

# Editorial

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

## Mechanism for industrialisation

The "Expression of interest" made by the Ministry of Commerce and Industries of the previous Government to establish additional industrial estates was heralded as a positive step towards the movement for industrialization of the state and was much applauded. The benefits these industrial estates will provide, if and when put into practice, is immense and far reaching. Dependence on imports and from outside the state for almost all of our daily requirements, save for miniscule percentage of certain basic things like grains, vegetables and other agricultural products has been eating into the fiscal resources of the state.

The initiative, keeping in view the Act east policy of the Indian Government, is, as the Minister for Commerce and Industries has stated, to tap the opportunities that will arise thereof, and to make the state an industrial hub for the rest of the country. What is of concern for the people in the country, and particularly for the state now, is that this evidently positive step might be shelved by the current Government, even while the country is curiously looking on, fingers crossed with the hope to witness the actual implementation- how earnest and committed the ministry will be in this regard. Another aspect that needs to be addressed, from the point of view of the general public, is the awareness of the benefits and possibilities these Industrial Estates offers for the prospective industrialists as well as the schemes, subsidies, tax holidays and other such incentives that can be availed from the government by the small and micro industries. Financial availability is a major factor in successfully developing an industrial set-up, more so in our cash- strapped state. A smoother, hassle free policy to make loans, grants and other financial aids available in time will decide the future of these industries.

The grind and hurdles one is forced to go through for obtaining capital for any new venture, not to mention the compulsory personal "considerations" one has to provide the staffs and officials concerned, is the biggest deterrent for a majority of the public in their endeavor to set up a new enterprise. A dedicated financial house which can approve and speed up the funding process based solely on the merit and viability of the proposals being put up for financial assistance, and not based or influenced by personal considerations will go a long way in reducing the high rate of defaults in repayment of loans. Emphasis needs to be given in developing an atmosphere conducive to the development of small, micro and cottage industries which will act as the backbone for further industrialization. An incubation centre for the fledgling units is of vital importance to develop the practice of industrialization of our State. For the state to usher in a new era of industrialization, a concerted effort needs to be made by the government and the public to promote and participate which will come only when the general public is made aware of the full implications of such initiatives.

The end result: more stable society, increased financial discretion, increased economic opportunities, decreased social disruptions and anti-social elements to name a few.

## Six killed in clash after dispute over panchayat poll in Guj

Bhuj (Guj), Oct 24

Six people were killed in a clash in Gujarat's Kutch district following a dispute over village panchayat elections, police said Wednesday. An argument erupted between members of two communities late Tuesday night over the sarpanch's (village head) election held sometime ago in Chhasra village in which a woman had won, Kutch (West) Superintendent of Police M S Bharada said.

"Some members of a community held a grudge against the other after facing defeat in the election. The argument over the issue escalated and people from both the sides attacked each other with sharp weapons," he said. Six people were killed on the spot

in the clash.

The deceased were identified as Magan Ahir (27), Bharat Ahir (28), Bhargav Ahir (26) and Chetan Ahir (38), all from the same family, Abid Sabbar Bhulia (25), son of the woman sarpanch, and Amad Abdul Bhulia (70), he said. Two persons were injured in the incident. One of them was admitted to a local hospital, while the other, who received serious head injuries, was shifted to a hospital in Ahmedabad, the SP said.

A team of police officials was camping at the village to bring the situation under control, he said. An FIR was lodged against members of both the communities under relevant sections pertaining to rioting, murder and other offences, he added.

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# The Sordid CBI Drama: Abdication of Responsibility By PMO and CVC

By-VAPPALA BALACHANDRAN  
Courtesy: The Citizen

In 2013 two retired police chiefs published Op-ed articles recommending that the CBI should be given constitutional status like the Election Commission (EC) or Controller & Auditor General (CAG) to insulate it from political pressure. They were responding to a Supreme Court observation (May 8, 2013) on the "Coal Seam" of CBI being "One parrot, many masters". I opposed it through a column on May 19, 2013 as I felt that it was a dangerous step in a democracy. I argued that the EC and CAG had no power of search and arrests which CBI had. Without checks and balances this power could be misused. The Supreme Court had also observed on May 8, 2013: "The CBI cannot be given unbridled power as an unruly horse is a dangerous thing".

I was reminded of this when the present sordid drama of the clashes between two titans of the CBI are unfolding. As I am writing this, Rakesh Asthana, CBI's No: 2 has moved the Delhi High Court for quashing the FIR registered against him by the CBI under instructions from Director Alok Verma. However the High Court has not accepted Asthana's plea to quash the FIR. Nor has it stayed the investigation into the bribery allegations against Asthana and his deputy Devendra Kumar, who has already been arrested and sent to seven day CBI custody. The High court has only ordered that Asthana should not be arrested till Monday (29th) till the Court hears his plea.

I do not want to go into the merits of the case as it is sub judice. All I wanted to say is that this shameful

drama would not have played out publicly but for the clumsy Machiavellian attempts by the Modi government to install Asthana as the de facto CBI director. This attempt however has exploded on their face. Also, it is not only the CBI which is in disrepute in this affair but also our external intelligence department whose Special Secretary in alleged to have "aided Asthana in the bribery case to settle a money-laundering case against Qureshi".

That Asthana was the preferred choice of the higher political leadership in Modi government was apparent when the then CBI Special Director R.K. Dutta who was No: 2 was abruptly transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs just prior to the retirement of CBI Director Anil Sinha on 2 December 2016. This was a brazen attempt by the PMO to get Asthana anointed as No: 2 although he was only an Additional Director. It was also a blatant attempt by the government to circumvent rules to confer leadership position to Asthana through the back door. Thus Asthana continued as "Acting director" from 3 December 2016 till 31 January, 2017.

On December 9, 2016 Supreme Court asked the government some very sharp questions on a plea by Prashant Bhushan representing the "Common Cause" NGO: "Why was senior-most officer R K Dutta, supervising high profile 2G and coal scam cases, shifted out of agency without the nod of this court," a bench of Justices Kurian Joseph and RF Nariman asked while issuing notice to the government. "You have to reply on two questions, as to why Dutta was shifted out of CBI

by curtailing his tenure and how the CBI's interim director was appointed," the bench said.

The plea had claimed that the government did not convene a meeting of the selection committee, even though it was fully aware that Anil Sinha was going to demit the office of CBI director on December 2. It alleged that the government had "prematurely curtailed" Dutta's tenure and transferred him to MHA on November 30 just two days before Sinha was slated to demit office.

To me it is clear that the Chief Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) K. V. Chowdary was also responsible for this affair by abdicating his constitutional responsibility. R K Dutta who decided to go back to his parent cadre (Karnataka) told "Hindustan Times" (October 8, 2018) how meekly the CVC had surrendered to political influence: "A note had gone to CVC that I was to be shifted from CBI to the home ministry and CVC just followed the course. CVC was supposed to look into the reasons of my shifting. CVC's role comes into play when someone is shifted or inducted. If someone is to be given extension in tenure or prematurely sent out of CBI, CVC again has a role. It cannot act in a mechanical manner. It needs to know whether there is something which warrants removal of an officer".

Alok Verma took over as Director in February 2017 when the selection committee comprising of the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and Chief Justice J. S. Khehar cleared him. The first sign of the rift between him and Asthana appeared in July 2018 when CBI informed the CVC that the Director had not delegated any powers to Asthana to represent him in his absence. At that time it was revealed that Alok Verma had objected to the promotion of Asthana as Special Director when the screening Committee was considering his case as he was involved in some corruption cases. Despite this he was cleared for promotion.

"There is a constitutional breakdown because of the questionable roles of the PMO and CVC"

A report carried by a web site on 22 September 2018 lays bare the alleged intrigues which compelled the CBI to issue an unprecedented announcement that their Special Director was "being probed in at least half a dozen cases". The web report also accused some officials in the PMO of helping Asthana. The CBI statement says: "Certain allegations have been made in a newspaper published from New Delhi referring to a complaint filed before the Central Vigilance Commission against the Director CBI. The newspaper story has subsequently been carried in several electronic channels. It is unfortunate that baseless and frivolous allegations are being made publically without proper verification of facts to malign the image of the Director CBI and intimidate the officials of the organization."

"It is stated that the CVC has sought for certain case files from the CBI on the basis of a complaint filed by the Special Director, CBI. In its response to the CVC letter, the Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) of CBI has pointed out that the complaint is an attempt by the complainant to intimidate the officers of CBI who are investigating his role in at least half a dozen cases. The CBI said that the CVC should opine on the maintainability of the complaint and consider it malicious and frivolous in order to protect the integrity of the organization" said CBI in a press statement.

There is a constitutional breakdown here mainly because of the questionable roles of the PMO and also of the CVC who is supposed to be the watchdog for probity in public life. Now the headache has been conveniently transferred to the higher courts. It is a sad day for India. (The writer is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat)

## PM Modi awarded the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize

New Delhi, Oct. 24

The Seoul Peace Prize Committee has decided to confer the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr Modi has been chosen for the award in recognition of his dedication to improving international co-operation, raising global economic growth, and accelerating the Human Development of people in India.

The Award Committee recognised Prime Minister Modi's contributions to the growth of the Indian and global economies, crediting 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between the rich and the poor. The Committee lauded Mr Modi's initiatives to make the government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetisation. The Committee also credited the Prime Minister for his contribution towards regional and global peace through a pro-active foreign policy with countries around the world under the 'Modi Doctrine' and the 'Act East Policy'.

Expressing his gratitude for the

prestigious honour and in light of India's deepening partnership with South Korea, Mr Modi has accepted the award. Mr Modi is the fourteenth recipient of the award. The award will be presented by the Seoul Peace Prize Foundation to Mr Modi at a mutually convenient time. The Award Committee lauded Prime Minister Modi's initiatives to make the government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetisation. The Committee also credited the Prime Minister for his contribution towards regional and global peace through a pro-active foreign policy with countries around the world under the 'Modi Doctrine' and the 'Act East Policy'.

The Seoul Peace Prize was established in 1990 to commemorate the success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, South Korea. After assessing over a hundred candidates proposed by over 1300 nominators from around the world, the Award Committee decided to bestow the Prize on Prime Minister Modi, calling him 'the perfect candidate for the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize.'

## Pakistan arrests 16 Indian fishermen

Karachi, Oct 24

Sixteen Indian fishermen have been arrested by Pakistani authorities for allegedly straying into the country's territorial waters, a security official said Wednesday. They were arrested on Monday by personnel of the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) during an operation.

A security official told PTI that three boats of the fishermen were also

confiscated.

A case has been registered against them at the Dock Police Station in Karachi.

Pakistan and India regularly arrest each other's fishermen who inadvertently enter into their waters due to absence of any proper technology to confirm the coastline border between Pakistan and India near Sir Creek in the Arabian Sea. They languish in jails until they are set free on certain occasions.

## Delhi's air quality slips to 'very poor', firefighting continues at Bhalswa landfill

New Delhi, Oct 24

Delhi's air quality Wednesday dipped to 'very poor' barely two days after staying in the 'poor' category, even as firefighting operations continued at the Bhalswa landfill site.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recorded the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi at 312 at 11 am.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The air quality in the capital had shown signs of improvement Monday as it moved from 'very poor' to 'poor' category, but experts said it could deteriorate in the coming days due to toxic air coming out of the blazing fire at Bhalswa landfill site.

A Delhi Fire Service official said firefighting was still on at the garbage dump site.

"Due to continuous discharge of methane gas from the landfill, fire erupts randomly. Two fire tenders are currently working on containing the fire at the site," he said.

Fire has been raging at the massive dump site since October 20. However, by Tuesday evening, the flames were somewhat brought

under control and parts of the landfill smouldered, DFS officials had said.

The Centre-run System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) also reported an AQI in the 'very poor' category.

On Sunday, the AQI had oscillated between 'poor' and 'very poor' categories.

On Saturday, a haze had engulfed the national capital and the worst air quality of this season was recorded at 324.

North Delhi Mayor Adesh Gupta and NDMC Commissioner Madhup Vyas had visited the landfill site on Tuesday and the civic body had announced a slew of measures, both long-term and short-term for remediation of the site.

Anumita Roychowdhury of CSE Monday said, toxic air emanating out of such landfill fires is likely to affect the air quality.

"If the wind speed is lower and the temperature dips, the polluted air coming out of the landfill fires will get trapped, which would severely affect the air quality," she said.

The Supreme Court-appointed Environment Protection Control Authority (EPCA) Friday had held a meeting with officials of Punjab, Haryana and the Delhi governments to discuss the pollution situation in the national capital.