

Sanjay Gandhi

On Emergency And Constitutional Change

An Exclusive Interview

Sanjay Gandhi—29 years old, educated at Doon School, trained at the Rolls Royce Works, manufacturer of Maruti—has suddenly become a force to reckon with. Since the Emergency, he has been the principal confidant of his mother, the Prime Minister.

He is not committed either to the Left or to the Right; he is committed to his country. He is clear-headed, dynamic and a no-nonsense man.

What has brought you into politics?

I first got involved in active politics in 1971. At that time, there was a crisis in the country. A large number of young people came out to help. After the election, things quietened down, the crisis was over and I went back to making my car.

On June 12, 1975, again, there was a crisis. It was not only a question of the Prime Minister but of the country. The way things were moving would have led to chaos in the country. The Opposition wanted just this, even at the cost of the country breaking up. Fortunately, the Emergency saved the situation. The crisis is still not over.

Why have you joined the Youth Congress and not straight away the Indian National Congress?

Colour Photographs by R. B. BEDI

UNDER THE CONGRESS BANNER. Crowds surge forward to greet Sanjay Gandhi at Kamagata Maru Nagar during the 75th plenary session of the Congress. Below: His graduation in politics? Sanjay speaks during one of the meetings at the same venue.



This collaboration with foreign governments retarded the growth of Indian publishing. Some enterprising Indian publishers took up the publication of university-level textbooks, but up to about 1960 they did not make any significant impact.

Many of our authors still seem to harbour strong prejudices against Indian publishers. They, therefore, prefer to get their books published either abroad or by foreign publishers operating in the country. The main reasons are the wider readership that comes to the author through publication abroad; an efficient marketing organisation resulting in higher sales and larger royalties to the author; and higher standards of production.

How many Indian authors really get into the foreign publishers' lists. Only a handful. Most of the Indian manuscripts that are sent abroad are returned with a "rejection slip". A number of these manuscripts found "not up to the standard" or unsuitable by foreign publishers inevitably find their way into the Indian publishers' lists. These are the second choice of our Letter authors writing in English.

Since these books are to be priced sufficiently low, in order to survive in a sluggish market, the costs have also to be kept low. Publishers cannot afford to have them printed by the few better printers or spend time, money, expertise and other resources needed for maintaining a high standard.

Foreign publishing houses continue to dominate the Indian book world. Books are

also being imported on a large scale. Foreign books on various disciplines are firmly entrenched in the reading and reference courses prescribed by our universities and institutes. This seems to be inevitable. To replace even a few of them would call for an all-out national effort.

During the last decade, Indian publishing has made good progress. Indian books on a variety of subjects—particularly up to the degree level—have found acceptance. Children's books and those of general interest are now being published.

Professionalism

There is an awareness of the need for accelerating the growth of professionalism in Indian publishing. The better publishers plan out their programmes of publishing well in advance. They give better attention to the editing of manuscripts before their publication and the designing of books.

Still Indian publishers have not developed the same degree of expertise and professionalism in the marketing and distribution of books. This important aspect of publishing seems to have been neglected by them. A common criticism is that our publishers are enthusiastic in accepting manuscripts for publication but, once a book is published, all enthusiasm seems to wane. This is one of the major reasons why many of our publishers have come to grief.

All the ingredients of a book have to be paid for by the publishers immediately after publication whether the book sells or

not. The profits, if any, do not come in until most of the books are sold. The publisher's investment remains a dead investment until the sales. Effective marketing on a national scale is a most urgent challenge.

To reach the ultimate buyers—the general public, students, institutions and libraries—the publisher has to popularise his books through advertisements, reviews, salesmen and booksellers. In Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras, there are good booksellers who serve the public reasonably well. By and large, there is a dearth of professionally managed bookshops with staff who are well trained.

A happy trend is that export of Indian books in the English language has been progressively increasing. But if one considers the large number of titles we bring out in the English language, the rate of increase should be regarded as rather slow. There is scope to double our present exports to other developing countries of school and college books in the next year. Books on Indian philosophy, culture and history are in demand in the English-speaking countries like the UK and the USA.

Except for a few titles, Indian books have so far made no appreciable impression in the international market. Even on Indian themes and with books by Indian authors, the British or the American publisher has been able to do better than the Indian publisher. In terms of money, the value of our exports is about Rs 1 to Rs 1.5 crores, whereas we import books worth Rs 8 to Rs 9 crores annually.

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The Youth Congress was the Congress's most disorganised and exploited wing. The youth in India have tremendous energy and enthusiasm. If this energy and enthusiasm can be channelled to do constructive work, it would give the youth a sense of achievement and go a long way in the task of building the nation. The Youth Congress should not confine itself to the politically committed young men and women, but should also encourage young professionals, artists, writers and farmers to join in this task.

How do you visualise the future of the Congress?

The future of the Congress is the future of India. For the past 90 years the history of the Congress and the history of India have been inseparable. There are a number of political parties in India but there is none that can take the place of the Congress in the foreseeable future.

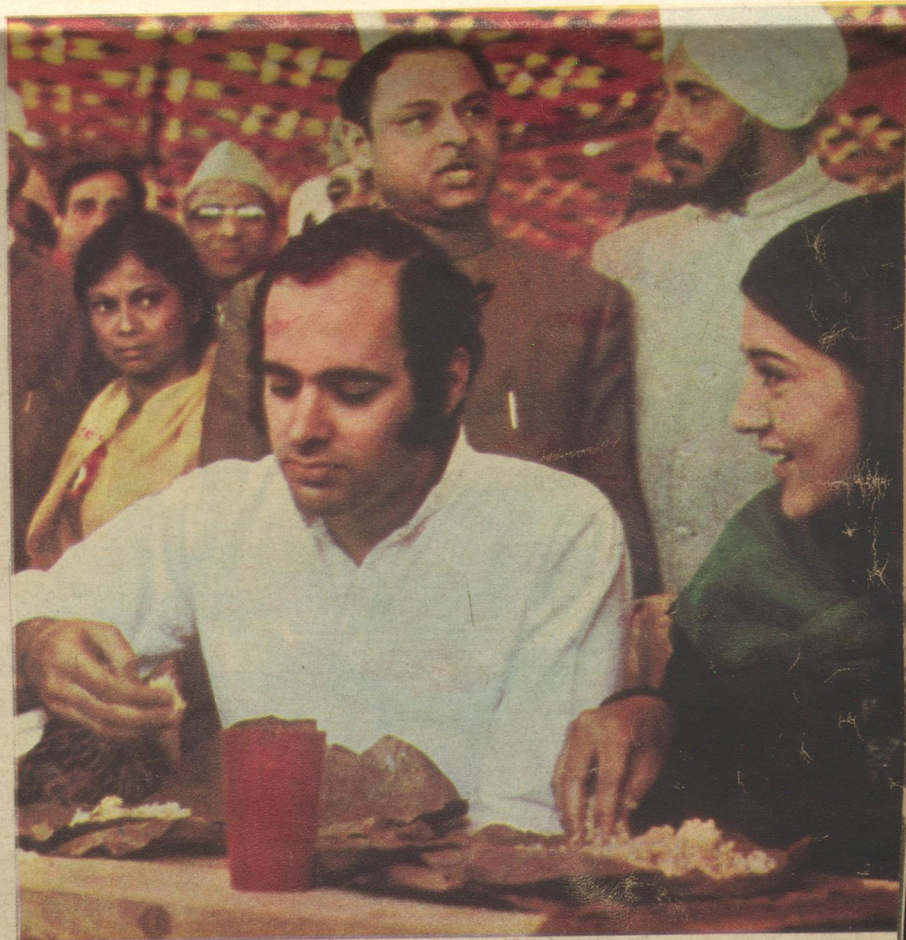
Don't you think that the Emergency can be misused by some senior leaders in the Congress to defeat its objectives?

It is very difficult for senior Congress leaders to misuse the Emergency. It, however, may be misused by some officials. I have heard many such complaints, mostly regarding Delhi, and checked them. So far, only two cases have been found to be genuine and action was taken on the same day.

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WANTED YOUNG MEN LIKE HIM. Sanjay, along with Ambika Soni, launched in Kamagata Maru Nagar a nationwide three-month drive to enrol new members for the Youth Congress—young men and women who would take a pledge to involve themselves in implementing the new economic programme and to participate in a campaign to eradicate illiteracy.



NOT AN EMERGENCY LUNCH. Sanjay Gandhi and wife Menaka paid a surprise visit to the Congress pandal where the delegates were having lunch. Their arrival was greeted with shouts of "Sanjay Gandhi Zindabad!" The couple then sat down to a meal of dal, rice, chapatis and vegetable curry. Halwa was served for dessert. Left: Arriving to attend the inaugural meeting.



"WHEN I GROW UP, I'LL MAKE MY OWN CARS." Sanjay (left) with Grandpa Jawaharlal and brother Rajiv. Rajiv, now driving his toy car, was later to fly planes as an Indian Airlines pilot. Right: So that the youngsters get glimpses of the world. The Nehru family, on their way to Indonesia in 1950, on board the then flagship, INS DELHI. With them is former Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral A. K. Chatterji.

Has the Emergency strengthened the popular base of the Prime Minister? Do you think the youth and the intellectuals are upset with the many restrictions on freedom of expression and association it has imposed?

This is a strange question. The Prime Minister did not declare the Emergency to strengthen her base, which is acknowledged throughout the world.

The restrictions in no way affect the lives of any law-abiding citizen. Even before the Emergency, there were some officials and others who used their position to throw their weight around.

Do you believe that the present Constitution should be changed by another—with a Presidential form of government and more powers to the Executive and less powers to the Judiciary?

MAN OF DRIVE. Sanjay with a prototype of his Maruti.



Some changes are necessary. If any Law or Article comes in the way of development and progress, it must be changed. I am in favour of any change that will speed up work and benefit the average citizen.

There are talks that, since the Emergency, you have begun to exercise tremendous influence on your mother? Is there any truth in it?

There is no change in my relationship with my mother since the Emergency.

Right or Left ?

Are you more to the Right than to the Left?

I am neither a Leftist nor a Rightist. If anything benefits the country, I am for it, be it Left or Right. It reminds me of Gandhiji's words:

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

What are you doing to guard yourself against the sycophants who seem to be anxious to gather around you?

I meet a very large number of people every day. They are mostly people from outside Delhi and therefore I can't see the same people regularly. This makes "gathering around me" difficult. If any sycophants do turn up, I always try to avoid them.

With your involvement in active politics, has your interest in Maruti lessened?

No. But I have been giving it less time than before.

What are your future plans, especially in view of the reports that the Youth Congress workers everywhere are looking to you for a lead?

I have no future plans. If I can help to reorganise the Youth Congress, I would like to do it. I have no plans beyond that. This in itself is a big task.

Do you agree that the declaration of the Emergency on June 26, 1975, was justified?

Yes. Otherwise there would be confusion and instability and even a chance of the country's unity being affected.

Slander In The Indian Press

What is your reaction to the allegations made in the foreign press that the Emergency was declared primarily to squash mounting opposition within the ranks of the Ruling Congress Party to the Prime Minister and not, as is claimed, to stem the rising tide of lawlessness?

The foreign press has usually been anti-Indian. In 1965 and 1971, many of them accused us of starting the wars against Pakistan. As for the lawlessness, no one living in India needs to be told about it. It was there, large as life.

Was it necessary to impose censorship on all newspapers and journals and evict foreign pressmen who refused to submit their copy to the Censor? Don't you think a censored press has no credibility with the readers?

Slander was the order of the day in the Indian Press. They constantly told blatant, malicious lies. Censorship was the only way to put an end to this. Any law must apply equally to foreign journalists. Even with censorship the Government has not told the press what they should write—only certain material was cut out. But before censorship, weren't most journalists told by their bosses what to write? Could the newspapers

publish anything to the contrary? Isn't this a form of censorship?

What has the country gained in the six months of the Emergency? And what has it lost?

The greatest gain is a sense of discipline and the speeding up of work. I could give a long list of figures of the achievements on all points—from the lowering of prices to increase in production. This rate of progress was unimaginable a year ago.

What has the country lost? Smuggling, blackmarketing, hoarding, bus burning and the habit of coming late to office.

Do you think the Emergency has lasted long enough and should be lifted?

Along with the Emergency a programme was announced. A number of programmes have been announced in the past, but for a number of reasons most have not been completed. The people felt that the programmes are just for propaganda. The Emergency gives a chance to complete the announced programme. On completing the programme we should go to the polls and let the people judge the Government on its performance and not on its promises.

Do you agree that since the proclamation of the Emergency there has been a definite shift to the Right?

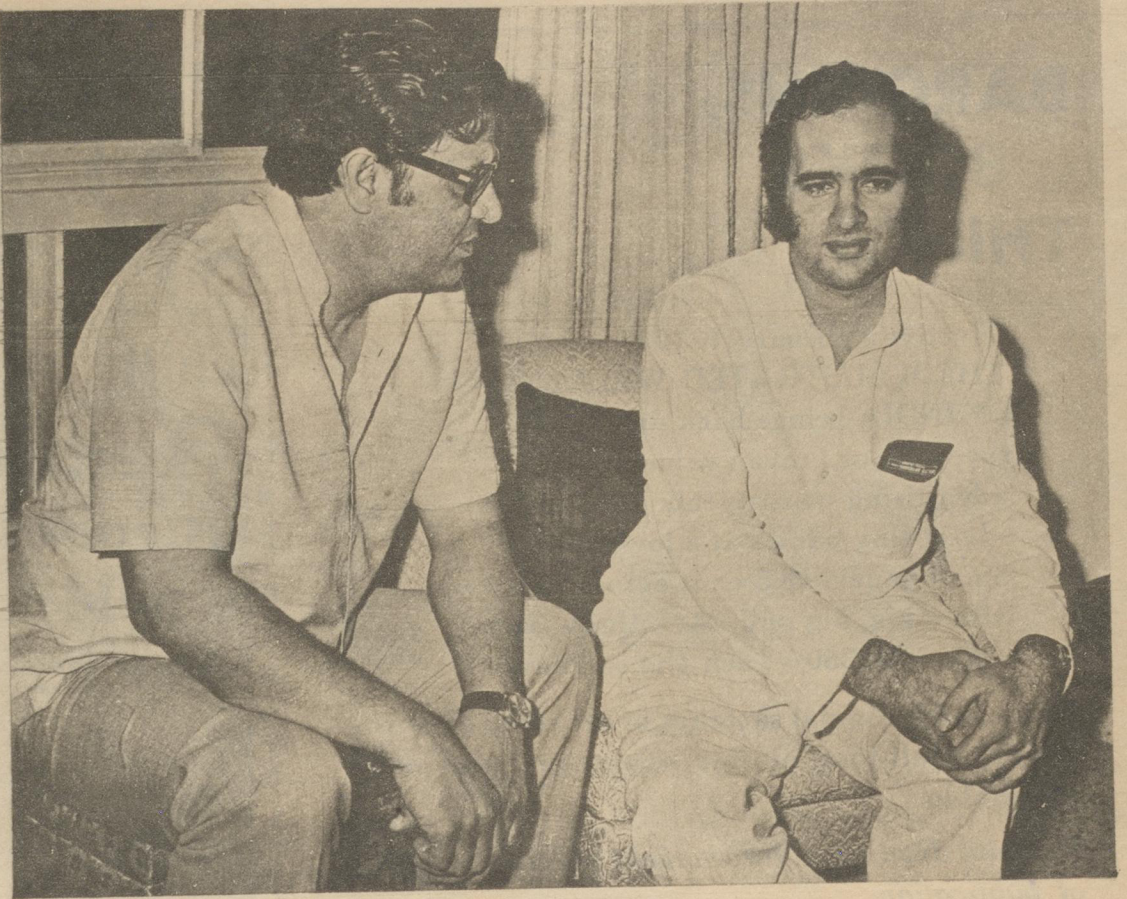
No. Today the situation here and in the world is changing fast. Our decisions and programmes must be more pragmatic with a view to getting on with the job.

20-Point Programme

It is alleged by critics that there is nothing new in the 20-Point Programme and that even the Opposition was and is willing to collaborate in executing it. Do you agree?

Everything is not new in the Programme. But that it is being quickly implemented is new. The Opposition has been opposing anything the Government does, just for the sake of opposing. If they are willing to collaborate, who ever stopped them?

How much of the 20-Point Programme has been achieved in the last six months? Are you satisfied with the pace at which it is being implemented?



—Ravi Arora

DISCUSSING CENSORSHIP with Mr Ayub Syed, Editor of Current, a Bombay news weekly.

The list of the achievements would run into many pages. The programme has made a good start and its impact can be seen all round. I always feel things could go faster.

"I Believe In Whatever Works"

In an interview granted to Surge, you criticised the functioning of the Public Sector. Do you still believe that more reliance should be placed on private enterprise?

I believe in whatever works. If the Public Sector helps the country grow, I believe in that; likewise for the Private Sector. There is room for improvement in both.

What is your experience as Managing Director of Maruti of governmental interference?

Many of our laws and rules have caused delays and given opportunity for dishonesty. They also increase paperwork.

How would you spell out the role of youth in implementing programmes of national resurgence?

Youth should put all their energy into constructive work. This work will differ from place to place, depending on local needs. The Youth Congress can play an important role in channelling this energy.

What have been the shortcomings of our planned economic programme? Where have we failed—in policy-making or in implementation?

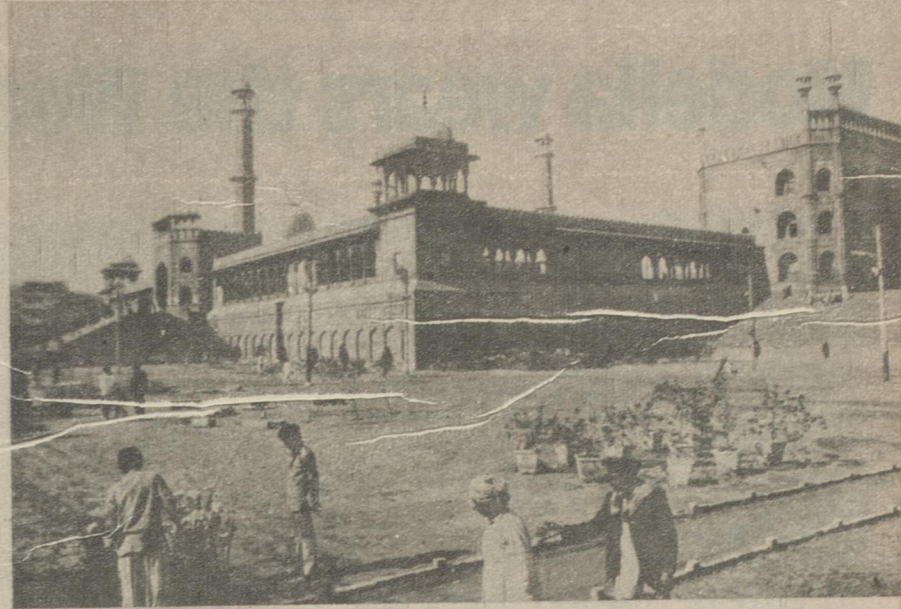
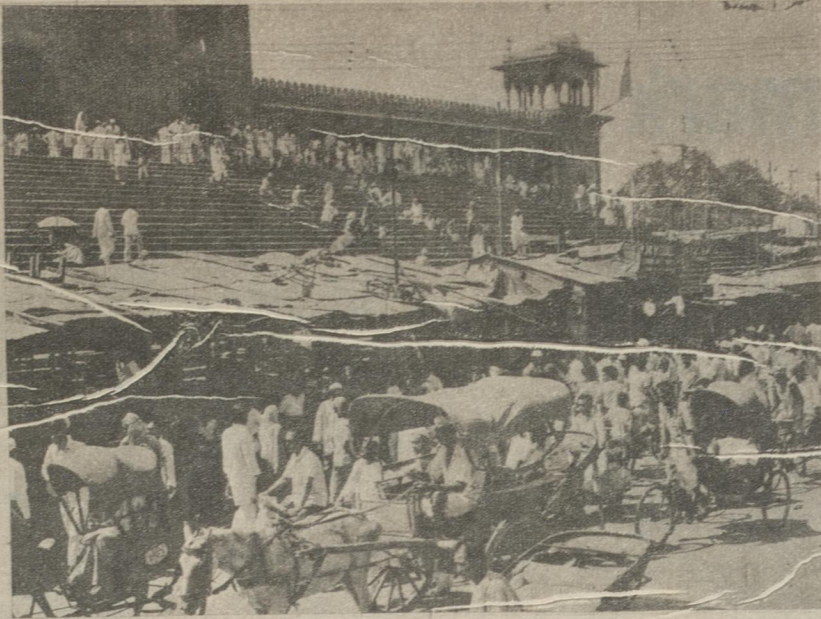
Our growth has been tremendous, compared to any other country. Of course we could have done better. Our greatest failing is the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is good to maintain law and order. This is what the British wanted. Unfortunately, the old

—Continued

WHEN HE TOOK A WIFE. Sanjay signs the papers after his wedding to Menaka in September 1974 in the presence of Marriage Magistrate Navin Chawla. Others in the photograph are Mrs Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and the bride's father Colonel Anand. Right: Mother and son with Giani Zail Singh, Chief Minister of Punjab, during the recent Congress session.

—S. K. Chadha





BETTER GODLINESS WITH CLEANLINESS. Jama Masjid before and after the Youth Congress, under the leadership of Sanjay Gandhi, started a campaign to clean up Delhi.

system was retained after Independence. The bureaucracy tried to keep as many controls in its hands as possible. This has hurt industrial growth greatly.

How do you rate the achievements of India under your grandfather?

The base of this country was built at that time. This may not look spectacular but, if the direction of development then had taken another line, today we would not be in a position to move forward at this pace nor talk of self-reliance.

What have you to say to the criticism that the foundations of democracy laid by Mr Nehru are being undermined now?

In a country as diverse and large as India, democracy cannot be undermined. It is the only system that can work and it is here to stay.

Will discipline imposed from above have a lasting effect?

This is not a case of "discipline imposed from above". In fact it was a case of "indiscipline imposed from above". As soon as the few people causing the indiscipline left the scene, discipline came on its own. There was no imposition of it.

Youth Congress in Delhi

What has the Youth Congress under your leadership done in Delhi since August 1975?

During the last six months, about 20,000 residential plots for the Janta, Low and Middle Income Groups have been developed in the colonies of Shalimar Garden, Paschim-puri, Pitampura, Vikaspuri, etc. Out of these, 8,000 plots have already been allotted and 6,200 are being allotted from the 15th January, 1976, to the 31st January, 1976, thereby making a total of 14,200 plots. The remaining 5,800 plots will be allotted in the month of February and March 1976. The allotment of these 20,000 plots, on which two dwelling units each can be constructed by the allottees, will provide accommodation to about 40,000 families, or 2 lakh people of smaller means. 25 per cent of these plots are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

During the same period, 21 new Resettlement Colonies in different parts of Delhi for resettlement of squatters/jhuggi-jhonpuri dwellers have been got developed by the Delhi Development Authority. In these colonies, about 50,000 plots, providing accom-

modation to about 2.5 lakh people, have been developed, with all the basic civic amenities, including pucca roads, drains, street lighting, public latrines, pure water supply, parks, playgrounds, schools, dispensaries, etc. In most of the new Resettlement Colonies, even television and adult literacy centres have been established.

From this "Operation Resettlement", the following main advantages have accrued:

- (a) The resettled families have now become regular allottees in a legal manner, instead of being squatters with an uncertain future. The security of tenure has naturally given them confidence.
- (b) Various development projects which were held up for non-availability of land due to squatting have now been started and these are being executed with speed and vigour. Overbridges, roads, schools, shopping centres, parks, playgrounds and housing estates are now being developed and constructed after clearance of the squatters and their resettlement in appropriate colonies.
- (c) Elimination of odd, scattered and haphazard slum-squatter settlements has improved the general environment and landscape of the city.

This "Operation Resettlement" seems to be the biggest and quickest peacetime resettlement and "relocation" of people known to history.

About 4,000 houses have been got constructed by the Delhi Development Authority during the last six months and a target of constructing one lakh houses has been laid down. Construction of another 12,000 houses has already begun.

Radical changes have been brought about in the environment of the old and historic part of the city which has been restored to some of its ancient grandeur.

Also, the general living conditions of the residents have been improved. Some of the main improvements effected are:

- (a) Redevelopment of Jama Masjid complex.
- (b) Shifting of iron merchants' market—Lohar Mandi.

- (c) Shifting of old motor part dealers kabaris—Motia Khan.

- (d) Shifting of Lakkar Mandi.

- (e) Shifting of cycle market.

- (f) Shifting of wholesale fruit and vegetable market—Sabzi Mandi.

All the traders/shopkeepers shifted from the above-mentioned old and congested markets have been allotted land in the new markets at reserve price which, in certain cases, is less than 10 times the price fetched in the open auctions held by the Delhi Development Authority from time to time. This demonstrates how much consideration has been shown to the industries/trades relocated in the new areas.

To terminate nonconforming uses in residential premises and make the environment healthy and beautiful, vigorous action has been taken to stop misuse of the premises. Simultaneously, a large number of new commercial complexes, such as Nehru Place, Rajendra Place, Bhikaji Cama Bazar, Basant Lok, etc. are being rapidly developed. Four new *chhoti* subzemandis, namely Tilak Nagar, Janakpuri, Safdarjang Enclave and Okhla, have also been set up. In addition to these, about 1,000 commercial premises in local and convenient shopping centres have been made available during the last three months.

The Delhi Development Authority has been asked to take up the task of redeveloping the villages which are coming in the expanding orbit of the city. A model village of Katwaria Sarai has been redeveloped.

About 40,000 head of cattle have been removed from the urban areas of Delhi through the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the Delhi Development Authority and the New Delhi Municipal Committee. Out of these, in Mandanpur Khadar and Masoodpur, even built-up sheds have been got constructed through the Delhi Development Authority with all the civic amenities. Firm action to eliminate stray dogs has also been taken through the local bodies.

For the resettlement of roadside petty traders whose temporary licences were revoked, arrangements have been got made with the banks to advance loans to them so that they could purchase land from the Delhi Development Authority in its local and convenient shopping centres and *chhoti* subzemandis.