

NEWS ALERT

FOREST COVER UNDER THREAT (February 12)

In a move that could affect the Aravallis and other forest areas in the state, the Haryana government has decided to amend the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA). Experts say that the move will encourage real estate developers and the Haryana Urban Development Authority by allowing unrestricted construction in areas where it was previously banned due to the enforcement of PLPA. This could adversely affect the catchments of Badhkal, Surajkund and Damadama lakes in the state, which is struggling with water challenges. The groundwater level in Haryana has dropped by more than 50 per cent in the past four decades, show government figures. At 3.59 per cent, Haryana has the lowest forest cover in the country. The 118-year old Act covers 20,200 hectares of forest in south Haryana of which 7,000 hectares falls in Gurugram while a little over 4,000 hectares falls in Faridabad. The Act also covers some portion of Shivalik ranges in North Haryana.

DTCP ORDER CLEARS THE WAY FOR MCG TAKEOVER OF PRIVATE COLONIES (February 13)

After several months of delay, the MCG will finally take over eight colonies namely Palam Vihar, Sushant Lok 1, DLF Phases 1 to 3, Suncity and South City 1 and 2. The order for the takeover was issued by the department of town and country planning (DTCP) on February 9. Once the colonies are taken over by MCG, the corporation will begin work on road, sewage drains, water supply, parks and streetlights in these colonies. In DLF and Suncity colonies, the work is being completed by developers. DTCP had initially set September 15, 2018 as the deadline for the takeover, but in August, infrastructure work in eight colonies was found to be far from completion.

AMIT KHATRI IS NEW DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF GURUGRAM (February 13)

Haryana government appointed 32-year-old Amit Khatri as the new Deputy Commissioner of Gurugram. He was earlier the DC of Jind. The appointment of new DC has come just months before the state goes to General and Assembly elections. Hailing from Sonapat, Khatri was first a computer engineer before he took a plunge in Civil services. He got 11th rank overall in the 2010 Union Public Services Commission (UPSC). Earlier, an additional commissioner of Municipal Corporation of Gurugram, he is credited for conceptualising the decentralised sewage treatment plan in the city. He succeeds his batchmate Vinay Pratap Singh who has been transferred as the DC of Karnal.

GURUGRAM TO GET ITS FOURTH SUB-DIVISION (February 13)

Badshahpur will be Gurugram fourth sub-division. It is 8 km from the city on the Sohna-Alwar road. The fourth sub-division will soon have a Sub-Divisional Magistrate's (SDM) office. The three existing SDM offices are Gurugram (North), Pataudi and Sohna. The new sub-division will have its jurisdiction over 37 villages (all under Municipal Corporation of Gurugram) including densely-populated ones like Badshahpur, Wazirabad and Jharsa. Residential sectors and societies falling under the revenue area of the 37 villages, including sector 30 to 76, will also come under the new SDM's remit. Badshahpur assembly constituency is the largest in the state. Gurugram constituency is the second largest assembly seat in the state. The decision to set up the new sub-division was taken at a cabinet meeting headed by the chief minister. The new SDM's office is likely to start functioning from April 1.

IN-FOCUS

DMCR NOW SET TO RUN RAPID METRO (February 1)

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has approved the takeover of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) by Rapid Metro in the next couple of weeks. This will be followed by a series of meetings with the Haryana government to decide what Rapid liabilities will remain with Rapid Metro and what the state government. A three-month window has been created for a smooth transition to take place. It will also be decided who will retain the staff and security of the metro. Rapid Metro has been off to a slow start right from the word go. The first phase (Sikanderpur, DLF Phase 3, Cybercity Circuit) missed its daily



ridership estimate by 70 per cent (an average of 30,000 passengers instead of the target of 1,00,000. Phase II (from Sikanderpur to Sector 55-56) was launched in May 2017. After six years, current ridership is 50,000 per day. It didn't help that during the ride, Rapid Metro's parent company, IL&FS, ran into a financial crisis. Built for Rs 35 billion, Rapid Metro was to have initiated a third phase, also called north extension. However, this phase never took off. Rapid Metro was India's first private operator corridor that was both privately built and operated. Its first train was flagged off on Nov 14, 2013. The Rapid Metro network has 12 trains, 11 stations and runs on a network of 11.7 kms.

MCG START SLAPPING FINES FOR NOT SEGREGATING WASTE (February 10)

The MCG has decided to start imposing fines on owners of households if they fail to segregate waste. A fine of Rs 100 has been decided upon for a single offence. MCG has said that if the waste is not segregated, it will not be collected from households. Citing solid waste management rules, MCG officials said waste segregation at source was mandatory and the rule also applied to bulk waste generators. MCG has identified 19 agencies to help the bulk waste generators segregate their waste at source. The names of these agencies are listed on MCG's site. Regular notices and challans are also being issued to offenders. The civic body has issued notices to over 300 bulk generators and challans to around 100 in the past couple of months.

GOVERNANCE

NEW BUDGET TO BE TABLED IN THE HOUSE BY FEBRUARY END (February 6)

The Municipal Corporation, Gurugram has not used around 75 per cent of the money allocated in its budget for development work in the city and only two months are left before the start of the next financial year when it is expected to come up with a new budget. The corporation has spent only Rs 4.67 billion of the 18.84 billion budget for 2018-19. Yashpal Yadav, commissioner MCG said that there had not been many capital-intensive projects have been planned but those would come up on paper only in the coming year.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

IFFCO CHOWK UNDERPASS LIKELY TO BE READY IN A WEEK (February 12)

The IFFCO Chowk underpass project, which was stuck for past several months due to delay in shifting of a petrol pump, is likely to be completed in a week's time. Work is on at a war footing to complete the 55 metre stretch that was holding up the underpass completion. The land was handed over to NHAI on February 6 after Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) allotted a site in Sector 26A to the petrol pump owner. The Rs 2,85 billion IFFCO Chowk underpass project was announced in September 2016 and the cost is being shared by the state government (25 per cent) and NHAI (75 per cent).

WORK ON CITY'S FIRST GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE TO BEGIN (February 12)

If all works well, the city will get its first state-run medical college in three years' time. The GMDA has started preparing the master plan for Sheetla Mata Devi Medical College, which will also have a hospital wing, near Dwarka Expressway in Sector 102. The MCG has already transferred the land earmarked for the college in Kherki Majra to the development authority. The project was announced by CM Manohar Lal Khattar last April. According to the GMDA's plan, the medical college project will be executed in two phases. In the first phase, it will have an air-conditioned super specialty hospital with 500 beds, a block for infectious diseases and another for radiotherapy. The first phase will also have a trauma centre with 50 beds among other amenities. In the second phase, an organ transplant centre with 30 beds, department of nuclear medicine with 30 beds, department of biotechnology, department of experimental medicine and an advance research centre incorporating genetics, immunology and virology will be built.

NEW DRAIN TO END SEWAGE MISERY IN PALAM VIHAR (February 13)

Residents of Palam Vihar's C-Block can now take a sigh of relief as GMDA has decided to build an additional sewage line in the area. The decision was taken at a recently-held meeting between state public works department (PWD), PWD minister Rao Narbir Singh and officials of PWD and GMDA. The move comes after residents approached the minister with complaints of sewage overflowing in front of their houses due to construction the Bajghera railway overbridge.

NCR'S BIGGEST FLOWER MARKET TO COME UP IN CITY (February 13)

In another year and half, Gurugram will have NCR's biggest flower market. The market will have space for display, auction and sale of flowers. The state government is in the process of signing a pact with the Netherlands in this regard. Spread over 10 acres, the flower market will be jointly developed by Haryana Marketing Board and Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority.

Around 11 acres of land was recently allotted for the project in sector 52, Wazirabad. Inspiration is being taken by Royal Flora in the Netherlands the world's largest flower conglomerate with multiple flower auctions and markets. The market will give a platform to local farmers to showcase and sell their produce. The total cost of the project is around Rs 500 million.

COUNTRY'S FIRST 'INTELLIGENT TRAFFIC SYSTEM' LAUNCHED IN GURUGRAM (February 14)

The pilot project for the country's first 'Intelligent Traffic System' (ITS) was launched in Gurugram with 'smart' traffic signals being installed at four places along the HUDA City Centre to Bakhtawar Chowk stretch. The points at which the signals have been installed — Kanhai Chowk, the Sector 30/31 dividing road, Sector 31/45 traffic light, and Bakhtawar Chowk — were chosen because of the traffic congestion and vehicle load that they experience daily. Although three points along Golf Course Road were initially being considered, officials decided against it because of lack of optical cables on the stretch. The work has been carried out by Japanese firm Kyosan India Pvt. Ltd. The MoU for the project had been signed with the Haryana government in 2016. The impact of the project will be evaluated for six months.