Safdarjung Airport to Safdarjung Playfields? Make it possible

MY PRESCRIPTION



Delhi surely, getting ved of large decades ago, it was

common to see people spill out on to the Central Park of what was then called Connaught Place. A metro station took over that green, perhaps correctly so, as it was the right place for a junction. Till very recently, the lawns of India Gate and Central Vista were hubs of public activity.

While the green lungs created first by the British and, then, by Delhi's planners of the early 1960s — still hold firm on the landscape the British rule in 1920 and the Hauz Khas forest and many others were formed under Master Plan Delhi 1962), open green recreational areas are running out of space.

But there are examples to learn from. Berlin's Tempelhof Airport ceased flying operations in 2008 and was quickly converted into a recreational area. Skating, wind surfing and many other sports now abound on what was a runway. Berlin has given back nearly 350 acres to its residents.

Safdarjung Airport stopped the flying of fixed-wing aircraft several decades ago as the Aurobindo Marg flyover was dangerously close to its flight path. While parts of the 200-acre land parcel are still used as a heliport for VIP flights for PM and President by Indian Air Force, more than 150 acres are taken up by a nonnon-public, racecourse.

When the then Wellington Airfield was commissioned in 1928, it was located on the southern fringe of the New Delhi plan of 1922. There was no habitation around it till the ancient city of Mehrauli about 8km away. But now, Safdarjung Airport sits in the heart of the city.

The ministry of home affairs decided that it was best used as an emergency getaway for VIPs after the 2001 attack on Parliament. While the idea of giving this open green space back to the city for recreational purposes was mooted and examined in 2003, why it died is not public

IAF now operates VIP flights for PM and President from a small part of the airport, which sits in a corner behind Safdarjung Tomb and

ISSUE

> Delhiites are running out of open green recreational areas

Safdarjung Airport stopped

several decades ago > Parts of the 200-acre land parcel still used as a heliport for VIP flights for PM and

flying fixed-wing aircraft



not disturb the city traffic. In 2010, the airport was

Commonwealth Games. So, examples of change are as repartially converted into a

President by IAF

> But more than 150 acres taken up by a golf course and a racecourse, both out of bounds for common man

SOLUTION

- Consider converting Safdarjung Airport into a public green space
- ➤ Move almost-privately run racecourse from prime city land to Dhaula Kuan Cantonment's edge
- > Take cue from Tempelhof Airport in Berlin that has given way to Tempelhof Feld where people can indulge in recreational activities

away. A metro station at Jorbagh is a stone's throw away and the redevelopment of Ring Railway (which has Saf-

stations at walking distance) will also bring the airfield within easy reach of Delhiites. Citizens have already adopted metro as a preferred mode of transport.

The recent creation of National War Memorial at India Gate hexagon where 30 out of the 90 acres have been subsumed into a restricted public space is another example of how the city's open green public spaces have been pruned to give way for other uses.

So, with all these changes happening in the city, and with Delhi getting starved of open public spaces at an alarmingrate, is it not the right time to dust out the idea of making the airport into a public green? Do we really need an almost-privately run racecourse to occupy prime city land, used mainly by the likes of what are now

people"? Can IAF not play golf a wee bit away at Dhaula Kuan Cantonment's edge — a mere 4km away from Safdarjung, and not putt in the heart of the city?

These are not esoteric and wild ideas. Tempelhof Airport in Berlin has given way to Tempelhof Feld — a field where city residents ride cycles, skate, wind surf, play ball, skate board and roller board and breathe a breath of fresh air. There are other such examples. Croydon Airport in London has now got large open public playfields. The same is the case for many smaller European towns, which have grown around their original airfields.

So, why can Safdarjung Airport not convert to Safdarjung Playfields?

Sudhir Vohra is an architect and urban planner

Legalising weed could earn Delhi nearly ₹725 crore

▶Continued from P1

esides the two Indian cities and Karachi, the other four are Cairo, London, Moscow and Toronto in that order. These are cities where cannabis consumption is not legalised. Though Toronto legalised it earlier this year.

Interestingly, Amsterdam the city that would be mentioned in probably every weed lover's bucket list, is ranked 56th with an annual consumption of 3.6 tons of cannabis, barely a tenth of what Delhi consumed.

The study has also listed the average price of cannabis in these cities. Not surprisingly, both Indian cities are among the world's cheapest when it comes to buying this high. Latin America emerges as the smoker's paradise with five of the ten cheapest cities located in the continent. Cannabis is cheapest at \$1.34 per gram in Quito, Ecuador. Other Latin American cities featured in the cheapest list are Bogota in Colombia, Asuncion in Paraguay, Panama City in Panama and Montevideo in Uruguay.

The price was \$4.38 per gram in Delhi and \$4.57 per gram in Mumbai, the world's 10th and 11th cheapest rates, respectively. The drug was most expensive in Tokyo where one had to pay \$32.66 for every gram. Interestingly, the five cities where cannabis was the most expensive were all located in East Asia, the others being Bangkok, Hong Kong, Kyoto

What if the drug were legalised and taxed? Delhi could raise \$101.2 million (Rs 725 crore at today's exchange rate) if the tax rate of the most widely sold cigarettes brand were applied on this drug. The corresponding figure would be \$89.38 (Rs 641 cr) for Mumbai. If the average US tax rate on marijuana tax were applied, Delhi would raise Rs 225 cr and Mumbai Rs 199 cr, the study concluded

HC asks govt to list steps to regulate labs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi high court has asked the Delhi government to inform it of the steps taken or proposed in order to regulate the pathological laboratories and clinics in the city.

Abench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar recently asked the chief secretary to file an affidavit with all the details in three weeks, and listed the matter for further hearing on September 27.

ILLEGAL UNITS

It had earlier directed the principal secretary of the health department to explain the steps proposed to regulate the laboratories and clinics until a law was enacted to keep a check on such establishments.

The bench is hearing a bunch of PILs alleging that unauthorised laboratories and diagnostic centres were being managed by unqualified technicians. The PILs seek formula tion of a policy to regulate such establishments. The petitioners have argued that there is a need for urgent action as patients' lives are at stake and even a small error in diagnosis can be a threat to their lives

Stopped by traffic cop, Noida man dies of heart attack

Shikha Salaria @timesgroup.com

Noida: A 35-year-old man collapsed and fell on the road on Sunday evening after being stopped by a traffic constable, who allegedly hit the bonnet of his car with a stick repea-

tedly and demanded to see papers. By the time he was wheeled into a hospital, he had passed away. Police said Gau-

rav Sharma, who

worked in the sales department of a private firm in Sector 136, had suffered a heart attack. His parents alleged that as the cop kept shouting at Gaurav, he collapsed on the ground after he got out of the car and lost consciousness. The family did not confirm if Gaurav had a history of heart ailments, but poli-

ce said he was diabetic. Gaurav's father Moolchand Sharma (65) said the incident happened around 6pm when he and his wife were travelling towards Ghaziabad in the Ritz being driven by their son. "I was in the passenger's seat and we told the cop not to bang on the bonnet. I exited the car from the left while Gaurav opened the door on the right. I later found my son lying unconscious on the ground. The policeman fled the spot," the father claimed.

> A passerby helped pick Gaurav up and drove the car to Fortis Hospital in Sector 62. "The hospital staff checked his pulse in the car itself and told us he was no more," Shar-

ma said. He said all of them were wearing seat belts and the car, too, was within the speed limit.

Police in Noida sought to distance itself from the incident, saying it happened in Indirapuram. "After an inquiry, it was found that the deceased was prima facie diabetic in nature and died due to heart attack. The place of the incident was near the CISF cut. Ghaziabad Police have been infor med." Noida police chief Va-

Creating a deterrent: 2 jailed for smuggling tiger parts

New Delhi: In a rare occurrence in the city six years ago, three men were found smuggling tiger body parts in the boot of their car and slapped with charges under Wildlife Protection Act and Money Laundering Act. A special court recently held two of them guilty of smuggling the uncured trophies and handed them jail terms of five and three years, respectively. The third accused had died during the trial.

Tiger, an endangered species, is protected under Schedule (I) of Wildlife Protection

cial judge Santosh Snehi Mann may prove to be a deterrent as there have been 626 cases of tiger poaching and 463 seizures across the country etween 2000 and 2018. Surajpal, Surajbhan and

tember 7, 2013 in Delhi with the tiger body parts. Following a tipoff, a special team comprising officials of Delhi Police Crime Branch, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the Maharashtra forest department the tiger parts were procured from there — intercepted the car. A sack containing tiger

Naresh were arrested on Sep-

bones, canines and nails was found in its boot and Rs 2.7 lakh under a seat.

Surajbhan had confessed he received the money from Surajpal to procure the parts. He had also said Surajpal, who died during the trial, paid him Rs 6 lakh to get two tiger skeletons against a commission of Rs 50,000-60,000. Police also seized 18 tiger nails and Rs 50 lakh from Surajpal's house.

The testimonies of wildlife officials in the court identified

Surajbhan has been slapped with a fine of Rs 60,000 and Naresh with that of Rs 30,000.

Community prayer at Ravidas temple site today has demanded reallocation of

Mohua.Chatterjee @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Dalit religious leaders will organise a community prayer at the Ravidas temple site in Tughlaqabad on Tuesday to mark a month since the historic Sant Ravidas temple was demolished by authorities following a Supreme Court order on August 10.

The demolition outraged the Dalit community, which has been protesting since and the land to rebuild the temple which it claims has stood since 1509. The Dalits claim Guru Ravidas visited the site in 1509 and preached there during the rule of Sikandar Lodi, who gifted the land to the guru. The Guru Ravidas Jayanti Samaroh Samiti has argued that it has been in 'possession" of the Ravidas temple land for 160 years.

Tuesday's prayer will be led by Sant Sukhdev Waghmare, it was decided by the Akhil Bharatiya Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas Mandir Sanyukta Sanrakhshan Samiti, an umbrella body of Dalit groups formed for the temple movement last month. About 250 people are expected to gather for the prayer.

This is the first Dalit movement in which the "sant samaj" or spiritual heads of the Ravidasi community have got involved, activist Ashok Bharti said. There are about 150 Ravidas temples in Delhi, he added.

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I Sabbl Singh S/o Madan Singh R/ol-113/777 gali no.13,Sa-ngam vihar,ND-80 have changed my name to Sabbl Singh Chauhan for all purposes.

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Sneha Aggarwal

Jai Prakash Agarwal Residing

At Flat No. 212, Manhattar 6,Mahagun Moderne,Sector 78

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201306 Have Changed My Name

To Dilip Agarwal Vide

Affidavit Dated 06.09.2019

I, Natarajan, son of Mr. K N S Raman, born on 13th August 1980, residing at 100 Christopher Columbus Dr Apt 2204. Jersey City. New Jersey 07302, USA have changed my name to Guru Prasad Koduvayur Subbaraman vide Affidavit dated September 5th, 2019 sworn before a Notary Public of New Jersey and attested by the Consulate General of India, New York.

I, Seema W/o Joy Chatterjee R/o D-75, Arya Nagar Appart-ment, I.P. Extn. Delhi-92 have changed my name to Jayati Chatterjee for all purposes

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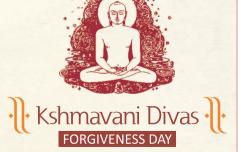
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