

Dr Karan Singh's MPLADS funds respectively to build the required infrastructure. The model, which was lauded by locals, politicians and government officials, today faces allegations of embezzlement. Charges and counter-charges between Manushi and the local mafia fly thick and fast. The Bhagat-Baisoya gang (Bhagat Singh, Mahipal Baisoya, Babli Baisoya, and Ajay Baisoya) is supported by the Delhi Pradesh National Panthers Party (DPNP) and a gentleman who works surreptitiously under the pseudonym "Hindustani".

Kishwar claims the bribe-collecting mafia — in connivance with local corporator Jagdish



Station, and sought details about the incident, he only had two words: "Nothing happened."

Subsequently, the police served externment notices to Mahipal and Bhagat Singh in addition to ordering them to furnish bonds of Rs 10,000 each. MCD Councillor Mamgain says, "There are no two ways about the fact that she (Kishwar) was beaten up on December 31."

DPNPP president Sanjay Sachdev says that while his party is not against the Sewa Nagar project, he is certain about the December 31 accident: "There is an AIMS report that proves that the old lady suffered a minor head injury." He also backs the vendors' allegation that Kish-

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war is running and ruling the market with an iron hand. "She must realise that she is not an enforcing agency or the court of law. She has been picking up vendors' items as and when she desires and has been issuing challans to the tune of Rs 3,000. The temple of the Swachh Narayani Devi (the goddess Kishwar conceptualised) that Manushi has built is on public land — it is illegal." Deputy MCD Commissioner (Central Zone), Amiya Chandra, says it is a wonderful project, and the MCD is trying its best to make it a success. "When I met Madhu, she told me the problem was not us with but the police." Asked if the temple was built on illegal land, Chandra told TEHELKA, "If the MCD wants, it can demolish the temple tomorrow. But if somebody is doing it to promote cleanliness, we must appreciate it."

KISHWAR SAYS that there wasn't any agreement signed for the temple, but it was part of the architectural plan given to the MCD. "The issue is not the temple; not even the project. The issue is policy reform at an all-India level. They can demolish what they like, I couldn't care less."

According to Hindustani, "As per the agreement, vendors had agreed to pay a fine of Rs 100 if they violate the *sanyam rekha*. But Manushi charged Kamruddin and Roshan Khan Rs 2,500 each for violations (copies of the receipts are with TEHELKA). Some were charged Rs 2,750 and Rs 11,000 with a promise of a installation of an electricity meter." Kishwar de-

fends: "They started a chicken slaughter shop in addition to the mattress-making shop and occupied 100 square feet of extra space. Chicken slaughter is not allowed on the pavement and we were getting notices from the MCD, so we suspended their membership. The money of the few people who paid for the electricity metre is deposited with us."

The man in the eye of the storm, Mahipal Baisoya, who now runs a CD shop in Sewa Nagar, claims Manushi took Rs 1.5 lakh from him and his three brothers with a promise to regularise their tempo stand and give them a stall each with costs ranging from Rs 30,000 to Rs 35,000 depending on how early they could pay. "We got a receipt for only Rs 30,000. When we heard that the tender for the project was for five years and would end in 2008, the vendors decided to question the organisation for accounts."

Kishwar says the Baisoyas' tempo stand was illegal and had become a hub for "anti-social elements", but denies taking Rs 1.5 lakh as Baisoya alleges. On June 6, 2007, the Deputy Commissioner (Central Zone) declared that, "Determined action should be taken to get the unauthorised tempo parking and the illegally constructed office of the Baisoya Tempo Stand removed from the project area."

While Mahipal and other vendors allege they live under the terror and fear of Manushi, active Manushi project members claim it is the Bhagat-Baisoya gang who have been terrorising them. "They want monopoly of the market and have made life miserable for us. They come at night with knives to threaten our wives and children," says Mehboob, a vendor in Sewa Nagar. Another vendor, Yogesh, says he is a victim of the money-lending mafia led by the Baisoyas. "They persuaded me into taking a loan of Rs 35,000 at an interest rate of 10 percent per month to buy goods for my stall. I have already paid over Rs 3.63 lakh as interest. They are claiming Rs 1.2 lakh more, have confiscated my scooter and forced me to sign several blank cheques."

As the blame game continues, the Union Cabinet's January 2004 ruling to implement a National Policy for Urban Street Vendors comes into force. As 3 lakh tehbazari licences and vending sites in Delhi are to be allotted, a big scam appears to be in the making. According to Manushi estimates, at an average of Rs 10 lakh per stall, this is worth Rs 3,000 crore. Clearly, there's a lot at stake.

Mamgain and MP Ajay Maken — has unleashed a reign of terror: beating up Manushi members, destroying project property time and again, and threatening them with dire consequences. However, members of the Bhagat-Baisoya gang and a few vendors claim Manushi has "pocketed their money". "The whole thing started with Ajay Maken, the local MLA, corporator and their henchmen asking us for stalls," says Kishwar. Maken's office when contacted said there was no need for Maken to clarify baseless allegations. Meanwhile, the situation at Sewa Nagar is volatile. A 24-hour police picket is stationed there after a recent incident of violence.

On December 31, 2007, Madhu Kishwar and Manushi member Sheeshpal were beaten up in the market. The Baisoyas, however, allege that the two were beaten up only when they tried to flee after ramming their car into their 65-year-old mother, who was admitted to AIMS and discharged three days later. When TEHELKA contacted the SHO, Kotla Mubarakpur Police