

Ananth Kumar is at it again?

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IT is indeed peculiar and untimely that the Minister for Urban Development should make an announcement about his Ministry's plan to abolish the leasehold system of land ownership and the move to allow a change of land use of industrial plots to — as the press statement says — other purposes.

Untimely, because matters regarding changes in land use, regarding whether the government should prevent such misuse by sealing buildings that violate land use regulations, are now being heard in the Supreme Court. And being heard in a bench headed by no one less than the Chief Justice himself, along with two of his companion brother judges.

The distance between

the Ministry and the Supreme Court is less than a few kilometres, and the fact that that both are situated in New Delhi — in Lutyens' beautiful Delhi cannot, surely, be lost on Ananth Kumar. The news

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report states that this sudden announcement was a fallout of his meeting with fellow BJP MPs, and a few MLAs from the BJP.

If this is so, the Minister — though he would naturally be eager to please MPs — could surely have waited a few days to get the views of the Supreme Court on this matter before shooting from the hip.

More so, as the matter of change of land use and

whether the government has the powers to change land use without abiding by the law laid down in the Delhi Development Act, is coming up on Monday before the Supreme Court only one working day away.

And that too, after the Court has given a few week's time to the DDA to place its point of view before it, and after Ananth Kumar has himself withdrawn the notice issued by DDA — a notice which tried twice to "jump the gun" on the very law the DDA was meant to protect.

These are matters of town planning and architecture — not of politics and petty electoral gains. Matters, which evolve out of generations of training and

education in the fields of human habitat studies, architecture, and town and country planning.

Kumar makes his fleeting visits from Bangalore to the Capital, and suddenly throws up these titbits to a hoard of hungry politicians who are now desperately trying to clutch at any straw in the wind to regain a weak credibility.

These are matters of planning and environment — of leaving behind a city in a better shape than it was when we inherited it — matters of urban architecture and design, of transportation and planning. Matters which concern the future of our children, and spaces they shall live in. Not our present space — but the future of our cities.

Matters which are not meant to be left to mere politicians. Mere politicians.