

Misguided guidelines

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THREE of the major "guidelines" publicly announced by the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi in yesterday's press conference are matters on which the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India is adjudicating since the last few years — These are the promised increase in FAR (floor area ratio) on existing buildings, using residential premises for commercial use and using industrial premises for commercial use.

As per the present Masterplan, all these are gross violations and the law provides powers with the L-G (through the DDA Act) to act against such blatant abuse. It is surprising that the L-G —

At August Kranti Marg



According to the new guidelines, DDA flats will be allowed to build basements and other underground constructions.

himself a seasoned career bureaucrat at one time — shows such scant respect for both the law he is meant to protect as well as for the Supreme Court.

One wonders whether this is a deliberate attempt to go on a collision course with the highest court in this country, or just a foolhardy fling into what could ultimately turn out to be an unsolvable mess? In all these court cases, the DDA has sworn affidavits which promise that they shall take action against offenders, that they are aware of the malaise, and

that they are constitutionally bound by the law to prevent such abuse.

One can only wonder whether the DDA has kept the L-G informed about these promises made to the apex court, as also whether the DDA officials who advise them (not many of them have covered themselves with the glory of honesty, as we have noticed in the recent past), or is this another case of the Mayawati syndrome? — 'I may have signed the file, but then I sign so many every day. Do you think I read all that I sign?'

In any case, the press conference called by the L-G shows how desperate our political class has become. They shall do anything — repeat anything — in the hope of votes.

Instead of allowing the DDA Study Group, which is working on the new Masterplan, to do their job, we have this GUIDELINE promissory note. Unfortunately, no amount of promises can solve the problems which the misguided guidelines can create if they

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were to be implemented in the New Masterplan 2021.

If implemented in the manner announced yesterday, the consequential problems of a broken down infrastructure cannot be solved by mere promises.

Perhaps the L-G does not realise that Delhi has a history of destroyed cities; several dynasties died in Delhi (Slave dynasty, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Lodhis and the Mughals). Perhaps a little reading of the history of the region is necessary.

And now, our political desperadoes are working overtime to destroy whatever is left of post independent Delhi. For the sake of a few votes, they are willing to destroy the Capital of this country.

And why not change the laws in Lutyens' Delhi as well? Is Lutyens' Zone the preserve of our political class or do they never step out of their tree-lined avenues and acre bungalows (gifted to them by Edwin Lutyens) to see what a mess the rest of the city already is?

(The writer is a Delhi-based architect, who writes on the urban mess in the Capital)

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