

ing up the city.

But there are some worrying signals from the executive branch of democracy. The Ministry of Urban Development has announced the formation of a committee comprising planners and politicians to figure out how to curtail the mess in the capital.

Parallely, last week's conference of the chief justices of high courts, which was addressed by Chief Justice of India and by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, presented an interesting situation. While the CJI watched, the executive head of our government expressed concerns about judicial activism and expressed the hope that the courts would issue orders that take into consideration the practical aspects of governance.

Coming from a reformist like Manmohan, such concerns are unusual. We can plan great laws for towns and cities, but without governance and executive discretion, no amount of law making or urban planning can help. A plan is as good as its implementation - otherwise

aerial
view

Sudhir Vohra

remains a yojana - and we have a plethora of them strewn all over the country. From employment plans to rural development, countless corpses of yojanas lie buried.

But then, perhaps, such checks and counter checks help a democracy flourish. Will the MCD, Delhi Government enter into confrontation with the highest court over the land on a matter so trivial as implementing 50-year-old urban laws on a mere 300 odd streets of the city? Or will the rule of law prevail?

Tweaking land use guidelines has led to urban chaos. The judiciary's stress on sanctity of regulations is a welcome step

Rule models for our cities

The past few weeks have been a bonanza for students of urban and municipal laws as well as, perhaps, for administrators and city managers who have to implement urban laws. Both the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court

What is even more interesting is that the order takes pains to explain the rationale and logic behind the need to conform to land use regulations - going to an extent of stating that land use is the crux of any town planning law and that without such

tions pending in the country.

The Delhi High Court also pronounced orders on matters pertaining to urban governance. In one such order, it clarified that a building plan sanction is sacrosanct to the last detail in the drawing and

mented? Will the Ministry of Urban Development see this as an opportunity to create better procedures of governance to ensure compliance with urban laws or will this also be confined to a report by a committee? Transparency, better

