

Bulldozer Justice

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Ending Bulldozer Justice: Supreme Court's Landmark Ruling

Context :

- The Supreme Court has issued **guidelines to counter arbitrary demolitions** to protect citizens from unjust actions by state authorities.
- This ruling states that **demolitions without due process violate the rule of law** and criticizes the use of "**bulldozer justice**" in society.

What is Bulldozer Justice?

- Bulldozer justice refers to the **instant punishment** method used by some state governments to penalize alleged rioters and protestors by demolishing their homes, stalls, or other constructions.

Case Background

- In 2019, journalist **Manoj Tibrewal Akash's ancestral property** in Uttar Pradesh was demolished, allegedly for National Highway expansion.
- The Supreme Court found **violations** in the demolition, including lack of notice and exceeding the encroachment area.
- The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** deemed the demolition unjustified, revealing that only 3.7 metres of land was encroached, but 5-8 metres were demolished.

Key Highlights of the Ruling

- The Supreme Court emphasized that **arbitrary demolitions threaten the constitutional right to property**.
- **Six mandatory steps** were outlined for demolitions:
 - Verification of land records.
 - Proper surveys.
 - Issuing of written notices.
 - Consideration of objections.
 - Allowing time for voluntary removal.
 - Legal acquisition of additional land if necessary.

Wider Impact of the Ruling

- **Disciplinary and criminal action** will be taken against officials who conduct demolitions without following legal procedures.
- The **Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary** is to finalize disciplinary actions within four months.
- The court ordered **₹25 lakh compensation** for the petitioner and a review of similar cases

in the area.

Implications of the Ruling

- Addresses concerns over the **use of bulldozers to target specific groups** like minorities, protesters, and government critics.
- Mandates that **all states and Union Territories** implement these guidelines for uniform enforcement.

Conclusion

- The Supreme Court's guidelines emphasize the **rule of law** and ensure that demolitions are not used for **intimidation or selective punishment**.
- This landmark decision **upholds citizens' property rights** under Article 300A and promotes a fair, transparent approach to dealing with encroachments.



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