Central Vista Project

Why in news?

The Central government is planning to restructure the Central Vista.

What is the Central Vista Project?

- The Central government wants to **redevelop the Central Vista**, the 3-km long stretch from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.
- Amid the Covid-19 battle, the Centre has been rushing ahead, ignoring pleas to pause it for further deliberations.
- The plan is to construct a **new Parliament building** by March 2022 and a **common central secretariat** by March 2024.
- These will be built along with **new residences** for the Prime Minister and the Vice President near South and North Blocks, which will be repurposed as museums.
- There will be a new building for the Prime Minister's Office.

What is the draft plan?

- A draft master plan by a private firm contracted by the government has proposed a Parliament building next to the existing heritage structure, and office buildings all along Rajpath.
- These buildings will be built after demolishing existing buildings.

What is the project cost?

- The government has not publicly stated the project's estimated cost.
- According to the CPWD application for environmental clearance for the project, the construction of the new Parliament building is estimated to cost **Rs. 922 crore**.

Why the Centre wants to restructure?

- For the pre-Independence buildings that came up between 1911 and 1931, the Centre has cited that the restructuring needs to be done having in mind the **structural safety** of the existing buildings.
- For the post-Independence buildings such as Shastri Bhawan and Krishi Bhawan, it has cited the need for **modern workspaces**.

- Once delimitation is done and the number of seats will increase.
- So, there will be need for **more space to seat MPs** and **office space** for all of them.

How was the decision taken?

- The decision on redevelopment was taken in a hurry and **without adequate consultations**.
- The utility of such a massive redevelopment is not easily defendable.
- Nevertheless, the government is eager to recondition the capital's landscape as its monumental legacy.

What were the actions that were taken in a hurry?

- Independent expert members of the Central Vista Committee could not attend the meeting where it was passed without much discussion.
- The process for change of land use by the Delhi Development Authority was completed just before the lockdown began.

Was there any opposition?

- The Opposition, environmentalists, architects and citizens have raised many concerns even before the pandemic brought in extra issues.
- They have questioned the lack of studies to ascertain the need for the project and its impact on the environment, traffic and pollution.
- But, several key approvals for the proposed Parliament building have been pushed during the lockdown.
- This led to allegations of a lack of transparency.
- There were enough reasons to be circumspect about this grand idea from the very beginning.
- In the situation created by the pandemic, it must be deferred and the idea revisited later.

Source: The Hindu

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