Claim over Chandigarh

Why in news?

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister said it would be better if both Haryana and Punjab agreed on Chandigarh as a Union Territory.

Why this statement was made?

- Haryana Deputy CM wants the states to make their independent capitals and Benches of High Courts.
- On November 1, Haryana was celebrating 54 years of its formation as a separate state after it was carved out of undivided Punjab in 1966.
- The statement once again brought into focus the long-simmering dispute between the two states over one of India's most modern cities.
- But Punjab has always refuted Haryana's claims over Chandigarh.

Why was Chandigarh created?

- Chandigarh was planned to replace Lahore, the capital of erstwhile Punjab, which became part of Pakistan during the Partition.
- In March 1948, the Government of (India's) Punjab, in consultation with the Centre, approved the area of the foothills of the Shivaliks as the site for the new capital.
- From 1952 to 1966 (till Haryana was carved out of Punjab), Chandigarh remained the capital of Punjab.

How did it become a shared capital?

- At the time of reorganisation of Punjab in 1966, the city assumed the unique distinction of being the capital of both Punjab and Haryana.
- It became a capital even as it was declared a union territory and was placed under the direct control of the Centre.
- The properties in Chandigarh were to be divided in 60:40 ratio in favour of Punjab.

What is Punjab's claim?

- The-then Prime Minister had announced that Haryana, in due course, would have its own capital and Chandigarh would go to Punjab.

- The Centre had issued a formal communication is this regard on January 29, 1970, almost three years after Haryana came into being.
- Again, in 1985, under the Rajiv-Longowal accord, Chandigarh was to be handed over to Punjab on January 26, 1986.
- But the Rajiv Gandhi government withdrew at the last minute.

What is Haryana's counter-claim?

- As per the 1970 documents, the Centre had considered various alternatives for settling the matter, including dividing the city.
- But that wasn't feasible since Chandigarh was built as a planned city to serve as the capital of one state.
- Haryana was told to use the office and residential accommodation in Chandigarh only for five years till it shifts to its own new capital.
- The Centre had offered loan to Haryana for setting up the new capital.
- In 2018, Haryana suggested to set up a special body for development of Chandigarh.
- But Punjab rejected it, saying the city indisputably belonged to it.
- Haryana, on its part, has been demanding a separate High Court.
- It has locked horns with Punjab by passing a resolution in the Vidhan Sabha demanding 20 rooms in the Vidhan Sabha complex that have been in the possession of Punjab.

Source: The Indian Express

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