Official Land Holding of the Government

What is the issue?

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- The Centre does not know exactly how much property it owns.
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- This has created various problems with the economy and the land use pattern of the urban areas.
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What is the official status?

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- The information provided by the Government Land Information System (GLIS) is incomplete.
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- Various Central Ministries admit to owning only about 13,50,500 hectares of land.
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- But disparate official sources suggest that the correct figure is several times more.
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- Also a large proportion of government land lies unused.
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- The Ministries of Railways and Defence, respectively, have 43,000 hectares and 32,780 hectares of land lying vacant.
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- According to reports of the CAG, the 13 major port trusts have 14,728 hectares of land lying idle.
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	Total Land holding claimed in the GLIS	Total Land Holding#	Surplus Land#	Encroached area#
Railways	2,92,960	4,23,000	43,000	2,240
Defence	38,362	7,11,032.67	32,780	4,856.23
Port Trusts (13 Major)		31,238.15	14,566.83	161.18
Airport Authority of India (AAI)		55,037.25		422.82

What is the problem of unused land?

- **High Value -** A large part of the unused land is high-value property in prime areas in major cities.
- Land hoarding by government agencies has created artificial scarcity.
- It is one of the main reasons for skyrocketing urban real estate prices.
- Middle and lower-income households find adequate housing unaffordable.
- High land prices also reduce competitiveness by increasing the cost of industrial and development projects.
- The allocation of unused land is rife with corruption.

- **Urban planning -** To maintain efficiency amidst increasing population and economic growth, the Floor space index (FSI) should also increase.

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- However, most Indian cities defy these basic tenets of urban planning due to the large areas of unused or underutilised government land with an irresponsibly low FSI.
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- The FSI in Shanghai is four times of that of Delhi and Mumbai.
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- **Economic growth -** Solving the problem of wastage could generate employment and pull masses out of poverty.
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- Another report by the CAG on SEZs shows that 53% of the total land acquired by the government for these zones remains unused.
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What should be done?

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- The need of the hour is a comprehensive inventory of land resources and usage patterns for all government branches.
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- It should include information on the location of each property, its dimensions, the legal title, current and planned use, and any applicable land use restrictions.
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- The government should also agree to disclose its land use and release of excess land, the use of which it cannot justify.
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Quick Facts

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Floor space index (FSI)

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- Floor space index (FSI) is the total floor area built per square metre of land.
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- If if a single-storey building occupies 50% of a plot, the FSI would be 1/2.
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- If the building is expanded vertically to have four stories, the FSI will go up

to two (4 times 1/2), as the effective floor area has quadrupled.
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Source: The Hindu

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