

Central Vista Project

Why in news?

In the 75th year of Independence, India has a new Parliament building, built by Indians, and embodying the culture, pride and spirit of the entire nation.

What is the Central Vista Project?

- The Central Vista project is the revamping project of the Central vista area from Rashtrapati Bhavan till India Gate.
- The plan includes the construction of a new parliament, Prime Minister and Vice-President's residences along with 10 building blocks to accommodate all government ministries and departments.
- **Ministry** - The project is piloted by the Central Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **Time Frame** - The project was announced in 2019 by the Central government of India and is estimated to be completed by 2024.
- **Budget Outlay** - The gross rough estimation for all the planned development/redevelopment works is about Rs. 20,000 crore.

What is the need for the project?

- The existing Parliament House was commissioned in 1927 and showing signs of distress and over-utilization.
- The existing Parliament is not able to meet the current requirements in terms of space and amenities.
- **Safety concerns** - Current building is not designed according to fire norms.
- **Distressed infrastructure** - Excessive repairs have worsened the condition of the building.
- **Inadequate workspace** - The current parliament building poses a space constraint.
- **Narrow seating space** - The seating halls are cramped and only the first two benches have the desk space to place documents and papers.
- **Obsolete communication structures** - The communications infrastructure and technology is dated.
- **Vice President's House** - Vice-President, Chairman of Rajya Sabha's house is in Maulana Azad Road away from the Central vista.
- **Prime Minister's House** - Prime Minister's official residence is also outside the Central Vista in Lok Kalyan marg.
- **Decolonisation** - The old structures in the Central Vista embodies the Colonial rule of India.
- **Ministries** - Out of 51 ministries, 12 have offices outside the Central Vista which hinders coordination and synergy.

What are the criticisms against the project?

- The project started along with the COVID-19 pandemic year which spurred several criticisms.
- **Healthcare** - Funds have been diverted from public healthcare and COVID-19 response to the Central Vista Project.
- **Renovate** - Instead of building a New Parliament building, the existing Parliament building could be renovated.
- **Green Space** - The revamping project reduces the green spaces in the area.
- **Heritage** - The Central Vista Project is leading to a destruction of its Architectural Heritage.
- **Public Space** - The project will lead to reduction of public spaces and conversion of public spaces into Government use.
- **Old Act** - The role of managing the task is assigned to Central Public Works Department (CPWD) based on old Colonial Act, the Government Buildings Act, 1899.

What are the arguments put forward by the government?

- **Healthcare** - The Master Plan was conceived in September 2019, much earlier than the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Public Health has been a priority of the government and never compromised at the cost of the project.
- Till date, only 2 projects of New Parliament Building and Redevelopment of Central Vista Avenue have been awarded fund.
- **Green Space** - The overall green cover within Central Vista area will increase under the Master Plan.
- No trees would be cut and the trees would also be transplanted to Eco-park.
- **Old Act** - The Government Buildings Act, 1899 is in operation since 1899 and has not been repealed.
- The CPWD has been awarded the role based on the Section 3 of the Act which exempts all Government Buildings from the regulation of municipal laws.
- **Public Space** - Additional public and green spaces shall be added in Central Vista Avenue.
- Places like the National Museum, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Central Vista Avenue and India Gate will be accessible to the public.
- **Heritage** - None of the listed Heritage Buildings in Central Vista will be demolished further they will be retrofitted and refurbished for their future use.

What is the way ahead?

- India has grown out of its colonial past and the new Parliament building should be considered as a symbol of it.
- Still the heritage of the century old building must be preserved for its architectural marvel.
- The proximity of the ministry offices must aid and improve the synergy among the ministries.
- The technological and communication features added to the Parliament should be put in good use to improve its efficiency.

- The resilient and safe buildings of Central Vista should be made an example of Indian Architectural heritage.

References

1. [Business Standard - What is Central Vista Project?](#)
2. [Central Vista](#)

