

## **Three Capitals in Andhra Pradesh**

### **Why in news?**

Andhra Pradesh CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy recently hinted that his government would work towards the South African model of three capitals in his State.

### **What is the proposal?**

- In South Africa, the administrative capital is in Pretoria.
- Its national legislature is in Cape Town, and the judicial capital is in Bloemfontein.
- Likewise, Mr. Reddy proposes distribution of executive, legislative and judicial governance across Visakhapatnam, Amaravati (the current capital) and Kurnool respectively.

### **What is the rationale?**

- The idea seems to stem from the reasoning that the distribution would allow for “a decentralised development of the State”.
- The location choices are in the upper, central and lower geographical regions of the State.
- Such an arrangement follows the recommendations of the expert committee appointed by the Home Affairs Ministry in 2014.
- It studied the alternatives for a new capital.
- The panel had argued against the need for a greenfield capital city.
- It instead suggested focusing on distributing locations of governance beyond the Vijayawada-Guntur-Tenali-Mangalagiri urban area.
- Meanwhile, it suggested utilising the time period of 10 years to continue functions from Hyderabad after bifurcation.
- The Chief Minister’s current idea of three capitals has also got support from the government-appointed G.N. Rao committee.
- It has recommended that the Assembly’s location be retained at Amaravati.
- The Secretariat and High Court were recommended to be moved to Visakhapatnam and Kurnool, respectively.

### **What are the challenges?**

- Despite the expert committee’s recommendations, the earlier A.P. government led by the Telugu Desam Party had decided to build a grand

capital in Amaravati.

- The government had acquired large parcels of land from farmers.
- Many farmers had agreed to give up fertile land for the expansion of the capital as part of a land pooling scheme.
- They were to have received residential and commercial plots among other forms of compensation.
- Unsurprisingly, these farmers have protested the present decision to decentralise capital functions.
- On the other hand, the Secretariat and Legislative Assembly were shifted to Amaravati in 2016.
- The High Court began functioning in the beginning of 2019.
- Amaravati, which still requires significant development, has however become a functioning State capital for all purposes now.
- If the present government now limits Amaravati to hosting only the Assembly, it must take into account the concerns of the affected farmers.
- The government must consider the fact that considerable work has been completed in Amaravati to utilise it as a functioning capital.
- It must be taken into account before embarking upon the “decentralisation” idea (which was best served before the works in Amaravati began).

**Source: The Hindu**

