

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **artless** (adjective) – without skill/knowledge; hastily built.
2. **heartless** (adjective) – unfeeling, unsympathetic, uncaring, unconcerned, hard-hearted.
3. **Central Vista** (noun) – it is a grand redevelopment project for building what will be the power corridor of India, having a new Parliament building, a common central secretariat, and revamped three-km-long Rajpath, from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to the India Gate.
4. **demolition** (noun) – destruction, knocking down, pulling down, bulldozing.
5. **more so** (phrase) – to a greater degree; to a greater extent.
6. **in the midst of** (phrase) – in the middle of.
7. **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
8. **indeed** (adverb) – in fact, actually, undeniably.
9. **imperious** (adjective) – high-handed, commanding, domineering, authoritarian.
10. **obsession** (noun) – the particular condition of having unwanted and repeated thoughts, feelings, ideas &, etc., about someone or something (all the time); fixation, preoccupation, concern, mania/craze/phobia.
11. **grandeur** (noun) – majesty, greatness, magnificence.
12. **irony** (noun) – paradox, incongruity, peculiarity; contradiction, a strange/funny situation where things are happening the other way around (than expected).
13. **colossus** (noun) – giant, behemoth, mammoth.
14. **amid** (preposition) – in the middle of, surrounded by; during.
15. **ruins** (noun) – wreckage, damage; scourge, devastation, destruction.
16. **turn out** (phrasal verb) – transpire, emerge; happen/occur.
17. **monument** (noun) – example, exemplar, model.
18. **disregard** (noun) – negligence, indifference, non-observance, inattention.
19. **public good** (phrase) – the benefit, advantage, or well-being of the public.
20. **misplaced** (adjective) – misguided, misconceived, ill-advised, ill-considered, ill-judged.

21. **determination** (noun) – resolution, stubbornness, inflexibility.
22. **showmanship** (noun) – the skill or ability of a showman to attract attention.
23. **befall** (verb) – (of something bad) happen, occur, take place/appear, fall upon, hit, strike.
24. **urgency** (noun) – importance, necessity, hurry.
25. **raze** (verb) – destroy, demolish, pull down.
26. **raze to the ground** (phrase) – (of a building) to demolish something completely.
27. **scholar** (noun) – academic, intellectual, expert/pundit, learned person.
28. **curator** (noun) – guardian, custodian, keeper, caretaker.
29. the **spotlight** (noun) – the public attention, the focus of public/media; the public eye.
30. **put the spotlight on** (phrase) – to focus on someone or something; bring attention to someone or something.
31. **set to** (adjective) – ready, prepared, organized.
32. **demolish** (verb) – destroy, bulldoze, knock down, pull down.
33. **make way** (phrase) – clear the way, make a space, make room, stand back.
34. **call for** (phrasal verb) – require, publicly ask/necessitate, demand.
35. **suspension** (noun) – stoppage, termination.
36. **the way/path ahead** (phrase) – something (a plan/action) that leads to success in the future.
37. **conservation** (noun) – preservation, protection, safeguarding.
38. **house** (verb) – contain, hold, store.
39. **treasure** (noun) – valuable object, work of art, precious metals, jewels.
40. **archival** (adjective) – relating to archives (old/historical records, chronicles, annals).
41. **manuscript** (noun) – a handwritten book/document/script.
42. **expertise** (noun) – knowledge, command, mastery, prowess, skilfulness.
43. **certainly** (adverb) – surely, definitely, unquestionably.
44. **opaque** (adjective) – non-transparent, hidden, mysterious, doubtful, ambiguous, cryptic.
45. **cavalier** (adjective) – casual, unconcerned; without concern for something important or serious.
46. **artefact** (noun) – an object that is made by human workmanship, especially one of historical or archaeological interest. Artifact is the American spelling.

47. **lack** (verb) – be without, have need of, require.
48. **inventory** (noun) – list, directory, record, register.
49. **point out** (phrasal verb) – identify, mention, indicate, draw attention to.
50. **flag** (verb) – indicate, identify, point out.
51. **mishandle** (verb) – mismanage, spoil, ruin, wreck.
52. **in a hurry** (phrase) – in a rushed/quick/hurried manner.
53. **intolerance** (noun) – bigotry, narrow-mindedness, dogmatism, illiberality, insularity, sensitivity, oversensitivity.
54. **scrutiny** (noun) – review, examination, inspection.
55. **unprecedented** (adjective) – not done or experienced before.
56. **ripple effect** (noun) – an event (or a process/action) that causes several other events to happen indirectly one after the other. knock-on effect, secondary/indirect effect, consequence/implication, chain of events; domino effect.
57. **sphere** (noun) – an area of activity; a field of activity; domain, realm.
58. **take someone into one's confidence** (phrase) – tell someone a secret.
59. **course** (noun) – plan of action, course of action, procedure, approach.

Artless and heartless: On Central Vista project MAY 17, 2021 00:02 IST

The govt. must respond to concerns about demolitions in Central Vista redevelopment

The Government of India's Central Vista redevelopment project is highly questionable as a national priority at any time, and more so in the midst of a pandemic. The project includes the **construction of a new Parliament building**, and new residences for the Prime Minister and the Vice President. A new Parliament building is indeed required; and there is a strong case for reorganising the existing offices of the central government. However, the architecture and timelines of the redevelopment as it is happening now are less about the need and more about an imperious obsession with grandeur. The irony is that a colossus built amid the ruins of a pandemic could turn out to be a monument to the government's disregard for public good. The misplaced determination of the Centre to complete the project before the next Lok Sabha election in 2024 is characteristic of the showmanship that has befallen governance in India, but there is no justifiable urgency in razing to the ground a row of buildings and then rebuilding. Last week, 76 **scholars, artists, writers, curators and museum professionals put the**

spotlight on a particularly concerning aspect of the project. The National Museum of India, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), and the National Archives Annexe are set to be demolished to make way for new buildings.

These experts have called for an immediate suspension of the project, and wide public consultations on the path ahead. There are valid concerns about the conservation of the collections housed at these centres. Relocation of the treasures at the National Museum, archival records at the National Archives and manuscript holdings at the IGNCA can be an extremely challenging task even during ordinary times. It is a complex operation that requires detailed planning and expertise. Such changes around premier institutions take place only after wide consultations in any part of the world; and certainly not in the opaque and cavalier manner as is being planned here. Artefacts at the National Museum still lack a complete inventory, the experts have pointed out, flagging the risk of loss or mishandling. The Central Vista redevelopment project is clearly being implemented in a hurry. The government's intolerance towards any public scrutiny of the project is such that even photography of the construction is now banned. The country is facing an unprecedented health crisis, the ripple effects of which are being felt in the economic, social and political spheres too. The government will lose nothing if it were to suspend the project, and take the Opposition and the public into confidence on the future course, in calmer times.