

HARYANA'S CAPITAL : A POLITICO—GEOGRAPHICAL VIEWPOINT

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ABSTRACT : Two points must be taken into mind while selecting a site for the new capital, viz. there should be no political interference while deciding it and second, it should always be a new site preferably in core areas to project the image of the State.

INTRODUCTION

Capital is a city having the greatest concentration of political and administrative power of the respective state — a seat of State's legislature, executive and judiciary. Le Corbusier's (a well-known Swiss—French Architect), Chandigarh — the joint Capital of Punjab and Haryana, has been one of important issues of conflict between the two States. After a long time, the **Punjab Accord** was launched between late Sant Harcharn Singh Longowal on behalf of the Akalis and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of India on July 24, 1985. Under the accord, Chandigarh which, incidentally, is also called a mini-India (due to its linguistic assemblages) has been awarded to Punjab. This part of the agreement was to be implemented on January 26, 1986; but could not be brought into practice due to Haryana's demands for the area of Abohar and Fazilka (Punjab) and for the completion of SYL (Sutlej-Yamuna Link) canal in Punjab's territory. But any way, from the time of the Punjab accord, the case for a capital for Haryana — its site and location has been an important issue of interest, not only for the people of the State, but India as a nation.

LOCATION OF NEW CAPITAL

There are some important questions on which every Haryanvi and the people all around the State speculate these days, where should the new capital of the State be located? Should it be created by re-developing an existing town, or a brand new site be chosen for the purpose?

Instead of an old town, a new site is suggested for the capital of Haryana because undoubtedly a new city projects a new image — a new reflection and a new technical achievement. There is also a feeling amongst the people of Haryana that they have been deprived of Chandigarh. Here it is quite evident that if an old city is selected as the capital, it will spark-off rivalries within Haryana, which, no doubt, will have repercussions on Haryana's politics.

On the other hand, by choosing a new site, the people of the State can be psychologically compensated for the loss of Chandigarh. Moreover, it is important to build a new city from this point also that people in the State are coming from rural sectors to the urban centres for better life opportunities which means that for their

colonization either we will have to expand our existing towns or to build the new ones. Here it is made clear that they can be provided better urban amenities by settling them in a newly created city, than to adjust them in the slums of already congested and unplanned urban centres. A new city will definitely inspire our technocrats, architects, engineers and all others working in it to create something new with a distinctive character, which would be a fitting symbol of Haryana as a State.

The siting and location of the new capital is an important matter. In many instances sites of capital are chosen on political grounds. In Haryana too there is a neck-to-neck race amongst the politicians of different areas about capital's choice and every politician wants to have the capital in his area. But if the Government of Haryana desires to have a good capital — more natural and appropriate, the political people in the Government must shun their personal benefits and losses. Rather, the capital should be located in the area which have favourable topography, water supply, gradient, climate, accessibility and economic viability.

That the capital should be located at the geographical centre of the State is a natural desire and this to many minds is around Jind; but according to the geographical realities it should always lie in the centre of State's core-areas (productive-areas) instead of geographical centres. New Delhi — the capital of Indian Republic is a living example of the assertion. Haryana has both industrial as well as agricultural core-areas. To avoid industrial pollution it is always better to locate the capital in agricultural-core-area. In the case of Haryana — the agricultural core-area lies in Karnal and Kurukshetra districts. In this area there are two sites which can be considered for the State's capital. One is near

Madhuban (Karnal) and the other in the rectangle of Indri-Ladwa-Pipli-Nilokheri (Karnal and Kurukshetra districts). The site around Madhuban cannot be considered because of a single drawback, i.e. after the completion of the oil refinery proposed by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., it will not remain suitable for the new capital due to pollution. So, the second site lying in Karnal and Kurukshetra districts is the best available site for the purpose. As compared to all other sites in competition, the area under discussion has the maximum positive points. It has got the most favourable climate of the state which plays an important role in day-to-day life. Chandigarh is called the city beautiful not only due to its buildings, but exclusively because of its surroundings, full of natural greenery. Any area without suitable climate cannot being beautiful just by having sky-scappers.

The region has vast resources of sweet and suitable ground-water which is clear from its feeding of augmentation canal. Looking into the present political turmoil it is necessary that the new city should have its own water resources. The depth of ground-water is just 7 to 8 meters in the region. The Western Jamuna Canal (W.J.C.) and the Sirsa branch running through the area are also the good boosters for its water needs.

As regards the topography, the region is a level-plain having suitable texture for the construction of multi-storey buildings as compared to the sandy soils of the western parts of the State.

Being on Grand Trunk Road (Sher Shah Suri Marg — National Highway No. 1), it can serve as a mirror image of the state, as it will be lying on the main arteries of many states. The rail, road and air-routes to the adjoining states of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir pass through this region. By building a marvellous capital

in the vicinity of a historical town like Kurukshetra one can develop tourism which in turn can work as a state building activity. Brahm Sarovar in Kurukshetra and Karnal Lake near Karnal will be points of attraction for the tourists.

REMARKS

The reason why we suggested this site is that we are thinking in terms of a region as the best site for a capital, and not in terms of an isolated point. Now, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra and Karnal form a regional triangle. This is a good complex for the new capital, where administrative seat can be developed exclusively. First of all, Yamunanagar is a well-knit industrial centre. Then, Kurukshetra of Lord Krishna's fame is a good University and we have built-in-educational complex there. The University is just 6 km. away from the site of the capital – having the faculties of

Arts, Science, Commerce and Law. There is a college of engineering at University Campus – Regional Engineering College. A Government Ayurvedic College is already working and a new Medical College has been proposed. On the third side of the triangle is the town of Karnal, which is a very good urban centre providing the facilities like education and milk supply (having National Dairy Research Institute). At the same time, this triangle has the best transport system which means easy accessibility. The said region is going to provide an already developed infrastructure to the new capital, hereby saving the State's exchequer a large sum of money.

Considering the above favourable points it may be seen that the suggested site can serve the State in a proper and balance way.

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