

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS (21.07.2022)

1. Shortage of administrative capacity leading to underspending by states (*business-standard.com*) Updated: July 21, 2022

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/shortage-of-administrative-capacity-leading-to-underspending-by-states-122072100012_1.html

2. Nearly 6 Lakh 'Duplicate' Aadhaar Cancelled; UIDAI Spent Rs981.69 Crore in Enrolments & Updates: Govt (*moneylife.in*) Updated: July 20, 2022

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which has been tasked to provide 'unique' ID numbers to citizens, has cancelled nearly six lakh Aadhaar for being duplicate as of 31 May 2022, the Lok Sabha was informed.

Responding to a question, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, minister of state for electronics and information technology (MeitY), says, "Aadhaar cancelled for being duplicate and for other reasons as of 31 May 2022 are 5,98,999. UIDAI has taken adequate steps to address duplicate or multiple Aadhaar generation issues, and regular efforts are made to upgrade systems and procedures. The demographic matching mechanism has been further strengthened, biometric matching of all new enrolments is ensured, and 'face' has been included as a new modality, in addition to fingerprint and iris, for de-duplication."

Jagdambika Pal, a member of Parliament (MP) asked a question about action taken on the recommendations of CAG's audit report No24 of 2021 - (Meity) on "performance audit on the functioning of UIDAI", expenditure incurred by the Authority and number of Aadhaar cancelled.

The minister informed the lower house that the recommendations of the CAG's audit report No24 of 2021 - (Meity) on "performance audit on the functioning of UIDAI" have been accepted for implementation. "Action taken report has been uploaded on audit para monitoring system (APMS) <https://apms.nic.in/>."

However, we could not locate any action taken report on the APMS portal. It may be accessible only for registered users of the portal and may not have been put in the public domain by the ministry.

Responding to another question, Mr Chandrasekhar told the Lok Sabha that, over the past three years, UIDAI incurred an expenditure of Rs981.69 crore for Aadhaar enrolments and updates.

Mr Pal, the MP, also asked whether UIDAI stands by the Supreme Court's 2018 judgement on Aadhaar and provides an unconditional exemption to children. In response, the minister stated, "UIDAI has abided with the directions of the Supreme Court in its judgment dated 26 September 2018, in the matter of justice KS Puttaswamy (retired). The necessary amendments have been made in the Aadhaar Act, 2016, by way of the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Act, 2019."

Sharing steps to provide adequate facilities for Aadhaar enrolment, updating and retrieval, Mr Chandrasekhar says, "UIDAI through its Registrars ensures provision for Aadhaar enrollment or update to residents. As on 30 June 2022, more than 57,000 Aadhaar centres are active across the country. In addition to the above, around 34,500 tablet or mobile-based machines are also

functional in the field which is used for updating mobile number or email ID in Aadhaar and to provide facility for Aadhaar enrolment for children below five years."

"UIDAI also permits residents to update their demographic details such as name (minor change), date of birth, gender and address through the online myAadhaar portal. With regard to provisions available for retrieval of Aadhaar, residents can retrieve their lost EID or UID number by filling in the required details on UIDAI myAadhaar portal under the link: <https://myaadhaar.uidai.gov.in/retrieve-eid-uid>. Residents can also retrieve their lost EID/UID by visiting the nearest Aadhaar enrolment centre or by calling UIDAI call centre 1947. For retrieving the EID or UID, residents are to provide their demographic details properly," the minister says. <https://www.moneylife.in/article/nearly-6-lakh-duplicate-aadhaar-cancelled-uidai-spent-rs98169-crore-in-enrolments-and-updates-govt/67817.html>

3. Urban woes and construction catastrophe (*business-standard.com*) Updated: July 21, 2022

https://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/urban-woes-and-construction-catastrophe-122072001481_1.html

4. That sinking feeling: Why urban India gets flooded every monsoon (*business-standard.com*) Updated: July 21, 2022

Over the years, rains have made Delhi's Minto Road underpass, Mumbai's Gandhi market near the King Circle and Chennai's northern suburbs quite famous.

Mumbai won't forget the 2005 flood anytime soon, as over 1,000 people had lost their lives. Nearly two decades later, the 'Maximum City' still comes to a grinding halt when it rains. Earlier this month parts of the city were inundated in waist-deep water.

And it is not just India's financial capital. Majority of urban areas lack effective storm water drainage. Add to that unplanned development, encroachment of natural drainage corridors, and climate change and it becomes a perfect storm.

And the economic impact of flooding is also damaging. Mumbai lost Rs 14,000 crore to floods due to heavy rainfall between 2005 and 2015. The Brihanmumbai StormWater Disposal System, or BRIMSTOWAD, project to overhaul the city's old storm water drainage system was proposed after the 1985 floods. However, work finally started after the 2005 deluge.

The project, which included building eight major pumping stations, was yet to be completed as of January this year. Till that point, only six pumping stations had been built. The Brimstowad project was to cost Rs 616.30 crore when it was proposed in 1991. It was meant to be completed in 12 years. As of April 2021, Rs 2,439.35 crore had been spent on it and an additional investment of Rs 2,700 crore was still needed.

Let us move on to the national capital. Delhi's first Drainage Master Plan was prepared in 1976. Even in 2022, the capital is still operating on the same plan. The Delhi government has been trying to put in place a new plan for years now. In December last year, the state government decided to engage consultants to solve the problem after finding that the plan prepared by IIT Delhi had no actionable points.

The Public Works Department was supposed to start the tendering process for consultants by January and have them engaged by March. However, as of July this year, there was no indication that a consultancy had been appointed. Even if the PWD had stuck to its original time frame, a national daily had said that the drainage master plan would be prepared only by March 2023. Delhi's drainage system would be redeveloped by 2025.

In October last year, a Comptroller and Auditor General report had highlighted that the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, or BBMP, had not removed 714 encroachments out of the 2,626 identified near water bodies. Of the 23 significant encroachments, 16 were not even on BBMP's list.

Also, the IT capital's storm water drains were not directly connected to its water bodies. In some places, the runoff water was flowing into constructed deviation canals. CAG found that this increased the chances of flash floods.

Storm drains in many Indian cities were designed for a rainfall intensity of 12–20 mm per hour, which is insufficient for the current rainfall standards. They will have to be replaced or retrofitted. This will require funding.

Managing water logging falls to the states and UTs and is one of the functions of their urban local bodies. An RBI analysis of 2017-18 data of 221 municipal bodies across India found that nearly half the bodies were under high fiscal stress, given their limited ability to raise own revenues.

Another recent central bank study found that 70 per cent of surveyed urban local bodies had seen a worsening in revenues and an increase in expenditure during the pandemic. Thus, there is a question mark on how quickly India can build up its urban stormwater infrastructure.

But some progress has been made. Till April this year, under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, states and Union Territories had taken up 799 projects worth 2,952 crore rupees for the elimination of 3,770 water-logging points. And out of that, April, 633 projects worth 1,180 crore rupees had been completed, which had resulted in the elimination of 2,300 water-logging points.

A June 2020 Ministry of Earth Sciences climate change assessment report had noted how the increased frequencies of heavy rainfall had enhanced flood risk all over India, particularly in urban areas. This requires an urgent fix. Also the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs should start maintaining data on economic loss and deaths due to waterlogging to help us assess the overall damage. https://www.business-standard.com/podcast/current-affairs/that-sinking-feeling-why-urban-india-gets-flooded-every-monsoon-122072100111_1.html

5. Centre frets as states borrow against future revenues, government assets (timesofindia.indiatimes.com) JULY 21, 2022

NEW DELHI: From collectorates and taluk offices to municipal parks, some states have resorted to raising loans from banks by offering sovereign assets as a security or escrowing their future revenues, prompting the Centre to raise the red flag, especially in the wake of the Lanka crisis.

Between 2019-20 and 2020-21 at least five states - Andhra Pradesh, UP, Punjab, MP and Himachal - escrowed future revenues, finance secretary TV Somanathan said in a presentation to chief secretaries last month. More states may have resorted to such means, but data was not immediately available, sources told TOI.

Escrow refers to giving charge of resources to a third party or banks till a loan or a liability is cleared. On June 20, TOI was the first to report that the Centre has flagged its concerns over high debt levels in some states.

The worry stems from states offering securities to raise loans when they do not have revenue streams, something that the Comptroller & Auditor General has also frowned upon in the past.

With spending on the rise, experts say, states are increasingly resorting to off-Budget borrowings and pledging their revenue streams or sovereign assets.

While the Centre itself had large off-Budget borrowings, for food subsidy, funding Air India's losses and oil bonds, it has sought to clear its books in recent years. At the same time it is pushing states to be more fiscally responsible, but is facing political resistance, as was the case on Tuesday when several opposition parties objected to economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth's presentation at a meeting of political parties on the Lankan crisis.

Under current rules, the Centre allows states to borrow up to 3.5% of the gross state domestic product (GSDP), with another 0.5% permitted which are linked to power sector reforms. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/centre-frets-as-states-borrow-against-future-revenues-government-assets/articleshow/93015634.cms>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

6. CAG pulls up Kerala again for off-budget borrowings ([thehindu.com](https://www.thehindu.com)) UPDATED: JULY 21, 2022

Kerala's overall debt at ₹3,24,855.06 crore as per audit report

Off-budget borrowings have landed the Kerala government in trouble with the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) yet again with the latter painting a bleak picture of the State finances and noting that such borrowings through the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and Kerala Social Security Pension Ltd (KSSPL) have jacked up the State's overall debt by over ₹16,000 crore.

In its State finances audit report for the year ended March 2021 tabled in the Assembly on Wednesday, the CAG notes that the overall fiscal liabilities of the State rose by 62.51% from ₹1,89,769 crore in 2016-17 to ₹3,08,386.01 crore. Adding to this the KIIFB and the KSSPL's outstanding liability of ₹16,469.05 crore, the overall debt went up to ₹3,24,855.06 crore in 2020-21.

Effective total public debt stands at ₹3,19,089.06 crore as the Department of Expenditure, Government of India, had decided that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation of ₹5,766 crore given to the State as back-to-back loan will not be treated as debt of the State.

The KSSPL's outstanding liabilities of ₹10,848.61 crore constituted 65.87% of the total outstanding off-budget borrowing. During 2020-21 alone, Kerala resorted to off-budget borrowings to the tune of ₹9,273.24 crore.

Debt trap

Repeating the warning it had sounded in the audit report for the year ended March 2020, the CAG observes that, 'These off-budget borrowing will have an impact of increasing the liabilities of the State government, leading to a debt trap over a period of time.' Creating such liabilities without disclosing them in the Budget raises questions both of "transparency and of inter-generational equity", the CAG notes.

The CAG has refused to accept the State Finance department's argument that the KIIFB borrowings are not off-budget borrowings but at the most contingent liabilities. "The fact remains that the KIIFB has no revenue of its own and the State government has to defray the debt obligations of the KIIFB by transferring its own revenue resources through the Budget every year. As such, these borrowings cannot be treated as contingent liability, but a direct liability on the State's own resources," the CAG says.

Pointing out that the Budget is the most important instrument of legislative control, the CAG wants all government borrowings and expenditures to be legitimately covered within the Budget henceforth.

While expenditure on social security pension schemes and critical infrastructure projects are desirable, financing these expenditures through off-budget borrowings raises public debt and goes against the letter and spirit of the Kerala Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003, it says.

Other observations

The CAG observes that the government should focus on the growth of its own tax revenue and take measures to improve it. The State also needs to closely monitor its debt sustainability and make earnest efforts to maintain a healthy debt-GSDP ratio.

Revenue receipts of the State increased from ₹75,611.72 crore in 2016-17 to ₹97,616.83 crore in 2020-21, recording a growth of 29.10%. However, the State's own tax revenue, the main source of revenue in revenue receipts, increased by only 13% and its share in revenue receipts decreased from 55.78% in 2016-17 to 48.82% in 2020-21. This points to the poor collection of tax revenue during 2020-21, when the COVID-19 pandemic gripped Kerala, the CAG says.

Revenue expenditure rose from ₹91,096.31 crore in 2016-17 to ₹1,23,446.33 crore in 2020-21, recording a growth of 35.51%. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/cag-pulls-up-state-again-for-off-budget-borrowings/article65661824.ece?homepage=true>

7. KIIFB liabilities are not coincidental, must be borne by govt: CAG ([english.mathrubhumi.com](https://www.mathrubhumi.com)) 20 July 2022

Thiruvananthapuram: Comptroller and Auditor General of India rejected the government's claim that the liabilities of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) are off-budget borrowings. As per the 2021-2022 financial report of CAG, KIIFB loans will fall under the direct liability of the government.

The report says that the liabilities of KIIFB are not coincidental and the government must bear it. KIIFB does not have an income of its own. KIIFB has been utilising the revenue of the government. So, KIIFB's liability should be borne by the government, observed CAG in its report.

The report tabled before the Kerala legislative assembly session on Wednesday reads that loans may have to be taken to pay the interests of the borrowings that have already been availed.

The loans taken from outside are hugely affecting the government. To date, KIIFB has borrowed Rs 8604.18 crore. The pension company has taken Rs 669.09 crore as loan for various purposes. The report says that if this situation continues, it will affect future generations. <https://english.mathrubhumi.com/news/kerala/kiifb-liabilities-are-not-coincidental-must-be-borne-by-govt-cag-1.7711623>

8. Kerala's off-budget borrowings flagged ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) 21 July 2022

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has once again flagged the state government's off-budget borrowings. The State Finance Audit Report for the year ending March 2021 has pegged the overall debt of the state, including OBBs, at Rs 3,24,855.06 crore. As on March 31, Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and Kerala Social Security Pension Limited (KSSPL) had an outstanding liability of Rs 16,469.05 crore.

Of this, KSSPL's outstanding liabilities amounted to Rs 10,848.61 crore. This was in addition to the liabilities of Rs 3,08,386.01 crore as mentioned in the Finance Accounts 2020-21. The effective total debt was calculated without factoring in the Rs 5,766 crore obtained as back-to-back loan in lieu of GST compensation.

KIIFB has no revenue of its own and the state government has to defray the debt obligations of KIIFB by transferring its own revenue resources through budget every year. As such, these borrowings cannot be treated as contingent liability as claimed by the government, but a direct liability on the state's own resources, the report said. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2022/jul/21/keralas-off-budget-borrowings-flagged-2478837.html>

9. Off-budget borrowings through KIIFB may lead to a debt trap: CAG ([onmanorama.com](https://www.onmanorama.com)) July 21, 2022

Thiruvananthapuram: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report tabled before the State Assembly warns the Government that the off-budget borrowings made through Kerala Infrastructure and Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and Kerala Social Security Pension Limited (KSSPL) may lead to a debt trap.

The State's debt which was at Rs 1.90 lakh crore has risen to Rs 3.24 lakh crore over five years, the CAG points out in its annual audit report.

The off-budget borrowings made through entities like KIIFB are outside the purview of the Assembly. Besides the State's total debt of Rs 3.08 lakh crore, the borrowing of Rs 16,496 crore outside the budget, has made the total debts reach Rs 3.24 lakh crore.

The total debt should be only 29.67 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). This has now reached 39.87 per cent. If the off-budget borrowings of the State are also added up, it comes to 42.80 per cent. While 42 per cent of the debt is to be repaid within 5 years, the rest must be repaid within 7 years. The borrowings are to be spent on developmental projects of the State. However, over the past 5 years, it is being used for administrative expenses. The CAG pointed out that it is not a good wont to borrow again to repay the previous borrowing spent for administrative expenses.

Excerpts from the report

- Through the revenue had dipped, the revenue expenditure was managed with the Centre's aid.
- The State understated Rs 244 crore in Revenue deficit and Rs 9471 crore in Fiscal deficit.
- Rs 7600 crore drop in tax revenue from GST, Excise, vehicle tax, stamp duty, and land tax.
- Eight companies in which the State has invested Rs 315 crore are in loss. The State had invested Rs 2164 crore in these companies until March 31, 2021. The investment stuck in 16 companies currently inoperational, stands at Rs 33 crore.
- A large share of the borrowing (Rs 100 crore) for social welfare activities was given to Pariyaram Medical College to repay its debt from Ernakulam District Cooperative Bank. About 72 per cent (Rs 1739 crore) of the borrowings made for financial services was given to the KSRTC.
- The State has invested Rs 10064 crore in various institutions at an interest rate of just 1.34 per cent. Meanwhile, the borrowings made are at an interest rate of 7.31 per cent. <https://www.onmanorama.com/news/kerala/2022/07/21/off-budget-borrowing-kiifb-death-trap.html>

10. KIIFB borrowings not Kerala's direct liabilities: KN Balagopal ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) 21 July 2022

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Finance Minister KN Balagopal has said that borrowings of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) are on the basis of government guarantees and are therefore not direct liabilities of the state. They were only contingent liabilities particularly since KIIFB funds remunerative projects and generates its own income.

The explanation was in a statement tabled in the assembly. The statement said that the audit report reiterates last year's observations which were rejected by the PAC and by the state assembly with regard to the borrowings of the KIIFB which is being categorised as "off-budget" borrowing by the state. CAG has also categorised the borrowings of Kerala Social Security Pension limited (KSSPL) as an "off-budget" debt liability of the government. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2022/jul/21/kiifb-borrowings-not-keralas-direct-liabilities-kn-balagopal-2478838.html>

11. Kerala FM Balagopal defends KIIFB, KSSPL borrowings ([thehindu.com](https://www.thehindu.com)) UPDATED: JULY 21, 2022

CAG flays 'off-budget borrowings' of both agencies

The Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) latest audit report on State finances reiterates the observations on Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) borrowings that were earlier rejected by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Assembly, Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal has said.

The CAG's State finances audit report for the year ended March 2021 and Mr. Balagopal's observations on it were tabled in the Assembly on Wednesday. The Minister sought to defend the borrowings made through the KIIFB and Kerala Social Security Pension Ltd. (KSSPL), both of which have drawn criticism from the CAG for being "off-budget borrowings" that could plunge the State into a debt trap later on.

Mr. Balagopal said borrowings by the KIIFB were on the basis of government guarantees and were, therefore, not direct liabilities of the State. They were only "contingent liabilities" since the KIIFB also funded remunerative projects and generated its own income as well, according to him.

The borrowings of the KSSPL were merely for the purpose of managing the liquidity of the State and for ensuring that welfare pensions to over 60 lakh beneficiaries were not delayed due to cash management problems, Mr. Balagopal said.

"Most of these amounts are repaid during the course of the year. The (CAG) report also loses sight of the fact that it is because of the State's wide social security net through the KSSPL that the State has been able to keep poverty down to below 1%, which is the lowest in the country (if we go by the reports of the NITI Aayog of the Government of India)," Mr. Balagopal said.

In its audit report for the year ended March 2020 also, the CAG had sharply criticised the State for off-budget borrowings by the KIIFB and the KSSPL. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/balagopal-defends-kiifb-ksspl-borrowings/article65662011.ece?homepage=true>

12. CAG raps Kerala varsity for flaws in infra development (newindianexpress.com) 21 July 2022

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), that was tabled in the assembly on Monday, has pointed out numerous flaws in the functioning of the University of Kerala, including non-implementation of basic infrastructure projects and not carrying out periodic revision of syllabus.

The CAG report pointed out that the varsity did not have an approved master plan against which progress was monitored regularly. This led to deficiencies in timely implementation of infrastructure projects, software and revision of syllabus. The report said the university had not carried out revision of syllabus of 28 of the 142 courses for the last three years. "The delay in revision of syllabus of five courses ranged between eight and 13 years and in respect of 23 other courses between one and five years," it said.

Contrary to the UGC regulation of limiting the appointment of teachers on contract basis to a maximum of 10 per cent, more than 23 per cent of the total faculty strength in the university departments were appointed on contract basis, the CAG found. It pointed out that none of the 17 university Institutes of Technology, due for NAAC accreditation, had started the process. This led to lack of assurance in the quality of education imparted in these centres. Of the 174 teachers in 34 UITs, 108 teachers were appointed without NET/SET/PhD qualification in violation of norms prescribed by UGC, it said.

Failure of the university to take up the infrastructure development works resulted in receipt of only Rs 8.70 crore against the UGC allocation of Rs 15.76 crore as general development assistance during the XIIth Five Year Plan period (2012-17), the CAG report said. Five major infrastructure works involving Rs 9.70 crore initiated during 2011-17 remained incomplete. Against an expenditure of Rs 14.14 crore for payment of pay revision arrears, only Rs 4.57 crore was received from the state government.

The balance amount of Rs 9.57 crore was utilised from the non-plan fund of the university. The varsity failed to collect rent arrears of Rs 19.09 crore (excluding GST) from December 2014 towards land leased in 2010 for construction of 35th National Games Stadium. The university has also not collected Rs 11.63 crore as annual administration fee from self-financing and unaided colleges. The CAG report pointed out that Kerala University Colleges of Teacher Education (KUCTE) and the University College of Engineering operated by the university in self-financing mode were running on losses from 2016-20.

MAJOR DRAWBACKS

- Non-implementation of development projects, lack of periodic syllabus revision
 - Numerous flaws detected in functioning of UITs & qualification of faculty
 - Varsity failed in collecting fees, dues to the tune of crores of rupees
 - Over 23% of the varsity's total faculty appointed on contract basis
 - Poor security audit of university-hosted websites and online payment portal
- <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2022/jul/21/cag-raps-kerala-varsity-for-flaws-in-infra-development-2478836.html>

13. CAG report picks holes in Kerala University's overall performance ([thehindu.com](https://www.thehindu.com)) 21 Jul 2022

The varsity failed to optimally utilise funds provided by the UGC

A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the functioning of the University of Kerala pointed out that the varsity, which came into existence in 1937, is yet to have an approved master plan detailing areas envisaged for development including academic curriculum and physical infrastructure.

The report tabled in the State Assembly has audited the performance of the university from 2016-21. "The College Development Council, which was to ensure proper planning and integrated development of affiliated colleges, was ineffective due to improper constitution. Curriculum revisions were pending as compared to the schedule prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Inspections of affiliated colleges as mandated could not be ensured by the university," it said.

The report stated that the university failed to optimally utilise the General Development Assistance fund provided by the University Grants Commission resulting in loss of assistance.

"The delay on the part of university to amend the statutes resulted in non-receipt of ₹9.57 crore from the Government of India being pay revision arrears. Lease rent receivable on account of land provided for construction of stadium was in arrears. The self-financing Engineering College and KUCTEs [Kerala University College of Teacher Education] of the university,

which were meant to sustain on self-generated revenue, were consistently running on a loss,” according to the report.

The CAG found that the Demand, Collection and Balance Register was not maintained by the university. “Advances were pending recovery from staff of the University as well as from the Principals of colleges. There was a deficit of ₹7.23 crore in the University Provident Fund account, in spite of remarks of Public Accounts Committee directing the university authorities to take necessary steps to remit the arrears towards Provident Fund account at the earliest,” it said.

The performance report said that several departments continued to function without sanctioned posts of teachers. Number of faculties appointed on contract basis was higher than the prescribed limit. Despite the presence of a Scrutiny Board to ensure that the question papers were in conformity with the prescribed syllabus, the issue of ‘out of syllabus’ questions continues to plague the examination system, it said. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/cag-report-picks-holes-in-kerala-universitys-overall-performance/article65661712.ece>

14. Kerala University lacks master plan to monitor progress, says CAG (timesofindia.indiatimes.com) Updated: Jul 21, 2022

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The 2022 report of the comptroller & auditor general (CAG) on the functioning of University of Kerala which was tabled in the assembly on Wednesday said “the university did not have an approved master plan against which progress was monitored regularly. This has resulted in deficiencies in timely implementation of infrastructure projects, software and revision of syllabus”.

Interestingly, the varsity was accredited with A++ status by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) last month.

Contrary to the University Grants Commission (UGC) regulation of limiting appointment of teachers on contract basis to a maximum of 10%, over 23% of the total faculty strength in the university departments were appointed on contract, said the report. All 335 teaching faculty in 34 University Institutes of Technology (UITs), 10 Kerala University College for Teacher Education (KUCTEs), seven University Institutes of Management (UIMs) and the University College of Engineering were appointed on contract basis. Of the 174 teachers in 34 UITs, 108 teachers were appointed without NET, SET or PhD qualifications in violation of UGC-prescribed norms.

The syllabus of 28 courses, out of 142, were not revised during the last three years, says report of 2022. The delay in revision of syllabi of five courses had a range of 8-13 years, and it was 1-5 years for 23 other courses.

None of the 17 UITs due for NAAC accreditation had started the accreditation process. The School of Distance Education conducted 10 programmes during 2013-15 without UGC recognition, the report said. Another major CAG finding is that the college development council, a body envisaged by UGC to ensure integrated development of affiliated colleges, had only one member and remained ineffective due to the improper constitution and non-conduct of meetings. Interactions with colleges as prescribed by UGC guidelines weren’t conducted.

The university failed to conduct inspections of affiliated colleges from time to time. Also, no reports on affiliated colleges were submitted to the state government as required under Kerala University Act, 1974.

The CAG report found that the university's failure to take up infrastructure development works resulted in receipt of only Rs 8.70 crore against the UGC allocation of Rs 15.76 crore as general development assistance during the 12th Five-Year Plan period (2012-17).

A rent arrear of Rs 19.09 crore from December 2014 was yet to be received towards land leased in 2010 for construction of stadium for the 35th National Games. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/ku-lacks-master-plan-to-monitor-progress-says-cag/articleshow/93017166.cms>

15. Kerala University ran 9 departments without a single professor: CAG report (news.careers360.com) 21 Jul 2022

University of Kerala (KU), Thiruvananthapuram's department of nanoscience and nanotechnology ran without any sanctioned faculty posts and relying entirely on contract lecturers since its inception in 2016 till 2021, an audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India found.

In fact, "nine academic departments were functioning without even one sanctioned professor post, seven without any sanctioned post of associate professor and assistant professors for two departments," the audit report stated.

A performance audit of Kerala University covering the 2016-21 years by the CAG found numerous violations of UGC norms on structures of councils, teacher recruitment and pay, funding, and syllabus revision. Kerala University also failed to implement infrastructure projects on time.

CAG's report on the "Functioning of the University of Kerala" has been prepared for submission to Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, also the Chancellor of the university. The audit involved scrutiny of the university's records and physical verification.

Kerala University infrastructure

Five major infrastructure works worth Rs 9.70 crore initiated during 2011-17 remained incomplete. According to the CAG report, the university's failure to utilise infrastructure funds resulted in it receiving only Rs 8.70 crore of the UGC allocation of Rs 15.76 crore as general development assistance (GDA) between 2012 and 2017.

The development of infrastructure was needed as the CAG found that large numbers of colleges lacked rooms, toilets, seminar halls, library books and accessibility features such as ramps and lifts. The two University Health Centres were either non-functional or poorly-resourced.

Kerala University: Inspection, syllabus

KU has over 180 affiliated colleges enrolling over 1.3 lakh students. It has 43 departments of teaching and research, 16 faculties and a School of Distance Education (SDE). In the latest National Institutional Ranking Framework's (NIRF 2022), KU was placed at 40, dropping from 27 in 2021, in the "university" category.

The Kerala University College Development Council (CDC) – a UGC-mandated body intended to oversee the integrated development of affiliated colleges – had just one member when it should have included the vice-chancellor, director of the council, principals of some affiliated colleges, senior teachers of university departments and a representative of the state government. The CAG audit found that KU’s CDC didn’t have a full-time director.

“The failure of the university to constitute a CDC with multiple members and non-conduct of meetings by the director resulted in lack of coordination and interaction between the university and affiliated colleges,” the report said.

Out of 34 University Institutes of Technology (UITs) with an approximate annual intake of 3,970 students, 17 UITs were due for accreditation, but none had started the process.

By November 2020, out of the 90 boards of study (BoS), tasked with framing syllabus for undergraduate and postgraduate (UG, PG) courses, 52 lacked adequate representation of teachers or experts. Plus, the syllabus of 28 out of 142 courses had not been revised in three years which is the UGC’s recommendation.

The university also failed to inspect affiliated colleges periodically, as required under Kerala University Act, 1974. “It was observed that the commission for inspection of affiliated colleges is yet to be constituted and the inspection had not yet commenced,” the report said.

Mismanagement of funds

Between 2015-21, KU received Rs 2,624.56 crore from UGC, Kerala Government and other sources but Rs 468.6 crore went unutilised. The underutilisation meant its receipts also reduced. “It is pertinent to note that the university is seeking more funds from the government for infrastructure development, whereas at the same time it is unable to utilise the fund made available by UGC,” the report stated.

Plus, KU invested in State Bank of India fixed deposits for which “the university was unable to provide any documents showing the approval of the government for investing funds in SBI and its subsidiaries”, the report said. The university’s 10 Kerala University Colleges of Teacher Education (KUCTE) and one self-financing University College of Engineering in self-financing together lost over Rs 6.3 crore over 2016-20.

KU: contract teachers, delays

In October 2019, KU was denied the status of Institution of Eminence by UGC due to shortage of faculty. More than 23 percent of teaching staff were contractual, violating the UGC’s requirement that contract appointments be kept under 10 percent of the total. The percentage of such temporary staff also rose over 2016-21.

All 335 teaching faculty in 34 UITs, 10 KUCTEs, seven University Institutes of Management (UIM) and the University College of Engineering were appointed on contract basis. Out of 174 teachers in 34 UITs, 108 teachers were appointed without National Eligibility Test (NET) or a state-level equivalent or PhD, in violation of UGC norms. The contract teachers were also being underpaid, the CAG found.

The university has also seen many delays in the academic calendar – in conduct of the end-semester exams in 2016 and 2017 and in declaration of results of the UG programmes in affiliated colleges. In one case, exams were delayed by over 200 days (over six months) and in

two cases, between 100 and 200 days, or three and six months. Results were delayed by over 300 days – over nine months – twice and between three and six months, four times.

Revaluation of answer scripts took over 120 days (four months) – twice the prescribed 60 days – in over 21,800 cases, suggesting this is a routine affair. <https://news.careers360.com/kerala-university-cag-report-audit-staff-shortage-ugc-norms-funds-infrastructure-syllabus-revision>

16. Kerala Masala Bonds case: Why ED needs to do solid homework before quizzing Thomas Isaac (*thefederal.com*) 21 Jul 2022

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has quite a bit of legal research and homework to do before interrogating Kerala’s former finance minister Dr Thomas Issac, whom the agency has summoned in the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) ‘Masala bond’ case.

The ED has alleged that the KIIFB has violated the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) by issuing Masala bonds (rupee-denominated bonds). Dr Issac was sent summons for questioning in the case on July 18, and has been asked to appear with ‘account books.’

“I have not understood which account books they are referring to. However I replied that I was not free on the day as I had to deliver a few lectures at EMS Academy,” Dr Issac told The Federal.

Lessons ED should learn from gold smuggling case

However, experts say, it would be good for ED officials to have a clear understanding of the KIIFB before its officials sit down with Issac. The agency’s poor research and understanding of the KIIFB reflected in its investigation into the gold smuggling case.

The ED on August 9, 2020 had interrogated chartered accountant P Venugopal, who had helped accused Swapna Suresh open and maintain a locker at the SBI City branch in Thiruvananthapuram, at its Kochi office. The National Investigation Agency had seized ₹64 lakh and 983 grams of gold from the locker. Venugopal was summoned to furnish the details of the operation of the locker and the source of money and gold deposited in it.

But as per the transcript of the interrogation produced in the PMLA court, of which The Federal has a copy, the ED had asked Venugopal questions which were not only unrelated but also ill-researched. Here’s a sample:

- ‘Do you have any high profile clients such as bureaucrats, politicians and businessmen?
- PR Chandran IPS, K M Abraham, the present chairman of KIIFB and Sivasankar IAS are some of my clients.
- Do any of your clients have investment in KIIFB?
- No
- Have you ever visited KIIFB office?
- Yes.

The excerpts of the interrogation show that the ED has to primarily learn that KIIFB is neither a ‘Swiss bank’ which helps a person hoard black money nor a private company in which one can make an investment.

What is KIIFB?

KIIFB is a statutory body established in 1999 under the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Act as the principal funding arm of the state government.

By the drastic amendments introduced by the previous LDF government in 2016, KIIFB was enabled to mobilise funds for infrastructure development projects using financial instruments approved by Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Reserve Bank of India (RBI). According to the KIIFB website, the board has so far approved funding for projects worth ₹60,102 crore, covering all vital sectors like healthcare, education, transportation, information technology, sanitation and energy among others.

Has it violated laws? Experts say no

Now the question is whether KIIFB has violated FEMA by issuing Masala bonds. The ED's case is based on the findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) which says that the KIIFB mobilised funds from the international market by issuing Masala bonds without the consent of the Centre.

The additional report published by the CAG last year (yet to be approved by the Legislative Assembly) said that external borrowing done by KIIFB was unconstitutional because Entry 37 of List 1 of the Seventh Schedule under Article 246 of the Constitution only empowers the Union government to raise foreign loans.

Experts say the CAG's contention is a misreading of the Constitution. Article 246 refers to the subject matter of laws to be made by the Parliament as well as state government. The Seventh Schedule defines the allocation of powers between states and Centre as 'Union List,' 'State List' and 'Concurrent List'. The power to make legislation rests only with the Union government for the areas referred to in List 1.

"Foreign loans is the 37th entry in the Union List. It means that only the Union government has the power to make laws regarding foreign borrowings and not that it only it has the absolute power to take foreign loans," explains M Gopakumar, former secretary to Dr Thomas Issac, who has been currently working as a fellow at CSES- Centre for Socio-economic and Environmental Studies at Kochi.

FEMA is the rule made by the Parliament by invoking the power entrusted by entry 37 of List 1 under article 246. "The CAG has misinterpreted this provision to arrive at the conclusion that only the Centre is authorised to avail foreign loan and the ED is investigating a non-existing issue," says Gopakumar.

KIIFB's Masala bonds had RBI stamp

Before making headway into the case, ED also has to understand that KIIFB had the approval of the RBI to issue Masala Bonds. Section 6 of the FEMA empowers RBI to prohibit, restrict or regulate foreign borrowings. Under Section 6(3) (d) of FEMA, RBI is entrusted with the powers to regulate "any borrowing or lending in foreign exchange in whatever form or by whatever name called."

By invoking these powers, the RBI issued a circular on the issuing of rupee-denominated bonds overseas (Masala bonds). According to this circular, any corporate or body corporate is eligible to issue such bonds. Section 4(2) of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Act – the statute under which KIIFB is formed – defines KIIFB as a body corporate which mobilised ₹2,150 crore by issuing Masala bonds.

Interestingly, KIIFB is not the first of its kind that issued rupee-denominated bonds to mobilise foreign fund. National Highways Authority (NHAI) of India is a similar body corporate by statute which had mobilised ₹5,000 crore by issuing Masala bonds with the approval of RBI.

“How is it possible that NHAI’s Masala bond is legal and KIIB’s is not?” asks Gopakumar.

The last thing that ED officials have to learn before interrogating Dr Issac is that, even the Parliament has cleared KIIFB’s issuance of Masala bond.

While answering a question on the legal validity of Masala bonds in the Lok Sabha on March 22, 2021, Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance said that the RBI had given ‘no objection’ from the angle of FEMA for raising rupee-denominated bonds. <https://thefederal.com/states/south/kerala/kerala-masala-bonds-case-why-ed-needs-to-do-solid-homework-before-quizzing-thomas-isaac/>

17. Kochi कैग ने बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास में खामियों के लिए केरल विश्वविद्यालय की खिंचाई की (samacharnama.com) 21 Jul 2022

केरल न्यूज़ डेस्क, नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक (CAG) की एक रिपोर्ट, जिसे सोमवार को विधानसभा में पेश किया गया था, ने केरल विश्वविद्यालय के कामकाज में कई खामियों की ओर इशारा किया है, जिसमें बुनियादी बुनियादी ढांचा परियोजनाओं को लागू न करना और समय-समय पर संशोधन नहीं करना शामिल है। पाठ्यक्रम।

कैग की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि विश्वविद्यालय के पास एक स्वीकृत मास्टर प्लान नहीं था जिसके खिलाफ नियमित रूप से प्रगति की निगरानी की जाती थी। इसके कारण अवसंरचना परियोजनाओं के समय पर क्रियान्वयन, साफ्टवेयर तथा पाठ्यक्रम के पुनरीक्षण में कमियाँ हुईं। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि विश्वविद्यालय ने पिछले तीन वर्षों से 142 पाठ्यक्रमों में से 28 के पाठ्यक्रम में संशोधन नहीं किया है। "पांच पाठ्यक्रमों के पाठ्यक्रम में संशोधन में देरी आठ से 13 साल के बीच और 23 अन्य पाठ्यक्रमों के संबंध में एक से पांच साल के बीच थी," यह कहा।

कैग ने पाया कि अनुबंध के आधार पर शिक्षकों की नियुक्ति को अधिकतम 10 प्रतिशत तक सीमित करने के यूजीसी के नियम के विपरीत, विश्वविद्यालय विभागों में कुल शिक्षकों की संख्या का 23 प्रतिशत से अधिक अनुबंध के आधार पर नियुक्त किया गया था। इसने बताया कि नैक मान्यता के कारण 17 विश्वविद्यालय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों में से किसी ने भी प्रक्रिया शुरू नहीं की थी। इससे इन केंद्रों में दी जाने वाली शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता में आश्वासन का अभाव रहा। इसमें कहा गया है कि 34 यूआईटी में 174 शिक्षकों में से 108 शिक्षकों को यूजीसी द्वारा निर्धारित मानदंडों का उल्लंघन करते हुए नेट/सेट/पीएचडी योग्यता के बिना नियुक्त किया गया था। <https://samacharnama.com/city/kochi/Kochi-CAG-pulls-up-Kerala-University-for-lapses-in/cid8082109.htm>

18. **कैसे 'रेवड़ी कल्चर' ने किया बंटार, देश का करीब हर राज्य कर्जदार** (aahtak.in) 21 Jul 2022

एक सिम्पल सा गणित है. अगर खर्च ज्यादा और आमदनी कम है, तो कर्ज लेना ही पड़ेगा. लेकिन खर्च और कर्ज का प्रबंधन सही तरह से नहीं किया, तो हालात ऐसे हो सकते हैं कि न तो कमाई का कोई जरि या बचेगा और न ही कर्ज लेने के लायक बचेगे. ऐसा ही श्रीलंका के साथ हुआ. श्रीलंका कर्ज पर कर्ज ले ता चला गया और आज कंगाल हो चुका है. उस पर 51 अरब डॉलर का कर्ज है. न खाने-पीने का सामान है, न गैस है और न ही पेट्रोल-डीजल.

श्रीलंका के इस आर्थिक संकट ने दुनियाभर की सरकारों को चेता दिया है. मंगलवार को ऑल पार्टी मीटिंग में विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर ने कहा कि श्रीलंका से सबक लेते हुए 'मुफ्त के कल्चर' से बचना चाहिए. जयशंकर ने कहा कि श्रीलंका जैसी स्थिति भारत में नहीं हो सकती, लेकिन वहां से आने वाला सबक बहुत मजबूत है. ये सबक है वित्तीय विवेक, जिम्मेदार शासन और मुफ्त की संस्कृति नहीं होनी चाहिए.

जयशंकर के बयान से पहले प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने भी 'मुफ्त की रेवड़ी कल्चर' पर सवाल उठाए थे. 16 जुलाई को बुंदेलखंड एक्सप्रेसवे का उद्घाटन करने के बाद जनसभा को संबोधित करते हुए पीएम मोदी ने कहा, 'हमारे देश में रेवड़ी कल्चर को बढ़ावा देने की कोशिश हो रही है. मुफ्त की रेवड़ी बांटकर वोट बटोरने का कल्चर लाने की कोशिश हो रही है. ये रेवड़ी कल्चर देश के विकास के लिए बहुत घातक है.'

मुफ्त की रेवड़ी कल्चर पर पीएम मोदी के बयान पर सियासत भी हुई. हालांकि, एक महीने पहले ही आई रिजर्व बैंक ऑफ इंडिया की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि राज्य सरकारें मुफ्त की योजनाओं पर जमकर खर्च कर रहीं हैं, जिससे वो कर्ज के जाल में फंसती जा रहीं हैं.

इसे ऐसे समझ सकते हैं कि हाल ही में पंजाब सरकार ने हर परिवार को हर महीने 300 यूनिट फ्री बिजली और हर वयस्क महिला को हर महीने 1 हजार रुपये देने की योजना शुरू की है. इन दोनों योजनाओं पर 17 हजार करोड़ रुपये खर्च होने का अनुमान है. लिहाजा, 2022-23 में पंजाब का कर्ज 3 लाख करोड़ रुपये से ज्यादा होने का अनुमान है. आरबीआई ने चेताया है कि अगर खर्च और कर्ज का प्रबंधन सही तरह से नहीं किया तो स्थिति भयावह हो सकती है.

'स्टेट फाइनेंस: अ रिस्क एनालिसिस' नाम से आई आरबीआई की इस रिपोर्ट में उन पांच राज्यों के नाम दिए गए हैं, जिनकी स्थिति बिगड़ रही है. इनमें पंजाब, राजस्थान, बिहार, केरल और पश्चिम बंगाल है.

कैसे कर्ज के जाल में फंस रहे हैं राज्य?

आरबीआई ने अपनी इस रिपोर्ट में CAG के डेटा के हवाले से बताया है कि राज्य सरकारों का सब्सिडी पर खर्च लगातार बढ़ रहा है. 2020-21 में सब्सिडी पर कुल खर्च का 11.2% खर्च किया था, जबकि 2021-22 में 12.9% खर्च किया था.

रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, सब्सिडी पर सबसे ज्यादा खर्च झारखंड, केरल, ओडिशा, तेलंगाना और उत्तर प्रदेश में बढ़ा है. गुजरात, पंजाब और छत्तीसगढ़ की सरकार ने अपने रेवेन्यू एक्सपेंडिचर का 10% से ज्यादा खर्च सब्सिडी पर किया है.

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि अब राज्य सरकारें सब्सिडी की बजाय मुफ्त ही दे रहीं हैं. सरकारें ऐसी जगह पैसा खर्च कर रहीं हैं, जहां से उन्हें कोई कमाई नहीं हो रही है. फ्री बिजली, फ्री पानी, फ्री यात्रा, बिल माफी और कर्ज माफी, ये सब 'freebies' हैं, जिन पर राज्य सरकारें खर्च कर रहीं हैं.

आरबीआई का कहना है कि 2021-22 से 2026-

27 के बीच कई राज्यों के कर्ज में कमी आने की उम्मीद है. राज्यों की ग्रॉस स्टेट डोमेस्टिक प्रोडक्ट (GSDP) में कर्ज की हिस्सेदारी घट सकती है. गुजरात, महाराष्ट्र, दिल्ली, कर्नाटक और ओडिशा की सरकारों का कर्ज घटने का अनुमान है.

हालांकि, कुछ राज्य ऐसे भी जिनका कर्ज 2026-

27 तक GSDP का 30% से ज्यादा हो सकता है. इनमें पंजाब की हालत सबसे खराब होगी. उस समय तक पंजाब सरकार पर GSDP का 45% से ज्यादा कर्ज हो सकता है. वहीं, राजस्थान, केरल और पश्चिम बंगाल का कर्ज GSDP के 35% तक होने की संभावना है.

आमदनी से ज्यादा खर्च ने और बनाया कर्जदार

चाहे राज्य सरकार हो या केंद्र सरकार, हर किसी को कर्ज की जरूरत पड़ती है. दुनियाभर की सरकारें भी कर्ज लेकर ही देश चलाती हैं. लेकिन जब ये कर्ज बढ़ता जाता है तो उससे दिक्कतें बढ़नी शुरू हो जाती हैं. ऐसा ही श्रीलंका के साथ हुआ. श्रीलंका कर्ज लेता रहा और एक समय ऐसा आया कि वो उ से चुकाने की स्थिति में नहीं रहा और उसने खुद को दिवालिया घोषित कर दिया.

हमारे देश में भी सरकारों का राजकोषीय घाटा लगातार बढ़ता जा रहा है. केंद्र सरकार का भी और राज्य सरकार का भी. देश में एक भी ऐसा राज्य नहीं है, जिसका खर्च उसकी आमदनी से कम हो. हर सरकार अपनी आमदनी से ज्यादा ही खर्च कर रही है. इस खर्च को पूरा करने के लिए कर्ज लेती है.

आरबीआई के मुताबिक, देशभर की सभी राज्य सरकारों पर मार्च 2021 तक 69.47 लाख करोड़ रुपये से ज्यादा का कर्ज है. सबसे ज्यादा कर्ज में तमिलनाडु सरकार है. उस पर 6.59 लाख करोड़ रुपये से ज्यादा कर्ज है. इसके बाद उत्तर प्रदेश पर 6.53 लाख करोड़ रुपये से ज्यादा का कर्ज है. मार्च 2021 तक देश में 19 राज्य ऐसे थे, जिन पर 1 लाख करोड़ रुपये से ज्यादा का कर्ज था.

तो क्या करें फिर सरकारें?

आरबीआई ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में श्रीलंका के आर्थिक संकट का उदाहरण देते हुए सुझाव दिया है कि राज्य सरकारों को अपने कर्ज में स्थिरता लाने की जरूरत है, क्योंकि कई राज्यों के हालात अच्छे संकेत नहीं दे रहे हैं.

आरबीआई का सुझाव है कि सरकारों को गैर-

जरूरी जगहों पर पैसा खर्च करने से बचना चाहिए और अपने कर्ज में स्थिरता लानी चाहिए. इसके अलावा बिजली कंपनियों को घाटे से उबारने की जरूरत है. इसमें सुझाव दिया गया है कि सरकारों को पूंजीगत निवेश करना चाहिए, ताकि आने वाले समय में इससे कमाई हो सके. <https://www.aajtak.in/india/news/story/freebie-politics-has-divided-india-almost-every-state-in-the-country-is-indebted-ntc-1503067-2022-07-21>

19. अरावली खा गए माफिया, जुबैर को ज़मानत (ndtv.in) 21 July 2022

क्या आप जानते हैं कि 2017 से लेकर 2020 तक के तीन साल में सीनियर सिटीज़न ने रेल टिकट की सब्सिडी पर सरकार से कितने करोड़ की छूट ली है, और कारपोरेट ने 5 साल में सरकार से कितने करोड़ की टैक्स छूट ली है? इसका जवाब लोकसभा और राज्य सभा में सरकार ने खुद ही दिया है. कोई पांच से छह करोड़ सीनियर सिटीज़न एक साल में रिजर्व क्लास से रेल यात्राएं करते हैं, सरकार उनके टिकट पर सब्सिडी देती है (थी). लोकसभा में रेल मंत्रालय ने बताया है कि सीनियर सिटीज़न के रेल टिकट पर हर साल 1500 करोड़ से लेकर 1650 करोड़ तक की सब्सिडी दी जाती थी, जो अब बंद कर दी गई है. 2

017-18 से लेकर 2019-20 के तीन वित्त वर्षों में सीनियर सिटीज़न को कुल 4, 794 करोड़ की सब्सिडी दी गई थी.

अब आते हैं कारपोरेट ने विभिन्न नियमों के तहत कितने लाख करोड़ की टैक्स छूट ली है. 19 जुलाई को राज्यसभा में वित्त राज्यमंत्री पंकज चौधरी ने बताया कि 5 साल में कारपोरेट ने विभिन्न मदों में कुल 4.5 लाख करोड़ की टैक्स छूट ली है. मंत्री ने कहा कि कारपोरेट का टैक्स माफ नहीं किया जाता है लेकिन यह वह आंकड़ा है जो कारपोरेट विभिन्न नियमों के तहत टैक्स से छूट हासिल करते हैं.

यही नहीं रेल मंत्रालय ने साफ कर दिया है कि सीनियर सिटीज़न और खिलाड़ी को रेल टिकटों पर कोई सब्सिडी नहीं दी जाएगी. करोड़ों सीनियर सिटीज़न परेशान रहते थे कि रेल टिकट पर सब्सिडी मिलेगी या नहीं. अब उन्हें जवाब मिल गया है कि नहीं मिलेगी.

जुबैर की ज़मानत की खबर पर आने से पहले अरावली और यूपी में तबादले के हंगामे की खबर पर बात ज़रूरी है. अरावली का पहाड़ माफिया काटकर खा गए, उनका कुछ नहीं बिगड़ा. अनुभव बताता है कि माफिया का कुछ बिगड़ेगा भी नहीं क्योंकि माफिया शब्द तो एक है लेकिन इसके भीतर प्रशासन, अधिकारी, नेता और न जाने कौन-

कौन आता है. अरावली मिट जाएगी मगर माफिया नहीं मिट सकता है. माफिया केवल पहाड़ नहीं काटता बल्कि सिस्टम के भीतर एक ऐसा पहाड़ बना देता है कि उसे काटना असंभव हो जाता है. हरियाणा के डीएसपी सुरेंद्र सिंह बिश्रोई की हत्या के बाद माफिया मिट जाएंगे, इस तरह का भ्रम पालने का कोई ठोस कारण नहीं है.

तबादले का नेटवर्क भी अलग-

अलग राज्यों में पहाड़ की तरह मज़बूत हो गया है. बिहार के राजस्व मंत्री ने हाल ही में कहा था कि उन के विभाग पर माफिया का कब्ज़ा हो गया है. उधर यूपी में तबादला नेटवर्क का पहाड़ इतना ऊंचा हो गया है कि योगी सरकार के तीन-

तीन मंत्रियों के विभाग पर भ्रष्टाचार के गंभीर आरोप लगे हैं. सारे आरोप तबादले को लेकर हैं. मुख्यमंत्री का कार्यालय इन विभागों में करप्शन की जांच करा रहा है तो इनके मंत्री नाराज़गी के बहाने बगावत के मीठे बोल बोल रहे हैं.

पांच साल तक संपूर्ण नियंत्रण से शासन करने और भ्रष्टाचार के मिटा देने का दावा करने के बाद भी योगी सरकार के कई विभागों में तबादलों को लेकर विस्फोट हो गया है. जुलाई महीने में यूपी के अखबारों में तबादले की खबरों को एक क्रम में सजाकर देखेंगे तो आपको यकीन हो जाएगा कि तबादला नेटवर्क नहीं मिट सकता है. अमर उजाला ने मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यानाथ के बयान के हवाले से एक हेडलाइन लिखी है कि अपने स्टाफ पर आंख मूंदकर भरोसा न करें मंत्री. खबर में विस्तार से लिखा है कि कैबिनेट की बैठक में मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा है कि मंत्री ईमानदारी और पारदर्शिता से काम करें. हिदायत देना बुरी बात नहीं है, समय-

समय पर इसकी ज़रूरत होती है लेकिन दूसरी बार मुख्यमंत्री बने योगी आदित्यानाथ को यह कहना पड़े कि मंत्री अपने स्टाफ पर भरोसा न करें, और राज्यमंत्री को भी बैठक में बुलाएं तो इसका मतलब है कि यूपी की कहानी में केवल बुलडोज़र का भय नहीं है, अगर भय होता तो मंत्री के स्टाफ वह काम तो बिल्कुल नहीं करते जिससे मुख्यमंत्री को कहना पड़ जाए कि मंत्री ही उन पर भरोसा न करें. लेकिन क्या मंत्रियों पर भरोसा किया जा रहा है, इसे समझने के लिए पहले एक हेडलाइन देखें. सात जुलाई के अखबार में छपी है. डिप्टी सीएम और स्वास्थ्य मंत्री ब्रजेश पाठक का बयान है कि डिप्टी सीएम को पता ही नहीं, सचिव ने कर दिए तबादले. अब यही आरोप जलशक्ति राज्यमंत्री दिनेश खटीक लगा रहे हैं. उनका कहना है कि पैसे लेकर तबादले हो रहे हैं.

यह आज नहीं बल्कि इस महीने के शुरू से ही दिखने लगा था, जब तबादलों में धांधली की खबरें यूपी के अखबारों में छपने लगी थीं। यह खबर आज की है कि PWD विभाग में तबादले को लेकर धांधली के आरोप में PWD हेड मनोज गुप्ता और चीफ इंजीनियर सहित पांच अधिकारियों को सस्पेंड कर दिया गया है। 18 जुलाई को कैबिनेट मंत्री जितिन प्रसाद के ओएसडी अनिल कुमार पांडे को हटा दिया गया।

इन खबरों को देखने के बाद आप ही बताईए कौन किस पर भरोसा नहीं करे। मुख्यमंत्री कहते हैं स्टाफ पर भरोसा न करें, मंत्री कहते हैं उन पर भरोसा नहीं किया जा रहा है। इस खेल में राजनीति तो होगी ही लेकिन पर्दा हटाकर देखिए तो तबादलों के नेटवर्क का पहाड़ साफ-साफ नज़र आएगा।

जिस राज्य की राजनीति में धर्म और राष्ट्रवाद की नैतिकता गंगा की तरह पवित्र होने का दावा किया जाता है, उस राज्य में तबादले को लेकर सरकार के भीतर से ही भ्रष्टाचार के आरोप क्यों लग रहे हैं? यह भी अजीब है कि दिनेश खटीक मुख्यमंत्री की जगह गृहमंत्री अमित शाह को पत्र लिखते हैं। कायदे से उन्हें अपना इस्तीफा पहले राज्यपाल और मुख्यमंत्री को देना चाहिए था। अमित शाह को इसलिए लिखा कि इस पूरे मामले को दिल्ली बनाम यूपी की लड़ाई के रूप में देखा जाए? देखा भी जा रहा होगा लेकिन यह बात ध्यान में रखने की ज़रूरत है कि जलशक्ति विभाग के कैबिनेट मंत्री स्वतंत्र देव सिंह हैं, जो बी जेपी के प्रदेश अध्यक्ष हैं। दिनेश खटीक इसी विभाग में राज्यमंत्री हैं। अमित शाह को एक पत्र लिखते हैं जिसमें काफी कुछ बताते हैं।

दिनेश खटीक मेरठ से हस्तिनापुर से चुनकर आते हैं। दोबारा विधायक बने हैं और दोबारा मंत्री भी। दिनेश खटीक ने अपने पत्र में जो आरोप लगाए हैं, उससे काफी कुछ देखने समझने को मिलता है। दिनेश खटीक ने लिखा है कि,

"दलित समाज से होने के कारण जलशक्ति विभाग में उनकी पूछ नहीं है। उनके आदेश पर कोई कार्रवाई नहीं होती और न ही कोई उन्हें बैठक की सूचना देता है। केवल गाड़ी दे देने से राज्यमंत्री का दायित्व पूरा नहीं हो जाता है।" दिनेश खटीक ने आरोप लगाया है कि उनके विभाग में तबादले में बहुत बड़ा भ्रष्टाचार हुआ है। जब उन्होंने विभाग से पूछा कि किस-

किस का तबादला हुआ है तो इसकी जानकारी तक नहीं दी गई। "प्रमुख सचिव, सिंचाई, अनिल गर्ग को उक्त स्थिति से अवगत कराना चाहा तो उन्होंने मेरी पूरी बात तक नहीं सुनी और फोन काट दिया। यह एक जनप्रतिनिधि का अपमान है। मैं दलित जाति का मंत्री हूँ इसलिए विभाग में भेदभाव किया जाता है। जब दलित राज्यमंत्री का कोई अस्तित्व ही नहीं है तो पद से इस्तीफा दे रहा हूँ।" जब इतना लंबा चौड़ा पत्र लिख ही दिया तो फिर मीडिया से बात क्यों नहीं कर रहे हैं।

नमामि गंगे प्रोजेक्ट में भ्रष्टाचार का आरोप सुनकर तो ED के सारे अफसरों को विमान से नहीं तो नाव से ही लखनऊ की तरफ रवाना हो जाना चाहिए और जांच करनी चाहिए। मां गंगा के प्रोजेक्ट में भ्रष्टाचार चल रहा है, यह बात स्वयं मंत्री कह रहे हैं। क्या इसके बाद भी मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ दिनेश खटीक को मनाकर मंत्री पद पर बनाए रखेंगे या नमामि गंगे प्रोजेक्ट की जांच NIA, ED और CBI में से किसी को सौंप देंगे? दिनेश खटीक का आरोप भले ही उनके विभाग तक सीमित हो लेकिन यूपी के कई विभागों में तबादले को लेकर पैसे के लेन-देन के आरोप लग रहे हैं।

PWD मंत्री जितिन प्रसाद के OSD अनिल कुमार पांडे को तबादले में धांधली के आरोप के बाद हटा दिया गया। यह कैसे हो सकता है कि अनिल कुमार पांडे की गतिविधि की जानकारी कैबिनेट मंत्री जितिन प्रसाद को न हो जबकि वे अनिल कुमार पांडे को UPA के समय से जानते हैं जब वे मनमोहन सिंह सरकार में मंत्री थे। मीडिया रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 350 इंजीनियरों के तबादले को लेकर हंगामा मचा हुआ है। इन्हें लेकर इंजीनियर इन चीफ मनोज गुप्ता को सस्पेंड किया गया है। चार अन्य सीनियर अफसरों को भी

सस्पेंड किया गया है. ज़ाहिर है योगी सरकार को लग रहा है कि भ्रष्टाचार हुआ होगा तभी इतनी कार्रवाई हुई और जांच हो रही है. क्या तब तक मंत्री जितिन प्रसाद को पद से हटा नहीं देना चाहिए? जब ओएस डी का तबादला हुआ, इंजीनियर इन चीफ सस्पेंड हैं तो मंत्री कैसे अनजान हो सकते हैं. क्या यही बात दूसरे दलों की सरकारों के समय मान ली जाएगी? जितिन प्रसाद के भी दिल्ली में होने की खबर है, पर उन्हें बताना चाहिए कि उनके रहते भ्रष्टाचार हुआ या नहीं, अगर हुआ है तो फिर उन्हें मंत्री क्यों रहना चाहिए. अपने विभाग में तबादले को लेकर जो धांधली हुई है, उसकी नैतिक ज़िम्मेदारी से भी खुद को अलग कैसे कर सकते हैं? क्या ये सारे सवाल वाकई पूछने लायक नहीं हैं?

यूपी के अखबारों में पशुपाल विभाग में 50 करोड़ के घोटाले की खबर छपी है. भास्कर की खबर है कि पशुपालन विभाग में उपकरण और दवाओं की खरीद दो गुनी कीमत पर हुई है. इसकी जांच हो रही है. आज PWD और सिंचाई विभाग के तबादले का बवाल दिल्ली पहुंचा है. लेकिन इसकी शुरुआत हुई थी स्वास्थ्य विभाग के तबादले से. स्वास्थ्य विभाग के तबादले में इतनी धांधली हो गई कि योगी सरकार को अपने ही मुख्य सचिव के निर्देशन में जांच बिठानी पड़ गई. ऐसा लग रहा है कि विभागों से भ्रष्टाचार से अकेले मुख्यमंत्री कार्यालय ही लड़ रहा है.

12 जुलाई की एक खबर अमर उजाला की है स्वास्थ्य विभाग में तबादले की जांच के लिए मुख्यमंत्री योगी ने कमेटी गठित की. मुख्य सचिव जांच करेंगे. यह खबर 5 जुलाई की है डिप्टी सीएम और स्वास्थ्य मंत्री कह रहे हैं कि उन्हें तबादले की जानकारी नहीं थी. कमाल है, बिना मंत्री की जानकारी के तबादले हुए जा रहे हैं. अखबारों में खबरें भरी पड़ी हैं. पीएमएस डॉक्टरों का एसोसिएशन हो या स्वास्थ्य विभाग के तमाम दूसरे संगठन सभी गलत तबादलों के खिलाफ मोर्चा खोले हुए हैं. कर्मचारियों ने 14 जुलाई को महानिदेशालय का घेराव भी किया था. खुद डिप्टी सीएम ब्रजेश पाठक ने अपर मुख्य सचिव को पत्र लिखा है जिससे पता चलता है कि तबादला उनकी जानकारी के बगैर हुआ और तबादला नीतियों का पालन नहीं हुआ.

हो सकता है कि यूपी की सरकार में मुख्यमंत्री और मंत्रियों के बीच वर्चस्व की लड़ाई चल रही हो लेकिन इस लड़ाई में तीन तीन बड़े विभाग के मंत्री भी संदेह से परे नहीं होते हैं. क्या वे बताना चाहते हैं कि वे नाम के मंत्री हैं मगर तबादला कोई और कर रहा है, या जब तबादले में धांधली हो रही है तब केवल अधिकारी ज़िम्मेदार हैं, उनकी कोई भूमिका नहीं. यह भी एक बड़ा सवाल है कि हज़ारों लोगों का तबादला हो रहा है, और मंत्री की कोई भूमिका नहीं? बसपा नेता मायावती और सपा नेता अखिलेश यादव ने ट्वीट के ज़रिए राज्यमंत्री दिनेश खटीक के मामले में प्रतिक्रिया दी है. मायावती ने कहा है कि यूपी भाजपा मंत्रिमंडल के भीतर भी दलित मंत्री की उपेक्षा अति निंदनीय और दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है. समाजवादी पार्टी के नेता अखिलेश यादव ने ट्वीट किया है कि, उप्र भाजपा सरकार में भ्रष्टाचार और कुशासन की क्रॉनॉलॉजी समझिए- पहले लोक निर्माण विभाग के मंत्रालय में विद्रोह, फिर स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय में विद्रोह, अब जल शक्ति मंत्रालय में विद्रोह. जनता पूछ रही है, उप्र की भाजपा सरकार ईमानदारी से बताए... अब अगली बारी किसकी है?

सवाल है कि केवल बयानों को लेकर बवाल होगा और वर्चस्व की लड़ाई लड़ी जाएगी या भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों की स्वतंत्र जांच होगी? मुंबई क्राइम ब्रांच की एंटी एक्सटोर्शन सेल ने नवगठित महाराष्ट्र सरकार में कैबिनेट मंत्री पद दिलाने के नाम पर 100 करोड़ मांगने वाले एक गिरोह को पकड़ा है. खास बात है कि इस गिरफ्तारी में उस विधायक ने ही अहम भूमिका निभाई ये गिरोह 100 करोड़ में कैबिनेट मंत्री पद दिलाने के लिए जिसके पीछे पड़ा था. पुलिस ने मामले में 4 आरोपियों को गिरफ्तार किया है. इस देश में कुछ भी हो सकता है. सावधान रहा कीजिए.

आज ताबड़ शहर बंद रहा. स्कूल कालेज, दुकानें सब बंद रहीं. शहर के लोगों ने डीएसपी सुरेंद्र सिंह विश्रोई की हत्या के विरोध में एक मार्च निकाला. दिवंगत विश्रोई के बेटे कनाडा में रहते हैं. उनके आने का इंतज़ार किया जा रहा है. जिसके बाद गुरुवार को हिसार के उनके गांव सारंगपुर में अंतिम संस्कार होगा

कल विश्रोई की हत्या के आरोप में डंपर का क्लीनर इक्कर मुठभेड़ के कुछ देर बाद पकड़ा गया, ड्राइवर को भी आज भरतपुर से गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया. इसके अलावा माइनिंग में शामिल बाकी लोगों की भी तलाश जारी है. जहां पर ड्राइवर और क्लीनर दोनों रहते हैं वहां पूरे मोहल्ले के घरों पर ताले पड़े मिले. क्या वहां के लोग भी भाग गए?

कांग्रेस ने जब हरियाणा के मुख्यमंत्री से इस्तीफा मांगा तब उसके जवाब में गृहमंत्री अनिल विज ने कहा दिया कि 2013 में जब हुड्डा मुख्यमंत्री थे बिलकुल इसी प्रकार की घटना हुई थी, उस समय भी पुलिस वाले मारे गए थे. ये सब शुरू तो कांग्रेस के समय से हुआ. मंत्री कह रहे हैं, हमने तो फिर भी उस पर नियंत्रण किया है. क्या वाकई अरावली के खनन पर नियंत्रण हो गया है?

कांग्रेस के समय हुआ तो अब भी हो गया, तो क्या बात. इस तरह से हर बात इज़ इकल टू हो जाती है और जैसा चल रहा है, चलता रहता है. एक बात ठीक से समझने की ज़रूरत है. मुआवज़े के ऐलान से, परिवार के एक सदस्य को नौकरी देने और डंपर के मालिक और चालक को गिरफ्तार कर लेने से सुरेंद्र सिंह विश्रोई की हत्या का इंसोफ नहीं हो जाता है, न ही अरावली की निरंतर हत्या का इंसोफ होता है. क्यों कि सुरेंद्र सिंह विश्रोई की जान इसलिए गई क्योंकि वे देखने गए थे कि वहां माइनिंग तो नहीं हो रही. अरावली दुनिया की सबसे पुरानी पर्वतमाला है, जो दिल्ली से लेकर गुजरात के चंपानेर तक में 692 किलोमीटर में फैली हुई है.

अप्रैल 2019 में डाउन टू अर्थ ने अरावली को लेकर एक कवर स्टोरी की थी. उसमें अरावली को लेकर काफी जानकारियां मिलेंगी. प्रणय लाल ने लिखा है कि दुनिया के इन सबसे पुराने मोडदार पर्वतों का निर्माण करीब दो अरब साल से गतिमान टेक्टॉनिक प्लेटों और इस दौरान निकले मैग्मा से हुआ है. करोड़ों वर्ष तक अरावली को कोई खतरा नहीं हुआ लेकिन माफिया ने अरावली को काट खाया है. इस कटान के कारण अरावली बहुत तेज़ी से खत्म होती जा रही है. रायसीना हिल्स भी कुछ और नहीं, बल्कि अरावली ही है. दिल्ली और आसपास के विकास ने अरावली को निगल लिया. अरावली ग्रेनाइट की खान है. इसकी रेंज में ग्रेनाइट निकालने का धंधा अनियंत्रित तरीके से चलता आ रहा है. 75 करोड़ वर्ष पहले ज्वालामुखी फटा था, जहां आज जोधपुर का महेंद्रगढ़ किला है. जब धरती पर बर्फ की परतें जमी हुई थीं, तब की बात है. मालानी में ज्वालामुखी फटा. और धरती से बर्फ का पिघलना शुरू हुआ. धरती पर बहुकोशिकीय जीवन की शुरुआत होती है. आधुनिक समय में अरावली की भूमिका है. यह पर्वतमाला मानसून के समय बादलों को शिमला और नैनीताल की तरफ भेज देती है. इसके पत्थरों की बनावट पानी के संरक्षण में भी काम आती है. कभी इस इलाके में 40 फीट पर पानी मिलता था लेकिन अब तो 350-400 फीट नीचे जाने पर भी पानी नहीं मिलता है. फिर भी अरावली को लगातार काटा जाता रहता है. अप्रैल 2019 में डाउन टू अर्थ में जितेंद्र और शगुन की रिपोर्ट है कि अब अरावली को बचाना मुश्किल है. 2002 में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने अरावली में माइनिंग बैन कर दिया था, पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु मंत्रालय की अनुमति से ही खनन हो सकता है. 2018 में सुप्रीम कोर्ट की एक कमेटी ने रिपोर्ट दी थी कि अवैध माइनिंग से राजस्थान में 1967 से लेकर 2018 तक अरावली का 25 प्रतिशत हिस्सा गायब हो गया. सुप्रीम कोर्ट के बैन के बाद भी अरावली का कटान नहीं थमा है.

किस स्तर पर अरावली को काटा जा रहा है इसका पता 2017 के Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) की रिपोर्ट से चलता है. 2011-12 से लेकर 16-

17 के बीच अवैध माइनिंग के 4,072 मामले दर्ज किए गए थे. अवैध रूप से करीब दस लाख टन खनीजों का उत्खनन किया जा चुका है. अलवर ज़िले में अरावली की 31 पहाड़ियां गायब हो चुकी हैं. ये CEC की रिपोर्ट है.

अगर कोई दावा करे कि अरावली में खनन पर रोक है, माफिया सक्रिय नहीं हैं, तब फिर अरावली को खोजने का काम कीजिए, कि यह पर्वतमाला पहले की तुलना में कितनी बची रह गई है. हम आपको एक होमवर्क देना चाहते हैं. अरावली के इलाके से कितने सांसद आते हैं और इनमें से कितनों ने अरावली को लेकर सवाल पूछे हैं? यह जानकारी आपको जागरूक बना सकती है.

अरावली को सबने मिलकर मारा है, लेकिन अब भी इसका एक कोना बचा है. एक वीडियो उसके सुंदर कोने का है. 25 नवंबर 2017 के प्राइम टाइम में इसे दिखा चुका हूँ, यू ट्यूब पर इस एपिसोड को फिर से देख सकते हैं. उस साल इंडिया हैबिटेड सेंटर में अरावली को लेकर एक प्रदर्शनी लगी थी. इसमें इरा पांडे, प्रदीप कृष्ण और आदित्य आर्या ने अपने काम का प्रदर्शन किया था. क्या आप अरावली को बचाना नहीं चाहेंगे, पर्वतमाला खत्म हो चुकी है, पहाड़ियां बच गई हैं. वो भी कब गायब हो जाएं पता नहीं.

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने मोहम्मद जुबैर को आज कई मामलों में राहत दी है. यूपी सरकार ने जुबैर के मामलों में जांच के लिए दो-

दो SIT का गठन किया था, इसे भंग कर दिया है. यूपी सरकार ने कहा कि जुबैर ट्वीट न करे, इसका आदेश जारी हो, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने ऐसा आदेश देने से इनकार कर दिया, यानी जुबैर ट्वीट कर सकेंगे. यही नहीं जुबैर को सभी FIR के मामले में गिरफ्तारी से राहत दी गई है. अंतरिम जमानत दे दी गई है.

27 जून को मोहम्मद जुबैर को गिरफ्तार किया गया था. आज के आदेश के बाद जुबैर के जेल से बाहर आने का रास्ता साफ हो गया है. इसके पहले दिल्ली की पटियाला कोर्ट और सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने सीतापुर मामले में अंतरिम जमानत दे दी थी, लेकिन अब सभी FIR के मामले में अंतरिम जमानत मिल गई है. जुबैर की याचिका में इस बात की भी मांग की गई थी कि सभी FIR रद्द कर दी जाएं, लेकिन कोर्ट ने इनकार कर दिया और कहा कि अगर जुबैर चाहें तो इसके लिए दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट में याचिका दायर कर सकते हैं

फिलहाल सभी मामलों की जांच दिल्ली पुलिस करेगी और ये सभी मामले दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट के अधिकार क्षेत्र के दायरे में रहेंगे. जुबैर के खिलाफ दिल्ली के अलावा यूपी के हाथरस में दो और, गाजियाबाद, मुजफ्फरनगर, चंदौली, लखीमपुर और सीतापुर में एक-

एक FIR दर्ज की गई थी. जब यूपी सरकार के वकील ने कहा कि जुबैर को ट्वीट करने से रोका जाए तब जस्टिस डीवाई चंद्रचूड़ की बेंच ने कहा कि हम ऐसा कैसे कह सकते हैं. यह एक वकील से बहस न करने के लिए कहने जैसा है. हम नहीं कह सकते कि एक पत्रकार न लिखे. सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कहा है कि यह पाया गया है कि दिल्ली पुलिस द्वारा उनकी काफी निरंतर जांच की गई है. हमें उनकी स्वतंत्रता को और रोकने का कोई कारण नहीं दिखता हमारा विचार है कि उन्हें सभी FIR पर अंतरिम जमानत पर रिहा किया जाना चाहिए. यह कानून का एक निर्धारित सिद्धांत है कि गिरफ्तारी की शक्ति का संयम से पालन किया जाना चाहिए. वर्तमान मामले में उसे लगातार हिरासत में रखने का कोई औचित्य नहीं है. जुबैर को आज शाम रिहा कर दिया गया.

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने गिरफ्तारियों को लेकर कितनी चिन्ता जताई है तब भी फिल्मकार अविनाश दास को गिरफ्तार किया गया. अविनाश ने भी सुप्रीम कोर्ट में जमानत की याचिका दायर की हुई है. बुधवार को अहमदाबाद पुलिस ने बताया है कि अविनाश दास ने राष्ट्रीय ध्वज की सही से तस्वीर पोस्ट नहीं की थी. राष्ट्रीय

य ध्वज के अपमान के आरोप में गिरफ्तार किया गया है. पुलिस ने बताया कि अविनाश ने गृहमंत्री की ऐसी तस्वीर लगाई है जिससे उनकी प्रतिष्ठा को नुकसान पहुंचता है. सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने इतनी बार इन सब बातों पर फैसला दिया, राय दी, चिन्ता जताई तब भी गृह मंत्री की प्रतिष्ठा को नुकसान पहुंच रहा है इसलिए किसी को गिरफ्तार किया जा रहा है.

एक बहस चलती है, कहीं पहुंचती है, खत्म होती है, फिर वही बहस कहीं और से चलती है और खत्म होती है. जैसे ही लगता है कि अब बहस खत्म हुई, फिर से वही बहस कहीं और से चलती है और खत्म होने का नाम नहीं लेती है. <https://ndtv.in/blogs/ravish-kumar-writes-mafia-ate-aravali-zubair-got-bail-3178409>

20. Andhra Pradesh's borrowings show that it is following Sri Lanka's path: TDP ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) 21 July 2022

VIJAYAWADA: The Opposition TDP has expressed serious concern over the deep financial crisis in the State. The TDP has been saying for the past four months that the State is following the path of Sri Lanka, said Public Accounts Committee Chairman Payyavula Keshav.

Stating that the Centre has red-flagged 'disturbing trends' in the finances of several States, including Andhra Pradesh, he cited the severe economic crisis in Sri Lanka. Keshav opined that the high off-budget borrowings, escrowing of future revenue and loans secured against public assets are the primary reasons for the disastrous situation.

Speaking to mediapersons on Wednesday, the PAC Chairman alleged that the State had borrowed four times more than Sri Lanka and challenged the Jagan Mohan Reddy government whether it is ready for an open debate and special audit on the issue.

He pointed out that the Reserve Bank of India has prepared a risk analysis and the Union Finance Ministry has made a presentation on this, in which Andhra Pradesh is either on top or in second place in all the indices.

The risk analysis has been made strictly on the guidelines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "This is only a tip of the iceberg," the TDP leader said.

Accounts for Rs 40,000 to Rs 50,000 crore have not been made public yet and if this too comes out then one can easily imagine the grave situation, he said. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) should bring out the facts and the qualifying certificate issued to Andhra Pradesh by CAG is unique as no other State got such certificate till now.

If AP faces a situation like Sri Lanka, leaders may run away from the State, but the common man will be the worst-hit as he cannot go anywhere, he feared.

Making it clear that the TDP is committed to implementing welfare schemes for the poor, he alleged that the YSRC government was looting the State in the name of welfare. Stating that he is ready for an open debate on the economic crisis of the State, the PAC Chairman demanded a white paper on the present economic situation of the State. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2022/jul/21/andhra-pradeshs-borrowings-show-that-it-is-followingsri-lankas-path-tdp-2478989.html>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

21. Only decentralised renewable energy can help achieve 2030 targets: Experts ([business-standard.com](https://www.business-standard.com)) July 21, 2022

India may have taken great strides in utility scale deployment of renewable energy (RE), but the 2030 targets -- as promised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the climate summit last year -- can be achieved only by increased de-centralised installation of RE, experts have warned.

At the annual climate change negotiations platform at Glasgow in November 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that India will have installed capacity of 500 GW of non-fossil energy and meet 50 per cent of its requirements through renewable energy. Modi also announced that India will achieve Net Zero in 2070.

As of date, according to the Ministry of Renewable Energy (MNRE), India is now at 4th global position for overall installed renewable energy capacity. The solar capacity has increased in the last 7.5 years from around 2.6 GW to more than 46 GW. India currently has the largest RE expansion programme with 175 GW till 2022.

Vibhuti Garg with the Institute of Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), however, pointed out it is not enough. "India gets investments of about USD 10-15 billion for RE annually, when it needs upwards of USD 30-40 billion," Garg said, adding, as per the International Energy Agency's (IEA) Sustainable Development Scenarios (SDS), India needs USD 110 billion in annual investment to deploy renewable energy, battery storage, electric vehicles and network expansion and modernisation of the grid.

According to the Ministry officials, India's RE installed capacity increased 286 per cent in the last 7.5 years but it had a share of just 26.53 per cent in the total installed generation capacity.

Said Ulka Kelkar, director, Climate Programme at the World Resources Institute (WRI), India: "The annual solar PV (photo-voltaic) capacity additions (the world over) has consistently defied the trend predictions by IEA for the last 10 years."

She suggested an overlap of the map for all renewable energy projects across the globe with that of land use showed that all new projects for RE are coming over agriculture land. "It is arable land, may or may not be yielding much but the fact is, India's new RE projects are replacing agriculture land," Kelkar told a media workshop on RE organized by Earth Journalism Network (EJN).

That is because all big projects target massive installed capacities and disrupt agriculture, wildlife and in general biodiversity around them.

Surya Sethi, who is the UNESCO Chair Professor for Climate Science and Policy at the TERI School of Advanced Studies (TERI SAS) pointed out a crucial element. "None of the utility scale RE projects are independent. They all are using the grid as a back-up, like a battery. In this manner, this support system cost is not calculated as part of overall cost per unit."

It is here that Sethi, a former India negotiator at the annual climate change conferences (COPs), brought in the point of decentralised RE.

"Be it solar, wind or biofuel, RE by its very nature is de-centralised. In the case of biofuels, the energy needed to transport it beyond a 5 sq kms area will be more than what can be extracted from that biomass."

Experts also pointed out multiple reasons, including problematic power purchase agreements (PPA), non-availability of adequate finance for refurbishing existing wind-mill parks for higher capacity, policies about evacuation etc. faced by developers that go for large installed capacity plants. "Rooftop solar, for instance, has huge potential, but is not popular for a multitude of reasons. That would work best in a decentralised manner," Garg added.

Linking to the targets announced by PM Modi as part of India's promise to the world on climate action, Sethi said, "You need four times the capacity to meet the energy level using conventional power. That will be pointless if you have to generate and evacuate a large quantum of power." https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/only-decentralised-renewable-energy-can-help-achieve-2030-targets-experts-122072100154_1.html

22. Update system to curb tax evasion in entertainment sector, Public Accounts Committee tells I-T Department (*economictimes.indiatimes.com*) July 20, 2022

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) opined that increasing affluence and changing lifestyles have contributed towards making the Indian entertainment industry a sunrise sector for the economy, with high potential for increased revenue generation. A Parliamentary panel has asked the income tax department to continuously update its mechanism to curb tax evasion in the fast growing entertainment sector. The sector in the recent past has expanded into new segments like OTT, podcasts, audio books and gaming apart from the traditional modes such as television, radio, cinema, music and sports.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) opined that increasing affluence and changing lifestyles have contributed towards making the Indian entertainment industry a sunrise sector for the economy, with high potential for increased revenue generation.

The 51st report of the committee on 'Assessment of Assesseees in Entertainment Sector' was tabled in Parliament on Wednesday.

It noted that the dynamic nature of the industry poses a challenge of maintaining a balance in growth of new sectors viz-a-viz ensuring that tax revenue is correspondingly enhanced with the rise in avenues of income.

"Considering these aspects, the committee recommended that to curb tax evasion, a mechanism be brought in place for continuous review of the possible sources of revenue being generated in the sector and update the systems so as to keep pace with the contemporary developments taking place in entertainment sector," the report said.

While appreciating the initiatives taken by the finance ministry, the PAC emphasised on the need for fine tuning the e-systems coupled with efforts on rationalisation of business codes used for Income Tax Return (ITR) forms, refinement of information sharing mechanism and strengthening monitoring mechanism.

The panel, chaired by senior Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, suggested the endeavour should also be made to liaise with district administrations and other government

agencies concerned with economic offences for enabling seamless exchange of data with the income tax department.

"This, the committee have felt, will further improve the database on assessee/ offenders and will help in cross verification of figures disclosed by them during the assessment process," the report said.

The panel also said the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) should keep a constant watch over the rising number of high-risk assessee's cases in new and emerging segments of the entertainment sector -- augmented and virtual reality, social videos, cloud gaming, and podcasting. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/update-system-to-curb-tax-evasion-in-entertainment-sector-public-accounts-committee-tells-it-department/articleshow/93010403.cms>

23. Windfall taxes must go: Govt should make fuel business attractive instead of unnecessarily interfering in it (*financialexpress.com*) July 21, 2022

Persistently high inflation is what the government is most worried about, as it threatens to impair macroeconomic fundamentals and stifle a recovery.

By imposing windfall taxes on domestic oil companies—upstream producers and refiners focused on export markets—on July 1, the government had sought to lay its hands on a chunk of the “windfall profits” made by them in these “extraordinary times.” It had apparently identified a threshold of global crude price where pursuit of “super-normal profits” by these firms could stoke fuel inflation and lead to higher inflationary expectations. It felt that aggressive export sales by private refiners had created supply constraints in the domestic auto fuel markets. The government has, however, cut the taxes by almost half at the first instance of the fortnightly review, as crude and product spreads of the companies concerned have considerably narrowed in the last two weeks. With the Brent crude price cooling off by nearly a fifth in the two weeks to mid-July, spreads on petrol by Reliance Industries have, for instance, shrunk by 60% and that on diesel by nearly half. It doesn't require even a fortnight for the dynamics of globalised market to change and fly in the face of artificial market intervention.

Persistently high inflation is what the government is most worried about, as it threatens to impair macroeconomic fundamentals and stifle a recovery. But surprise decisions like export taxes distort markets and are at odds with the promises of stable tax regime and regulatory restraint. Export taxes, by definition, are anti-market. Multilateral trade rules recognise minimal import tariffs as a tool for countries to give a modicum of protection to domestic industries, but export levies are a rarity and generally denounced. The vicissitudes of the global energy markets caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the high commodity prices are behind the “windfall taxes” on oil companies. The external situation has made it incumbent on the government to tackle a spike in imported inflation. Given that half the country's imports are price inelastic, there are not many options if global prices of hydrocarbons and base metals spiral. The burden of increased global prices gets transmitted to the Indian economy and it is a policy call if it reaches the end consumers by how much and how soon.

Though the country has managed to do away with formal price controls on auto fuels and the Union budget is largely relieved of the onus of explicit fuel subsidies, the markets are hardly free. Therein lies the reason for the current imbroglio, where a government, which vows to encourage domestic manufacturing, is drawn to keep a close eye on export business of private

companies and worry about domestic availability of fuels despite the country's robust refining capacity.

These taxes don't even boost the government's revenue much to allow wholesome redeployment of public resources, as any rise in tax receipts will be largely offset by reduced dividend receipts and PSU capex constraints the taxes themselves could cause. The prolonged stagnation in production of oil and natural gas has a lot to do with the absence of a regime conducive for risk-taking and investments. After the latest cut, the taxes on crude production are down by a fourth from the July 1 level, but the tax content in crude price is still as high as 50%. If a strong value chain is to evolve in the sector, global parity pricing of crude must be non-negotiable. Also, taxes on exploration and production activities should be slashed. <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/windfall-taxes-must-go-govt-should-make-fuel-business-attractive-instead-of-unnecessarily-interfering-in-it/2600776/>

24. Indian Navy: Looking beyond the Vikrant (*financialexpress.com*) July 21, 2022

The Indian Navy is on the threshold of commissioning Vikrant, India's first indigenously designed and built aircraft carrier, to coincide with the 75th anniversary of India's independence being celebrated as the 'Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. Aircraft carriers are extremely complex platforms to design and build; hence, besides adding to India's maritime might, it is also a recognition of India's technological and industrial expertise.

Vikrant will also be the Navy's first brand new carrier. So far, the previous three carriers operated by the Indian Navy had been bought second-hand and were then extensively refurbished to the IN's specifications. India's first aircraft carrier, the earlier INS Vikrant was a former Majestic class light aircraft carrier which had been laid down in 1943, launched in September 1945 but was never commissioned. India bought it in 1957 and after extensive modernisation, it was finally commissioned in the Indian Navy in March 1961 and thus began a glorious saga of carrier-borne aviation in the Indian navy which continues to consolidate and grow. Vikrant and its accompanying battle group exercised complete domination in the Bay of Bengal thus cutting off the logistic support from West Pakistan to its forces in the then East Pakistan and hastened the historic surrender of the Pakistani military and the liberation of Bangladesh. Its carrier-borne aircraft, striking from seawards, decimated any semblance of Pakistan's maritime resistance. Even the threat of intervention by the US Seventh Fleet led by the world's largest aircraft carrier at the time, the nuclear powered USS Enterprise, could not deter the Indian Navy's Carrier Task Force from achieving its objectives. Vikrant's performance in India's historic victory in 1971 was ample validation of the power projection capability of an aircraft carrier.

In 1987, the Indian Navy commissioned its second aircraft carrier, INS Viraat. She was the erstwhile HMS Hermes and had been the flagship of the Royal Navy's Task Force that wrested the Falkland Islands back from Argentina in 1982. Operating 8000 miles away from home in the South Atlantic, this was another example of the power projection that a Carrier Task Force can exercise anywhere at any time. Commissioned in the Royal Navy 1959, she was decommissioned in 1984 till the Indian Navy breathed fresh life into her. She was finally decommissioned in 2016 and thus became the longest serving warship in the world at the time.

Viraat was followed by INS Vikramaditya, the erstwhile Kiev class aircraft carrier, Admiral Gorshkov. She was commissioned in the Soviet Navy in 1987 and decommissioned in 1994 following the spectacular collapse of the Soviet Union and its mighty military machine.

Vikramaditya was commissioned in the Indian Navy in 2013 after being extensively reconfigured to Indian requirements.

Aircraft carriers are an integral part of a blue water navy. They are floating air bases capable of transiting over 500 nautical miles in 24 hours supported by a potent multi-dimensional battle group to shape the maritime battlespace to advantage. Recognising the importance of the maritime domain for India and the need therefore to develop a credible blue water capability, the very first naval force level plan that was approved soon after independence included a requirement of three aircraft carriers which continues to this day. However, it is regrettable that for most of the last 61 years since the commissioning of the first aircraft carrier in 1961, the navy has had to make do with just one aircraft carrier except for brief periods when there were two in commission with one of them being more or less on its last legs.

The induction of Vikrant will, for the first time, provide the Navy with two modern fully operational aircraft carriers with cutting-edge capability and will greatly enhance the Indian Navy's ability to project national power at a time when the maritime security scenario in the Indian Ocean is becoming extremely challenging. India's strategic location with its peninsular tip jutting almost 1000 miles requires a commensurate capability to shape a favourable maritime situation across both, the country's eastern as well as western seaboard.

Unlike the older two carriers, Vikrant and Viraat which embarked the Sea Harrier fighter aircraft and were essentially air defence carriers with limited strike capability, both Vikramaditya and the new Vikrant, displacing about 45000 tonnes each have greater strike capability with larger and more powerful aircraft like the MiG 29K with longer operating ranges and weapon payloads which will further enhance the Navy's ability to project power at and from the sea. The Government seems to have narrowed down the choice of aircraft after extensive trials, to two aircraft – the Boeing F-18A Hornet and the French Rafale-M. The decision to procure these through a Government to Government (G2G) arrangement will, hopefully enable quicker decision making than the regular cumbersome and convoluted process of the Defence Acquisition Procedure. In any case, there is hardly any big-ticket item that has been procured through the Defence Acquisition Procedure (formerly called the Defence Procurement Procedure) with most coming through intergovernmental arrangements, be it with Russia, France, Israel or the USA.

While we celebrate the commissioning of Vikrant and highlight the country's indigenous capability to build aircraft carriers as a triumph of the 'Make in India' and 'Aatmnirbhar Bharat' spirit, which it definitely is, it is also time to reflect on the future. The navy has been highlighting the need for three aircraft carriers so as to have at least two operationally available at any given time to ensure the country's maritime security in its eastern and western maritime theatres as well as to ensure a decisively favourable maritime situation and superior naval capability in the Indian Ocean, which is the primary area of interest. The strategic construct of the Indo-Pacific has further widened the scope and range of the country's maritime security imperatives. A proposal for the construction of a second indigenous aircraft carrier (often referred to as IAC2) has been under consideration with the government for at least a decade if not more. The Navy has also identified the operational requirements – it will be larger than the present carriers, will displace about 65000 tonnes and will be powered by electric propulsion. Infact, till a few years ago, the Chief of the Naval Staff at the time had even suggested that a nuclear-powered carrier could be an option. This led to the setting up of a Joint Working Group with the US under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) on aircraft carrier technology cooperation. Latest technologies like the Electro-Magnetic Aircraft Landing

System (EMALS) have been discussed extensively with numerous presentations being made to industry and the government. EMALS has been installed on the latest American aircraft carrier (USS Gerald Ford) and China too is likely to install its own version of EMALS on its third carrier which was launched recently.

Over the last decade or so, the navy's prospective plans, approved by the MoD, have included the IAC 2. In 2015, the DAC had also approved a sum of Rs 30 crores for the preliminary design effort. Discussions on the design, the EMALS system and electrical propulsion have been continuing over the years. Therefore, if the requirement of a third aircraft carrier had been recognised over a decade ago, it definitely could not have changed with the security scenario definitely grimmer now than it was a decade ago. Infact, in the last eight years, India's foreign policy has been far more confident than at any previous time with the Prime Minister repeatedly emphasising the importance of the maritime domain; hence the need for a commensurate maritime presence and power projection capability has never been more significant than it is today.

Besides the requirement of at least three aircraft carriers from a national security perspective , retaining the skills and expertise to design and build these complex platforms is equally important. India is only one of a handful of countries in the world to build an aircraft carrier, the others being the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Spain and Italy. Japan has built helicopter carriers and is in the process of converting one of these into an aircraft carrier. It has taken the country 17 long years to build Vikrant – the ship was ordered in 2004, keel laid in 2009 and it was launched in 2013. It has taken a lot of time, effort and expense to develop the expertise, human and otherwise, many lessons have been learnt along the way, cooperation with external suppliers has been involved and a successful industrial eco system has been created which understands the intricacies and challenges of ensuring the stringent quality standards. Many small and medium industries are part of this ecosystem and have contributed in no small measure to this successful indigenous effort which will be proudly showcased to the world in mid- August.

This has involved a considerable investment in resources – technical, human and financial – on which many of these small and medium enterprises have staked their future in anticipation of a sustainable return on their investment with further orders. The indecisiveness of the government and the consequent delays in decision making is not only threatening the future of this ecosystem but a gap in the in a follow-on construction programme will also lead to loss of expertise, capability, human resource, the physical infrastructure and to a lack of confidence in an insensitive governmental system impervious to the concerns of the industry. It is unfortunate that despite this being recognised, the programme remains mired in the labyrinthian corridors of South Block with little or no discernible progress as is also happening with submarines, minesweepers, Landing Platform Docks (LPD), helicopters, aircraft...and the list goes on and on.

Reinventing the wheel to regain lost aircraft carrier construction capability is a luxury that a resource-challenged India cannot afford; infact, expediting the decision-making process and commencing construction of the IAC 2 is definitely the most cost-effective option while attributing the delay to a resource constraint, as is the wont to justify delays, will actually prove costly and counter-productive in the long run in more ways than one. <https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/indian-navy-looking-beyond-the-vikrant/2601528/>

25. ADB slashes India growth forecast to 7.2% for FY23, sees higher inflation ([business-standard.com](https://www.business-standard.com)) July 21, 2022

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday slashed its growth forecast for India to 7.2 per cent for FY23 from 7.5 per cent estimated earlier citing higher than anticipated inflation since April and subsequent monetary tightening by the central bank.

The Manila-based multilateral development bank also raised its inflation forecast for India to 6.7 per cent for FY23 from 5.8 per cent projected earlier.

“Although consumer confidence continues to improve, higher-than-expected inflation will erode consumer purchasing power. Some of the impact of this may be offset by a cut in excise duties, the provision of fertilizer and gas subsidies, and the extension of a free-food distribution program,” ADB said in its latest Asian Development Outlook supplement.

India’s GDP growth moderated to 4.1 per cent in the March quarter of FY22 on “disappointing” growth in private consumption and a contraction in manufacturing.

ADB said private investment will soften due to the higher cost of borrowing for firms as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) continues to raise policy rates to contain inflation. “Net exports will shrink due to subdued global demand and a rising real effective exchange rate eroding export competitiveness despite a depreciating rupee,” it added.

About the supply side, ADB said higher commodity prices will boost the mining industry. “But manufacturing firms will bear the brunt of higher input costs due to rising oil prices. The services sector, hit hard by COVID-19 since 2020, will do well in FY23 and beyond as the economy opens up and travel resumes. Even so, growth in Fy24 is revised down to 7.8 per cent (from 8 per cent estimated earlier),” it said.

Industry group Ficci in its latest Economic Outlook Survey released separately on Thursday reduced the median GDP growth forecast to 7 per cent from 7.4 per cent estimated in April--- within a range of 6.5 per cent to 7.3 per cent--blaming geopolitical uncertainty and its repercussions for the Indian economy.

“Indian economy is not immune to global volatility, as is evident from the deepening inflationary pressures and increasing uncertainty in financial markets. The participants pointed out that these factors are exerting pressure on India's economic prospects and are likely to delay the recovery,” it said.

Ficci said major risks to India’s economic recovery include rising commodity prices, supply-side disruptions, bleak global growth prospects with the conflict prolonging in Europe. “A slowdown in the Chinese economy is also expected to have an impact on India's growth. Increased input cost is impairing discretionary spending as these get passed on to the final consumer through higher selling prices,” it added. https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/adb-slashes-india-growth-forecast-to-7-2-for-fy23-sees-higher-inflation-122072100444_1.html