

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS (01.10.2022 to 03.10.2022)

1. Early Childhood Care and Education: ‘The Elephant in the Room’ No More (orfonline.org) Oct 03, 2022

The framers of the Constitution of India, which came into force in 1950, put faith in the State to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years of age. Article 45 of the Constitution was a directive principle for the State to begin doing so within a period of ten years from 1950. Yet today, more than 50 years since, India has yet to fulfil its promise to its young children.

To be sure, there have been efforts to institutionalise early childhood education. In 1986, the government announced a National Policy of Education (NPE), which viewed Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as an “important input in the strategy of human resource development” and committed the state to give more attention to the existing mechanisms of ECCE delivery in India. Over a decade later, in 2002, the government passed the 86th Constitutional Amendment, comprising two insertions: Article 21-A which made the Right to Education (RTE) of a child between six to 14 years, a fundamental right; and Article 51A(k) that assigned the “fundamental duty” of educating a child to their parent or guardian. Additionally, the old Article 45 was substituted by a new one through the same Constitutional amendment which introduced the concept of ECCE. It provided for a directive to the State, whereby the State was at liberty to pass legislation to bring into effect the mandate of providing ECCE to children up to six years of age.

In July 2020 the Ministry of Education (MoE) released the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which draws substantially from the Draft NEP 2019. The NEP 2020 rekindles the aspirations for ECCE, especially its educational aspect. However, until such time as the Constitutional principle is not translated into specific legislation, the government cannot be held accountable for failing to enforce its mandate to provide early childhood education.

The Legislative Mandate and its Enforceability

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (or the RTE Act) was enacted in 2009 and its primary objective is a verbatim reiteration of the aim of Article 21 of the Constitution. However, there has been less discussion around one of the rather neglected provisions of the said Act, which imposed a legislative mandate upon the respective Central and State governments to provide ECCE, as provided for under Article 45 of the Constitution. The provision says:

“Section 11: With a view to prepare children above the age of three years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years, the appropriate Government may make necessary arrangement for providing free pre-school education for such children.”

The Preamble of the RTE Bill refers to Article 45 as one of the components of the RTE Act, so passed.[a],What was then enshrined under Article 45 of the Constitution as a

non-enforceable directive principle was translated to an enforceable duty for the State to provide for ECCE, through Section 11 of the RTE Act. In turn, this created a corresponding enforceable right of the citizens to demand ECCE in the law, as a matter of statutory right.

ECCE and the Question of Governing Ministry

Sections 35 and 38 of the RTE Act provide for directions, guidelines, and rulemaking powers of the Union government as well as the appropriate Ministry for the implementation of the law. In practice, it is the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) that has been responsible for early childhood care and education, specifically through the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and the deployment of Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) in every state. As of 2021, there were 1.38 million AWCs in operation across the country—a number that may appear huge, but remains low compared to the massive need. Moreover, amongst the multitude of services related to early childhood care (i.e. health, nutrition, and immunisation, among others), the component of education has often been given low priority across the country.

Perhaps the most crucial issue regarding ECCE pertains to which Ministry would be tasked to make the rules in accordance with the provisions of Section 11 of the RTE Act. While the entire Act appears to be about the right to education which is to be administered by the Ministry of Education (MoE), a closer examination reveals that it is not quite so, at least under the law.

The Ministries can administer and act only on the subject matters specifically allocated to them under The Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961 (hereinafter referred to as the “Rules”). These Rules provide for the distribution of subject matters among all the departments of each Ministry; the said Ministry, through its designated Department, can thereby make rules and administer them.

In the context of the subject of this brief, the matter of “elementary education” has been allocated to the MoE through the Department of School Education and Literacy. However, there is no mention in the Rules about the MoE being tasked to provide ECCE. It clearly shows that ECCE is not an allocated business of the MoE. Indeed, ECCE is a subject matter that relates to the MoWCD. The allocated business for the MoWCD provides for “care of pre-school children including pre-primary education.”

A Chronicle of Neglect

The government Rules are clear in assigning ECCE to the purview of business allocated to the MoWCD, and not the MoE. However, neither the MoWCD nor the MoE has a clear demarcation of each other’s subject matters and have historically passed the responsibility of ECCE to the other. The consequences are dire for the young children of India, who are the intended beneficiaries of the law.

The allocation of business under the government Rules is of prime importance: it acknowledges the heads of expenditure (or the expense towards a specific subject matter); and it leads to the allocation of funds towards such head. ECCE in India has long suffered from scarce funding—in 2020-21, the public expenditure on early

childhood care and education was a mere 0.1 percent of GDP. Existing programmes—for example, the ICDS—are also poorly governed and implemented. Indeed, the draft National Education Policy (NEP) 2019 had noted the deficiency in the number of AWCs, and in the infrastructure and skilled workforce of the centres that are striving to remain operational.

The 2017 review by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of the RTE Act refers to the law as being under the jurisdiction of the MoE (then Ministry of Human Resources Development or MHRD). The entire audit was conducted with respect only to the MHRD at the Central level, and not the MoWCD. This shows that the MoE, MoWCD as well as even CAG do not strictly recognise Section 11 of the Act, i.e. ECCE, as a subject matter of MoWCD and it reveals the confusion within the Government; in turn, this “confusion”—whether intended or not—translates on-ground to negligence.

Even assuming that ECCE is recognised to be a subject matter under the MoWCD, the ministry was not audited in the 2017 Audit Report of the RTE Act; this implies that there is no fund allocation to MoWCD specifically for ECCE that requires to be reviewed by CAG. Furthermore, as a consequence of the non-recognition of MoWCD’s role for ECCE under the RTE Act, there would not be budgetary allocation in the subsequent financial years—this means Section 11 has no purpose. In fact, the budgetary allocation for the RTE Act itself is taken from that for the programme, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA, now under the Samagra Siksha Scheme)—which is an umbrella program for school education extending from pre-school to grade that focuses on school effectiveness, access, and learning outcomes. This makes things far worse for the prospects of effectively implementing ECCE.

At the same time, however, the MoWCD has passed an ECCE Policy in 2013, after it issued a draft Early Childhood Education Framework in 2012. It is also responsible for the ICDS which administers the Anganwadis. According to MoWCD, ICDS has four pillars: early childhood care education and development; care and nutrition counselling; health services; community mobilisation awareness, advocacy and information; and education and communication. The Ministry’s own data shows that there has been no significant spending on the first component, i.e. ECCE. As per the Notes on Demand of Grants for 2022-23, the actual expenditure under the ICDS Scheme in FY 2020-21 was INR 18203.87 crore, under the following sub-heads: Anganwadi Services (INR 15784.42 crore); National Nutrition Mission (INR 408.27 crore); Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (INR 1112.13 crore); Scheme for Adolescent Girls (INR 40.82 crore); National Creche Scheme (INR 11.60 crore); and Child Protection Services (INR 846.63 crore). No specific allocation out of the said amount has been made towards ECCE.

The Draft NEP 2019 visited the issue in great detail, highlighting the systemic and institutional issues that hobble the capacities of the Anganwadi system in delivering ECCE. Primary of these challenges is the lack of infrastructure. Compounding the difficulties is the overreliance by the Government and stakeholders on AWCs to deliver a multitude of functions with limited training and bandwidth. The gap between expectations and resources results in poor quality of service delivery in AWCs, especially in the field of education.

While there is no clarity yet on budgetary allocations, the draft NEP 2019 provided some direction on the inter-ministerial division of responsibilities related to the provision of early childhood education. It acknowledged the government's shortcomings, particularly through the ICDS mechanisms. The policy calls for greater attention on ECCE through an expanded institutional system. It outlines the following strategies: a) strengthening and expansion of AWCs; b) co-location of AWCs in primary schools; c) co-location of pre-primary grades in existing primary schools; and d) increased standalone pre-primary schools. The draft NEP 2019 committed to curricular and pedagogical reforms and recommended the extension of the RTE Act to include ECCE under its ambit. The NEP 2020—which was finally passed in July 2020—carries this vision, and notes that a clear demarcation between the education and non-education aspects under ECCE will be a key step forward.

It is important to recognise ECCE as a statutory obligation of MoWCD so that all stakeholders have clarity about who is responsible for implementing the law; it also ensures accountability. While the responsibilities of providing pre-school education (ECE or early childhood education) can be undertaken by the MoE as proposed by NEP 2020, the overall charge of the entire gamut of ECCE (including the 'care' components) should be retained with MoWCD. The MoE in that case would be deriving its powers and functions from the MoWCD for this limited purpose of providing pre-school education, to be in coherence with the Business Conduct Rules.

As the ecosystem is currently set up, ICDS tends to dilute the concept of ECCE as an essential obligation of the state, as it makes it the responsibility of nine ministries and departments rather than a sacrosanct responsibility of MoWCD alone, as written in the government Rules. The result is an overlap of policies between MoE and MoWCD in relation to ECCE. For instance, as per law, ECCE, inclusive of pre-primary education, is a business allocated to MoWCD. However, it is the MoE that has framed policies regarding pre-primary education under the banner name of Integrated Scheme for School Education, Samagra Shiksha Scheme (SSS) in 2018 by subsuming the erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of SSA, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE).

This was before the advent of NEP 2020, when the MoE was given no explicit charge of either ECE or ECCE. The 2018 directive of the SSS is cognisant of the proposals made by the NEP 2020 towards integrating pre-primary education into the ambit of formal school education. NEP 2020 is thus crucial for giving greater attention, for the first time, on strengthening the education pillar of ECCE. The responsibility is being given to MoE to ensure a curricular re-structuring that will place pre-school squarely in the ambit of school education. The intent to strengthen the teaching workforce—as outlined in NEP 2020—on pre-school education also exhibits clear and a long-due commitment towards ECCE in India.

These steps will be key to correcting the current state of early childhood care and education in the country, and finally abide by the government Rules and adhere to the constitutionality of the RTE Act's Section 11.

The Mess Around Reparations

Various decisions of High Courts have highlighted the failure of the government to implement the letter and spirit of Section 11 of the RTE in relation to ECCE. For instance, the Bombay High Court, in *Dr. Jagannath S/o Shamrao Patil v. Union of India & Ors* explicitly directed the State authorities to formulate guidelines under Section 11. Essentially, however, the onus is on the Central Government, as argued in the earlier sections of this brief.

The solution appears to be as fundamental as the problem itself. The first step should be to recognise which Ministry has been allocated to provide for ECCE—and that would be the MoWCD. As discussed earlier, in consonance with NEP 2020, the responsibilities of pre-school education or ECE can be undertaken by the MoE but the overall charge of ECCE should be retained with the MoWCD. To make the latter happen, a subsequent legislative amendment needs to be made to the business conduct rules.

An important distinction also needs to be clarified between legislation and policy. NEP 2020 is a policy document and mostly directional or aspirational in nature. While it does provide a clear and strong intent towards formalising pre-school education and streamlining it, the implementation is another matter altogether. In order to operationalise the spirit of the policy, legislative changes are needed to both the RTE Act as well as the business conduct rules.

Another key step would be to recognise and popularise the concept of ECCE being a vital part of the RTE Act as that of elementary education provided under the Act, something which the Draft NEP 2019 has emphasised. It would then be consequential to such a recognition, that budgetary allocation specifically for ECCE be made, either through the simultaneous repeal of overlapping and diverging schemes including SSS as well as ICDS, or through having different sets of budgets for different heads under ECCE.

This strategy would serve two purposes: it would avoid waste of financial and other resources; and it would direct the resources specifically towards pre-school education. It will also be imperative to formulate a definitive policy/ guidelines/ directions/ Rules strictly under Section 35 and 38 by the MoWCD and the local authorities and State Governments in terms of Section 11 of the RTE Act.

The fundamental aim of this approach would be to create justiciability: i.e., the right of an aggrieved person to approach Court(s) in order to hold the appropriate and responsible ministry accountable for its inactions, ineffective implementation and non-compliances in providing ECCE. In terms of rules, the ECCE has certainly come a long way from being non-existent under the Constitution initially, to being a non-justiciable directive principle under amended Article 45, and to finally being a part of the RTE Act under Section 11 as a justiciable provision. The right to enforce the concept of ECCE under Section 11 is crucial to bringing ECCE to the fore in Indian policy and lawmaking. This can be done only by assigning accountability to a Ministry; the strategies outlined in the preceding paragraphs will help.

In turn, such an official clarity will have an impact on all other stakeholders in the domain of ECCE: they will from hereon be clear as to who is indeed responsible for providing early childhood care and education.

Conclusion

Early childhood care and education has historically been neglected in India. The National Education Policy 2020 has come at the right time and provides a beacon of hope that adequate attention will henceforth be paid to ECCE. However, NEP still remains essentially an aspirational policy, and not an enforceable legislation. For substantive changes to happen in the domain of ECCE, the country's lawmakers need to step up and, first, revisit Section 11 of the RTE Act in light of the increased advocacy for ECCE.

It is also crucial to understand that while ECCE adopts a more holistic approach to the overall odevelopment of younger children, the mandate and expertise of delivering education lies with the MoE and not MoWCD. This would need to be adequately translated into practice, not just through laws but also through adequate financing and standardised policies. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/early-childhood-care-and-education/>

2. Private Hospital Opposes Removal of Payment Clause in Proposed CGHS Empanelment Pact (*medicaldialogues.in*) 02 October 2022

The private hospitals oppose the removal of payment terms in a proposed agreement related to the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) empanelment stating that these clauses would affect their ability to provide seamless services.

The CGHS scheme allows 40 million serving and retired Central government employees to seek medical services at government clinics and empanelled private hospitals and diagnostic centres by paying a nominal monthly amount. However, in the latest pact, there is no mention of a payment clause for empanelled private hospitals, which has caused reservations amongst the hospitals.

Due to delayed processing of their reimbursement claims and long-pending dues, the private hospital had already stopped cashless facilities for CGHS patients. Girdhar Gyani, coordinator of the CGHS working group for private healthcare providers, said, "The newly proposed agreement has sought extension of empanelment and added new clauses which are of deep concern to hospitals," adding, "The government has very detailed clauses on the hospital's terms of operation, termination, penalty and performance clauses. However, there are no payment terms in the agreement."

The previous CGHS agreement with hospitals allows 70 percent of the claimed amount to be paid within five working days upon the submission of bills and the balance amount after due scrutiny within 30 days. Also, the revised memorandum of agreement dated September 13 does not mention the terms of employment for private hospitals that wish to continue their empanelment with the CGHS for the next two years.

Speaking to Moneycontrol, Gyani said, "There is also no clause that allows hospitals to contest arbitrary deductions or denials," adding, "All healthcare groups indicated that CGHS takes nine months to one year to clear their bills. This places working capital stress on hospitals as they need to pay salaries monthly and their vendors in 45 days."

The healthcare institutions which are already on the CGHS panel are required to submit a letter of acceptance for the revised agreement within 15 days in order to continue the CGHS panel for another two years, until September 30, 2024. If not, it would be considered as they are not interested and will be removed from the panel.

According to various representatives from Medanta, Max Healthcare, Fortis Healthcare, Narayana Health, and Yashoda Hospitals, the proposed changes would severely affect their ability to deliver seamless services to CGHS beneficiaries.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India had observed that 632,000 claims amounting to Rs 527.62 crore were outstanding as of March 31, 2021. The discussions for new provisions were held on September 21 by the CGHS coordination committee representing healthcare associations including the Indian Medical Association, Ficci, Assocham, Healthcare Federation of India (NATHEALTH), and Association of Healthcare Providers.

Expressing their concerns, the committee had also written to the Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya and health secretary Rajesh Bhushan. The letter noted, "Representatives from key hospital groups expressed serious reservations about some of the new provisions... These changes will have a major impact on the ability of hospitals to deliver seamless service to CGHS beneficiaries without impacting the quality of healthcare." Opposing the continuation of previous CGHS rates, they stated that the rates have not been revised since 2014.

The letter to the health secretary stated, "In the past eight years since these packages were introduced, hospitals continued to pay annual increments to doctors and nurses, deal with rampant increases in the cost of medicines and consumables, and pay more for all operating overheads. It is impossible for hospitals to maintain acceptable standards of clinical quality at these rates."

Shravan Subramanyam, president of NATHEALTH, said, "In addition, the additional discounts and payment gateway tariffs being imposed will make the programme further unviable," adding, "It is important to engage in a dialogue to address the challenges in the scheme and make the supply pool grow where quality and appropriate care is provided to CGHS beneficiaries seamlessly in a viable contractual framework." <https://medicaldialogues.in/news/health/private-hospital-opposes-removal-of-payment-clause-in-proposed-cghs-empament-pact-99936>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

3. Madhya Pradesh govt cancels all Maheshwar Hydroelectric contracts (downtoearth.org.in) 30 September 2022

The Madhya Pradesh government has cancelled all contracts with Maheshwar Hydroelectric Project almost three decades after it agreed to purchase power from it. The project had a poor financial track record, several irregularities and graft allegations and caused the submergence of 61 villages.

The company also allegedly failed to provide proper resettlement to all the 9,500 families affected by it.

The Maheshwar dam is one of the large dams of the Narmada Valley Development Project, which envisages the construction of 30 large and 135 smaller dams in the Narmada valley. The privatised hydroelectric project of 400 megawatts capacity was coming up in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan September 27, 2022, announced the cancellation of all agreements with Shree Maheshwar Hydel Power Corporation Ltd. The approval was given in a cabinet meeting.

The contract for the hydroelectric plant was granted to a company under S Kumars Group. The state government had signed a power purchase agreement with the company in 1994, which was revised in 1996.

The project ran into trouble in 1999 when several German companies that were collaborating on the project backed out. The project estimates also shot up. The estimated cost of Rs 1,670 crore shot up to over Rs 3,000 crore by 2011.

The project was marred by several controversies of financial irregularities, which were also pointed out by Comptroller and Auditor General of India reports. CAG exposed serious corruption charges against the Maheshwar project in five reports in 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005 and 2014.

The 2014 CAG report had suggested terminating the project for undue delay in its completion.

Residents of 61 villages had been fighting against the project under the social movement Narmada Bachao Andolan for the last 25 years.

The construction work was repeatedly interrupted because of corruption charges, said senior activist of NBA Chittaropa Palit. "The work was stalled for 12 years," she said.

The projector S Kumars had also allegedly diverted Rs 106.4 crore from loans granted by various banks and government institutions for the Maheshwar project to another company of the same group, the Industrial Finance Corporation of India said in a 2001 report.

Protestors had alleged that there was no need for the project, which was wasting the taxpayers' money. MP has over 3,000 units of electricity in excess after meeting its current needs and currently, power is available at Rs 2.5 per unit.

The Maheshwar Hydroelectric Project was to supply just over 800 million units of electricity, whose cost would have come to around Rs 18 per unit, said the order issued now.

NBA had repeatedly demanded a forensic audit of the public money received for the project.

However, the government would have to pay about Rs 1,200 crore every year for 35 years to the project, even if no electricity was purchased, according to the power purchase agreement. Around Rs 42,000 crore of public money would have gone out of taxpayers' pockets in 35 years, even if no electricity was purchased.

This is a historic victory for our struggle, senior activist Alok Agarwal told Down To Earth. Agarwal had been a part of the protests against the hydroelectric project. "The government had to admit that we were right and they were wrong," he said.

The cancelled contracts are the power purchase agreement of November 11, 1994; power purchase agreement amendment and implementation agreement of May 27, 1996; rehabilitation and resettlement agreement February 24, 1997 and amendatory and restated agreement of September 16, 2005.

The state government's guarantees and counter guarantees attached to these agreements have also been cancelled. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/governance/madhya-pradesh-govt-cancels-all-maheshwar-hydroelectric-contracts-85235>

4. Madhya Pradesh News: MP में विद्युत विभाग को लग रहा पलीता, CAG रिपोर्ट में खुलासा ([newsnationtv.com](https://www.newsnationtv.com)) 01 October 2022

Video Link: <https://www.newsnationtv.com/videos/madhya-pradesh/electricity-department-in-mp-is-facing-destruction-disclosed-in-cag-report-100825.html>

5. ऑडिट सप्ताह: एजी ऑफिस में पहली बार मनेगा ऑडिट सप्ताह, राज्यपाल के आने की संभावना ([bhaskar.com](https://www.bhaskar.com)) Oct 2, 2022

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की अपील के बाद पहली बार ग्वालियर स्थित एजी ऑफिस इस बार ऑडिट सप्ताह मनाएगा। प्रधानमंत्री ने बीते साल दिल्ली में सीएजी के ऑडिट दिवस कार्यक्रम में अपील की थी कि सीएजी के बारे में आम लोगों और छात्रों को बताना चाहिए कि यह संस्था कैसे काम करती है। इसके लिए हर राज्य में ऑडिट सप्ताह मनाया जाना चाहिए। इस आधार पर दूसरे राज्यों में मौजूद एजी कार्यालयों ने ऑडिट सप्ताह मनाना शुरू किया लेकिन मध्यप्रदेश में अब यह पहली बार मनाया जाएगा।

मध्यप्रदेश के ग्वालियर एजी ऑफिस से इसकी शुरुआत होगी। ऑडिट सप्ताह 21 नवंबर से 27 नवंबर तक ग्वालियर एजी कार्यालय में मनाया जाएगा। इसके लिए शुक्रवार को ग्वालियर एजी कार्यालय के प्रिंसिपल अकाउंटेंट जनरल प्रथम रविंद्र पत्तार ने भोपाल पहुंचकर राज्यपाल मंगू भाई पटेल से मुलाकात की और उन्हें कार्यक्रम में आने का निमंत्रण दिया। ग्वालियर एजी कार्यालय में यह कार्यक्रम 25 नवंबर को प्रस्तावित किया गया है। एजी कार्यालय के अधिकारियों का कहना है कि अब हर साल ऑडिट सप्ताह मनाने की योजना तैयार हुई है। इसमें अधिक से अधिक स्कूल-

कॉलेज के छात्रों को जोड़ा जाएगा और उन्हें एजी कार्यालय बुलाकर यहां की कार्यप्रणाली के बारे में दिखाया और समझाया जाएगा। एजी कार्यालय के अधिकारी भी स्कूल-

कॉलेजों में जाकर सीएजी और एजी की कार्यप्रणाली के बारे में बताएंगे। <https://money.bhaskar.com/local/mp/gwalior/news/audit-week-will-be-held-for-the-first-time-in-the-ag-office-the-governor-is-likely-to-come-130388903.html>

6. Greater Noida: टाउनशिप योजना में 80 करोड़ रुपये का घोटाला, नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षा की रिपोर्ट में हुआ खुला (amarujala.com) Oct 3, 2022

पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री मायावती के शासन काल में यमुना प्राधिकरण के कुछ अधिकारियों और नेताओं ने मिलकर शासन को 80 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक का आर्थिक नुकसान पहुंचा दिया। इस घोटाले को अंजाम देने के लिए प्राधिकरण के क्षेत्र में बुलंदशहर के बैलाना गांव में एक टाउनशिप बसाने की तैयारी की गई।

इसके बाद जगह-

जगह पर टुकड़ों में परिचितों की जमीन खरीद ली। इसके लिए पहले 10 गांवों के लिए अधिसूचना जारी कराई गई, फिर बोर्ड बैठक में प्रस्ताव लाकर अधिसूचना को निरस्त (डी नोटिफाइड) के लिए शासन को पत्र भेज दिया गया, लेकिन इस बीच जमीन की खरीद चालू रही। इतना नहीं मुआवजा दर बुलंदशहर में 990 रुपये प्रति वर्गमीटर थी, लेकिन 1093 और 1186 रुपये वर्गमीटर की दर से मुआवजा दिया गया। इससे सरकार को घाटा हुआ।

इस घोटाले की नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (सीएजी) रिपोर्ट पिछले दिनों विधानसभा के पटल पर रखी गई थी। इसके बाद यमुना प्राधिकरण में दस्तावेज को लेकर रिकार्ड खंगालने शुरू कर दिए गए हैं। अब शासन की समिति कभी भी प्राधिकरण का दौरा कर सकती है।

दरअसल, वर्ष 2011 और 2012 में प्राधिकरण और कुछ नेताओं ने एक बड़ी कंपनी की मेगा सिटी टाउनशिप बसाने के लिए आवेदन कराया और चार लाख वर्गमीटर जमीन खरीदने की मांग की। इसके बाद जमीन खरीदने के लिए प्राधिकरण के अधिकारियों ने 10 गांवों की अधिसूचना कराई, लेकिन इसी बीच बोर्ड बैठक करके अधिसूचना को रद्द कराते हुए आपसी सहमति से जमीन खरीदने का प्रस्ताव बना लिया, जबकि अधिसूचना रद्द होने पर जमीन नहीं खरीदी जानी थी।

अधिकारियों ने कुछ विशेष लोगों की टुकड़ों में जमीन खरीदी जो मास्टर प्लान से बाहर थी। जमीन को एक से दूसरी तक जोड़ने के लिए अन्य किसानों से भी भूमि खरीदी गई, जबकि इस बीच टाउनशिप का प्रस्ताव निरस्त हो गया और राशि वापस मांगी गई थी। इस राशि को वापस करने के दौरान कुछ फीसदी कटौत

ती की जानी थी। अधिकारियों ने बिना कटौती के पूरी राशि कंपनी को वापस कर दी। जब कंपनी ने अपना आवेदन वापस ले लिया तो बिना किसी प्रस्ताव के इसमें से कुछ जमीन दूसरी कंपनियों को आवंटित कर दी गई।

सीएजी ने उठाए सवाल

बुलंदशहर में जिस समय 990 रुपये प्रति वर्गमीटर की दर से मुआवजा दिया जाना था। उसी समय प्राधिकरण के अधिकारियों ने 1093 से 1186 रुपये प्रति वर्ग मीटर मुआवजा दिया गया। इस जमीन का मुआवजा दिए जाने में बरती गई अनियमितियों के कारण प्राधिकरण को करीब सवा करोड़ रुपये का घाटा हुआ।

जब टाउनशिप का प्रस्ताव आया और पहले 10 गांवों की जमीन को अधिसूचित कराया और फिर उसे बोर्ड में ले जाकर अधिसूचना को निरस्त करा दिया तो टाउनशिप की योजना ही फ्लॉप हो गई। इसके बावजूद भी जमीन क्यों खरीदी गई।

जब टाउनशिप ने आवेदन वापस ले लिया तो दूसरे किसानों की जमीन क्यों खरीदी गई। आज तक इस जमीन पर कोई कब्जा तक नहीं लिया जा सका। <https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/noida/greater-noida-80-crore-scam-in-township-scheme?pagelId=1>

7. यमुना अथॉरिटी भूमि खरीद घोटाला : सीएजी ने माना अफसरों ने की मनमानी, अब सफेदपोश नेताओं के गिरेहबान तक पहुंचेगा 'कानून का हाथ' (tricitytoday.com) Sept 30, 2022

यमुना प्राधिकरण ने मास्टर प्लान से बाहर वैलाना गांव में मेगा टाउनशिप बसाने के नाम पर 62 हेक्टेयर जमीन खरीदी थी। इससे जुड़ा मामला सीएजी (CAG) ने पकड़ लिया है। यह मामला अब यूपी विधान सभा के पटल पर पहुंच गया है। विधान सभा में कार्यवाही के दौरान इस मामले में कई बड़े अफसरों की गर्दन फंस सकती है। इसके साथ ही जिन लोगों ने वैलाना गांव में पहले किसानों से औने-पौने दामों में जमीन खरीदी और फिर प्राधिकरण को सीधा बेच दिया, उन लोगों के गिरेहबान तक सरकार के हाथ पहुंच सकते हैं। इस जमीन खरीद घोटाले में 80 करोड़ रुपए का नुकसान यमुना प्राधिकरण को हुआ है। बड़ी बात यह है कि इस मामले में अथॉरिटी के तत्कालीन मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी पीसी गुप्ता जेल की हवा खा चुके हैं। अभी तक लाभ हासिल करने वालों तक आंच नहीं पहुंची है।

सीएजी को जांच में पता चला है कि यह जमीन यमुना प्राधिकरण के मास्टर प्लान 2021 और 2031 से बाहर थी। इस जमीन को खरीदने के लिए प्राधिकरण ने जनवरी 2011 में अधिग्रहण करने के लिए धारा 4/17 का प्रस्ताव दिया था। यह जमीन तत्कालीन सत्तारूढ़ पार्टी के सफेदपोश नेता और भूमाफियाओं ने मिलकर खरीदी थी। इसके बाद अधिग्रहण के प्रस्ताव को रद्द करा करवाया गया। इस जमीन को सितंबर 2011 में डिनोटिफाइड करवा दिया गया। इसी बीच फरवरी 2012 की बोर्ड बैठक में इस जमीन को सीधे खरीदने का प्रस्ताव पास करवाया गया। बैनामों से 70 करोड़, 34 लाख रुपए की जमीन खरीद ली। अधिग्रहण में 2.82 करोड़ रुपए का अन्य खर्चा हुआ। 3.5 लाख रुपए की स्टंप ड्यूटी और 14 लाख रुपए रजिस्ट्री शुल्क पर खर्च डाले गए। वैलाना गांव में जहां जमीन खरीद का खेला खेला गया, वह अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में नहीं था।

मेगा टाउनशिप बसाने के नाम पर वेव इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर को आवंटन किया जाना था। कम्पनी ने इसके लिए 50 करोड़ रुपए दिए थे। बाद में कम्पनी ने प्रोजेक्ट से हाथ खींच लिए थे। कम्पनी की जमा धनराशि बगैर 10 परसेंट शुल्क काटे वापस लौटा दी गई। इस मामले में कई नेता, भूमाफिया, प्राधिकरण के अफसर और बोर्ड बैठक में शामिल शासन के बड़े अफसर लपेटे में आ सकते हैं। अब इस मामले को विधानसभा की आश्वासन समिति के पास भेजा जाएगा। समिति विधान सभा में आरोप तय कर सकती है। यह जमीन फर्जी कंपनी बनाकर खरीदी गई बताई जाती है। <https://tricitytoday.com/greater-noida/in-yamuna-authority-land-purchase-scam-cag-admitted-that-officers-were-arbitrarily-33662.html>

8. सीएजी जांच रिपोर्ट: टाउनशिप बसाने के नाम पर तत्कालीन मैनेजर बशीखान के किया बड़ा घोटाला (jantaserishta.com) 1 Oct 2022

यमुना अथॉरिटी में सीएजी ने जांच में बड़ा खुलासा किया है। बसपा शासनकाल में पहले एचसी इंफ्रासिटी के नाम 4 लाख वर्ग मीटर जमीन का आवंटन टाउनशिप बसाने के लिए कराया। बाद में प्लॉट की रजिस्ट्री 3 अन्य कंपनियों के नाम कर दी गई। मजेदार बात यह है कि मामला यहीं पर नहीं रूका। बगैर अथॉरिटी के किसी भी अधिकारी से अपूर्व ल लिए बिना ही तत्कालीन मैनेजर बशीखान ने पांच अन्य कंपनियों को सब लीज कर डाली। इससे यमुना अथॉरिटी को 29.33 करोड़ रुपए का नुकसान हुआ है। सीएजी की जांच रिपोर्ट को यूपी विधानसभा के पटल पर रखकर पेश किया गया। जिसके बाद इस महा घोटाले का भंडा फोड़ हुआ है। अब मैनेजर बशीखान के अलाव उस दौरान आवंटन से लेकर सब लीज कराने में शामिल रहे अफसरों की गर्दन फंसेगी। उनसे अथॉरिटी को हुए नुकसान की भरवाई उनकी प्रॉपटी बेच कर की जाएगी। विधान सभा की समिति के सामने यह मामला जाएगा।

विधानसभा की समिति जल्द की जांच करने के लिए गठन होने बाद यमुना अथॉरिटी का दौरा कर सकती है। सीएजी ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में बाकायदा मैनेजर बशीखान के नाम का उल्लेख किया है। सीएजी की रिपोर्ट में खुलासा हुआ है कि यमुना अथॉरिटी की ओर से सबसे पहले एचसी इंफ्रासिटी के नाम चार लाख वर्ग मीटर जमीन का आवंटन हुआ। इसके बाद रजिस्ट्री रवि डवलपर, हाउसिंग डवलपर, पीआरजी ग्रुप को कर दी गई। इसके बाद स्वकुति, कास्मिक, तिवेली समेत पांच कंपनियों को बेच दिया गया। मैनेजर बशीखान ने बगैर बड़े अधिकारियों की प्रमीशन के बिना ही कंपनियों को सबलीज कर डाली। सीएजी ने इस मामले में 29.33 करोड़ रुपए का नुकसान हुआ बताया है। <https://jantaserishta.com/delhi-ncr/cag-investigation-report-big-scam-done-by-the-then-manager-bashikhan-in-the-name-of-settling-the-township-1619852>

9. Gauhati High Court directs Assam to place CAG report before Public Accounts Committee over money embezzlement charges (indialegallive.com) Oct 01, 2022

The Gauhati High Court has directed the Assam government to place the report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) before the Public Accounts Committee to verify the contentions raised by the petitioner as regards embezzlement of large amounts of public money meant for public purposes.

The Division Bench of Chief Justice Rashmin Manharbhai Chhaya and Justice Soumitra Saikia disposed of a PIL filed by Amguri Naba Nirman Samity, which prayed for the following reliefs:-

(a) to direct the Respondent Authorities to conduct an Enquiry through a High Level Enquiry Committee in the matter of huge financial embezzlement committed during the course of implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and other Schemes in the Districts of Kamrup (R), Nagaon, Baksa, Karbi Anglong, Cachar, Udalguri, Nalbari, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Goalpara Districts of Assam;

(b) to identify the Govt. Officials and other persons involved in misappropriation of Govt. Fund and thereafter launch appropriate proceedings for their punishment and also for recovery of the misappropriate Govt. Fund for them;

(c) to direct Respondents take into account the representations dated 12.05.2020 , 20.11.2020 , 23.11.2020 , 24.01.2022, 20.06.2021 , 17.07.2021 and 24.01.2022 submitted by the petitioner and do the needful for disposal of the same and/or pass such other order(s) as the High Court may deem fit and necessary.

In the interim, pending disposal of the instant petition this Hon'ble Court may be pleased to direct the Respondents to submit Status Report of the Enquiry initiated on the basis of the representations dated 12.05.2020 , 20.11.2020 , 23.11.2020 , 24.01.2022, 20.06.2021 , 17.07.2021 and 24.01.2022 if any, before the High Court.

M. Nirola, counsel for the petitioner, relying upon the audit report of the Accountant General (Audit), Assam, has submitted that there is large scale of embezzlement of public funds which is required to be investigated by an independent agency.

As against this, M. Bhattacharjee, Additional Senior Government Advocate, Assam, has contended that the present PIL is not maintainable as the same is purely based on CAG report and it is also the function of the Public Accounts Committee to examine such report submitted by the CAG and to take remedial steps, if discrepancy is found. It is, therefore, contended by Bhattacharjee that the allegations levelled in this petition may be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for their consideration.

Relying upon the judgment dated 19.05.2022 passed by a Division Bench of the Court in the case of the very petitioner being PIL No.68/2021 (Amguri Naba Nirman Samity vs. The State of Assam and Ors.), it has been submitted by Bhattacharjee that in a similarly situated case filed by the petitioner, the matter has been placed for consideration of the Public Accounts Committee.

A Division Bench of the High Court in Amguri Naba Nirman Samiti (supra), in similar circumstances has observed thus:

“5. Under the circumstances, we are also of the view that since the allegations of embezzlement are based primarily on the CAG report, the competent forum i.e the Public Accounts Committee may have a look at the same so that in case any illegality is found, necessary remedial actions can be taken by the competent authority.

Accordingly, the State Government would cause these reports of the CAG, which according to the petitioner disclose embezzlement of large sum of public money meant for the Social Welfare Department to the PAC for doing the needful.

The State Government will accordingly cause the matter to be placed before the PAC within the period of 8 (eight) weeks."

In the case the Bench observed that the allegations made in the petition are based on CAG report and, hence, it would be appropriate to direct the State Government to place the same before the Public Accounts Committee.

Accordingly, the Court directed the State Government to place the CAG report before the Public Accounts Committee to verify the contentions raised by the petitioner as regards embezzlement of large amount of public money meant for public purposes.

"The State Government will accordingly cause the matter to be placed before the Public Accounts Committee within a period of eight weeks from the date of receipt of a certified copy of this order", the Court further directed. <https://www.indialegallive.com/constitutional-law-news/courts-news/gauhati-high-court-cag-report-money-bungling/>

10. What purpose do massive but messy plantations serve? ([sentinelassam.com](https://www.sentinelassam.com)) Oct 03, 2022

GUWAHATI: The massive plantation drives in Assam continue to be messy – either falling short of achieving targets or overlapping plantations. The survival rate of the seedlings in the Forest Department's nurseries is also low.

According to official sources, the afforestation target from 2015-2020 fell short of achieving the target by 33.88 per cent. The CAG report said, "Afforestation initiatives were hindered due to failure of departmental authorities to protect the land from encroachment, non-demarcation of forest land, a doubtful declaration on creation of plantation, absence of coordination between Forest department and Revenue department authorities etc."

A source said, "Forest department has several nurseries to grow seedlings. They, however, allegedly go for random buying of saplings from private parties during various occasions, including the Van Mohotsav Week every year. They buy saplings without having a clear-cut picture of land available for plantation and the requirement of saplings. The department also does not keep records of saplings bought from private parties. In the past decade, the department planted crores of saplings on various occasions. However, it does not have the records of survived saplings."

The CAG also mentioned in its report that "in 2019-20, the department could utilize 25 per cent of the available stocks of seedlings, while 75 per cent seedlings remained unused... The selection of plantation sites by Golaghat Social Forestry Division despite prior information about encroachment from the Majuli Deputy Commissioner led to wasteful expenditure of Rs 36.89

lakh." <https://www.sentinelassam.com/topheadlines/what-purpose-do-massive-but-messy-plantations-serve-616155>

11. Why a new gambling law in Meghalaya has been met with fierce resistance ([scroll.in](#)) Oct 01, 2022

The state government's move to legalise and regulate certain forms of gambling in Meghalaya has been met with fierce resistance.

The government argues opening casinos would boost tourism, which is facing competition from other North Eastern states, and earn revenue. This has not gone down well in predominantly Christian Meghalaya, where public opinion is often shaped by powerful tribal organisations such as the Hynniewtrep Youth Council as well as by church groups.

Trouble started when the government passed the Meghalaya Regulation of Gaming Act in 2021, which appeared to reverse the state's decades-old ban on most forms of gambling. Opposition parties, including the Trinamool Congress, joined the Hynniewtrep Youth Council and various church groups in demanding the repeal of the new law.

"We are opposing the act from the religious and morality point of view," said Hynniewtrep Youth Council general secretary Roy Kupar Synrem. "Meghalaya being a Christian state, we don't want activities like casinos and gambling. The youths will be addicted to gambling and we don't want those kinds of activities and environment in the state."

Given the opposition, the government seemed to pull the brakes on implementing the law. A fresh furore broke out last month when the government told the state assembly that temporary licences had been issued to three firms in March. Chief Minister Conrad Sangma then gave assurances that the government had ordered a halt on all processes to start casinos after it held talks with church groups and non-governmental organisations. The temporary licences, issued before the talks, would "lapse automatically", he claimed.

However, pressure groups want the gambling law to be scrapped altogether.

Games of chance and skill

Till last year, the Meghalaya Prevention of Gambling Act, 1970, had prohibited most forms of gaming in the state. The new law aimed to introduce licences and regulation for "games of skill", where a player's skill determines the game rather than luck, such as bridge, backgammon, poker and bingo. It also sought to regulate "games of chance", where luck mattered over skill, such as baccarat, roulette and the three card game. Both online and offline games are mentioned.

What the new law does not mention is "teer", a game of archery where the players place bets on the number of arrows that stick to the target at the end of each round. The practice of betting on archery contests is believed to date back to the early 20th

century. The state is dotted with thousands of such teer gambling parlours, with about 1,500 in the capital of Shillong itself.

Till 1981, teer gambling was banned. Since then, it has been regulated by the Meghalaya Amusements and Betting Tax (Amendment) Act, 1982, and conducted under the aegis of the Khasi Hills Archery Sport Association. In 2018, the government introduced the Meghalaya Regulation of the Game of Arrow. Shooting and the Sale of Teer Tickets Act, 2018.

Those who oppose the new gambling law do not object to teer, arguing that the game has deep cultural roots in the Khasi community, combining art, entertainment and skill.

“Archery is not harmful, it is a sport,” said EH Kharkongor, secretary of the Khasi Jaintia Christian Leaders Forum.

Synrem also agreed teer was a traditional betting game which could not be compared to casinos where lakhs and crores could be lost and won.

‘High price to society’

The anxieties about casinos are outlined in a letter sent by the Khasi Jaintia Christian Leaders Forum to the chief, demanding the repeal of the new gambling law as it came “with a high price to the society”.

“The legitimisation of gambling is detrimental to the society as it has negative effects on quality of life such as loss of self-esteem, breakdown in relationships, depression and even suicides and fatal self-inflictions,” the letter said. “Gambling can increase criminality in several ways such as forgery, fraud, robbery and murder to finance one’s gambling habit.”

Kharkongor told Scroll.in that they opposed the law because it would enable all forms of gambling, not just the games mentioned in the law. “The introduction of casinos will affect so many dimensions of human lives and communities,” he said. “It will promote violence, drugs related incidents, flesh-trade and violent crimes and so many other immoral and criminal activities.”

Synrem complained the government had not consulted stakeholders before introducing the new gambling law.

Generating revenue?

As the controversy blew up last month, Sangma argued in the state assembly that the new law would only help regulate gambling. He claimed the rules said “locals cannot play”.

“Hence, we thought that we should have gaming zones which are far away from the core of the state and capital in areas which are at the border areas so that our people are nowhere close to it. We thought it was a win-win situation for the state,” the chief minister said in the assembly.

He also suggested the aim behind setting up casinos was to generate Rs 500-600 crore in revenue at a time when other sources of revenue, especially mining, had dried up.

The Hynniewtrep Youth Council was not convinced. Synrem pointed out that the 2021 act only said that licensees had to ensure a player – anyone taking part in a game online or on physical premises – was above 18 years old.

“[It] speaks of nothing when it comes to participation of local youths or residents of the state in online Gaming or betting,” he said.

The Hynniewtrep Youth Council dashed off a letter to the chief minister saying, “If the state government can check the revenue leakages as has been repeatedly pointed out and flagged by the CAG Reports every year, it can easily save about Rs 1500-2000 crore annually.”

Kyrsoibor Pyrtuh of Thma U Rangli Juki, a civil society organisation, also said it was unlikely to help Meghalaya’s economy since most investors were likely to be from outside the state.

Trinamool Congress legislator George B Lyngdoh also spoke at protests asking for a repeal of the law altogether, not just a halt on casinos. “Everyone possesses cellphones and has the power in their hands to participate in online betting and gambling, which will lead to addiction even though they do not go to casinos,” Lyngdoh said. “They would play at home, at educational institutions.” <https://scroll.in/article/1033959/why-a-new-gambling-law-in-meghalaya-has-been-met-with-fierce-resistance>

12. Cash-starved Bengal Govt to borrow hugely to meet everyday expenses (dailypioneer.com) 03 October 2022

Starved of liquidity, the Mamata Banerjee Government is likely borrow hugely in coming months to meet its daily expenses, sources in the Government say.

Though no senior bureaucrat or Minister would speak a word about the Government’s plans to meet the rising expenditure on account of payments towards 100-days’ work scheme, dearness allowance arrears and other schemes inside sources said there were plans to borrow about Rs 20,500 crore from the market in the closing months of this calendar year.

According to sources the government is likely to borrow Rs 4,500 crore in October. The amount would go up to Rs 7,000 crore in the month of November and then to Rs 9,000 crore in December. This could take the total loan to Rs 5 lakh 86,000 crore.

The State government had earmarked a total borrowing of Rs 73.268 crore for 2022-23. The previous Marxist government had left a total loan of Rs 1.72 lakh crore in their three decades of rule.

The Opposition BJP and Left have held the Chief Minister responsible for gradually leading Bengal towards a debt trap. “She has been running a Khela-Mela regime

highlighted by dolls, grants and fairs to gain narrow political mileage ... in the process she has been pushing the common man into debt trap,” said CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakrabarty.

The opposition BJP has shown how the Chief Minister had “mindlessly been spending money on unproductive schemes like a grant of Rs 60,000 each to 43,000 clubs organising Durga Puja across Bengal ... this has led to an unnecessary expenditure of Rs 252 crore.”

“The Chief Minister was solely responsible for driving away the industry captain Tatas from Bengal ... after this no industry worth its salt has invested here in a big way though she has spent crores on early basis in organising Bengal Global Business Summit a mega event to attract investment,” said Samik Lahiri a former CPI(M) MP.

“While she has failed to comply with the High Court order to clear DA of the government employees ... while she has failed to clear the dues of the MNREGA workers ... she has been spending mindlessly in doles to gain votes ... but this cannot go on for ever ... she will have to face the consequence,” BJP State president Dr Sukanta Majumdar said.

Even the CAG has expressed concern over increasing gap between gross domestic state product and the total loan taken. While in 2018-19 the State loan was 35.68 percent of the GSDP in 2020-21 it has gone up to about 37.05 percent, the authorities have pointed out. The CAG has also showed how in 2020-21 the Government has spent 71.53 percent of its acquired loan for serving previous debts.

The TMC Government has repeatedly accused the Centre for the present financial crisis the State was in. The Chief Minister recently told in a public meeting how the Centre had withheld about Rs 1 lakh crore that belonged to the State. She also alleged how the Centre was not clearing Rs 4,000 crore for the MNREGA scheme.

The Chief Minister in a recent letter written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi said how the Centre was blocking Bengal’s legitimate grants. She wrote in May this year “You are aware that the wages for MGNREGA form an important part of livelihood of rural people and considering this importance, the Act mandates that the wages must be paid within fifteen days,” adding the wage payment for MNREGA in Bengal was due to the tune of Rs 6,500 crore ... i.e Rs 3,000 crore against the wage liabilities and Rs 3,500 crore against non-wage liabilities.

However, Bengal BJP leader Dilip Ghosh said that Centre had done the right thing by stopping the payment as most of the funds that were being sent to the state were being either diverted for political purposes or taken away by the TMC politicians. “The Centre has asked for accounts ... Till the State submits the papers how can the Centre clear the funds ... this is public money,” he said. <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2022/india/cash-starved-bengal-govt-to-borrow-hugely-to-meet-everyday-expenses.html>

13. CAG report exposes fault lines in city's underground utility mapping (deccanherald.com) UPDATED: SEP 30 2022

Bengaluru: An audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has laid bare the fault lines in the underground utility mapping in Bengaluru, which often result in damages to utility lines and additional expense to the public exchequer.

The UDD and the BBMP — the authorities responsible for regulating the right of way of utility lines — were required to put in place policies/regulations to facilitate orderly laying of underground utilities and their mapping.

The BBMP, responsible for permissions for road-cutting and excavations in Bengaluru, established an online system in September 2015 — called the 'Multi-Agency Road Cutting and Coordination System' — for road-cutting permissions.

The CAG audit inspected the records of the UDD, BBMP, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom), Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL), Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL), and GAIL Gas Ltd (GGL), between March 2019 and June 2021.

While GAIL and BWSSB had their assets fully mapped, Bescom and KSPTCL had mapped 83% and 88% of their networks, respectively.

However, the audit observed that the BWSSB had adopted old road shape files from 2002 for mapping its utilities. The time gap between the creation of road shape files resulted in a mismatch in the actual location of utilities.

This meant that in some cases, the underground water or sewage pipelines were shown overlapped on buildings, instead of roads.

The audit observed that the BWSSB's GIS database did not capture the depth of the pipes below the ground level, pressure and flow direction. The GIS certificate, which was made mandatory for the completion of work, did not indicate the GIS coordinates or the details of other utilities.

Similarly, Bescom's GIS maps were prepared in a two-dimensional format with only the length and size of underground (UG) cable, with no provision for capturing the depth at which the UG cable was laid.

The audit noticed that there was no system in place for data validation before certification. Data inconsistencies were observed in 84,916 out of 202,788 BWSSB records in the database.

Test verification

To physically verify the accuracy of maps of underground utilities, the audit collaborated with an IISc team to use Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) technology in three chosen locations.

The studies done in Malleswaram Circle, Ideal Home Circle in Rajarajeswarinagar and Chandramouleshwar Temple Circle in Jayanagar showed many inaccuracies in the existence of water lines, such as the existence of one line instead of two, or line not being present, or the presence of an extra line.

The CAG report also notes that water and sewer lines were very closely laid in the surveyed locations contravening IRC norms and posing a risk of sewage mixing with potable water during the bursting of pipes.

Similarly, IRC standards suggested multi-utility ducts with separate enclosures for each type of service provider laying an underground cable network, which was not provided in the surveyed locations.

The audit observed that the incomplete GIS data on underground utilities resulted in frequent damages to the utility lines while carrying out road-cutting/excavation, and caused inconvenience to vehicular traffic. GGL pipelines suffered the maximum damage from BWSSB works (597) and by other external agencies (367). The report highlighted the lack of legal provisions to enforce mapping and inadequate coordination among the BBMP and the other bodies and suggested better coordination, data updating, etc, as remedial measures. <https://www.deccanherald.com/city/cag-report-exposes-fault-lines-in-city-s-underground-utility-mapping-1149756.html>

14. Regularisation of Ludhiana MC Employees: Review panel omits 88 names from previous list of 3,630 ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) Oct 01, 2022

The verification committee, which had been constituted by MC general House at its meeting on July 25, has found that 88 of the 3,630 names of MC's contractual employees (sweepers and sewer men) that had been tabled for regularisation, are either dead, non-existent or have been absent from duty for a long period of time. Mayor Balkar Sandhu said the panel's inquiry report and verified list will be tabled at the next MC House meeting on October 4, where a final decision on regularisation of employees will be taken.

The verification committee initially comprised two councillors - Jai Prakash and Sunny Bhalla and MC officials. The councillors, however, stepped down from the committee on September 23 stating that proper records were not being provided to them, making it difficult to carry out the review process. The remaining process was carried out by the other MC officials on the panel.

Of the 1,142 sewer men mentioned in the previous list, 28 been removed (for reasons stated earlier), including four in Zone A, 18 in Zone B and six in Zone D. Also, names of 60 of 2,488 sweepers have been omitted, including 26 in Zone A, 23 in Zone B, six in Zone C and five in Zone D.

An MC official, requesting anonymity, said officials of multiple branches had not revised the list tabled in the last House meeting. Councillors, including Jaspal

Giaspura, Mamta Ashu and Baljinder Bunty, had sought action against officials who had added names of ineligible employees in the list.

The MC House will also take a call on regularisation of 456 contractual drivers, gardeners, peon, mechanics etc, who were left out of the initial list.

As many as 60 resolutions will be tabled for discussion at the House meeting, including extending the upper age limit for employees to be regularised.

Earlier, various MC employees' unions had submitted memorandums with MC Commissioner Shena Aggarwal, asking for the upper age limit to be increased from 42 to at least 50.

They stated that a large number of employees, who have been working with MC for decades, will miss the chance to get regularised if the upper age limit is not extended.

Also, Amid hue and cry from councillors, a resolution to reconsider MC's recent decision making it mandatory to get building plan approved and clear all dues with building branch to get an NOC to carry out construction will also be tabled. The findings of a CAG audit report from 2019-20, which stated that lack of coordination between building branch and property tax wing is resulting in loss to state exchequer, will also be tabled for discussion.

A proposal to establish a school for the children of MC employees will also be taken up. The proposal has been prepared based on the demand of MC Employees Sangharsh Committee. Other resolutions on the table include establishing an IT cum geographic information system cell and MC's own petrol pump and installation of 9,000 LED street lights across the city.

A decision will also be taken on whether MC employees transferred to other cities by the state are to be relieved of duty.

MC will also taken a call on the penalty to be imposed on those found flouting the ban of single-use plastic. The penalty will range between ₹2,000 and ₹20,000, depend on the quantity of the banned material seized from the violator.

Other important resolutions include payment of ₹1.56 crore as salary to contractual staff deployed for ward delimitation and giving sewer men working in MC the designation of "sewer sainik".

Projects worth ₹3.2k cr under 24x7 water supply scheme up for approval

Projects worth around ₹3,200 crore which need to be taken up under the World Bank funded 24x7 surface (canal based) water supply project will also be tabled for approval

These include setting up demo zones and allowing floating of tenders to carry out the first phase of the project, which will cost around ₹1,700 crore (including 10 years maintenance). The formation of a special purpose vehicle (SPV) - Ludhiana Urban Water and Waste Water Management Limited, to take up the project, will also be discussed. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/regularisation-of->

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

15. Fiscal deficit widens to Rs 5.42 lakh crore in April-August ([moneycontrol.com](https://www.moneycontrol.com)) OCTOBER 01, 2022

The central government's fiscal deficit stood at Rs 5.42 lakh crore in April-August, accounting for 32.6 percent of the full-year target, data released by the Controller General of Accounts showed.

The fiscal deficit for April-August 2021 had accounted for 31.1 percent of the FY22 target.

The fiscal deficit in the first five months of FY22 was Rs 4.68 lakh crore. As such, the fiscal deficit in April-August of the current financial year is 15.7 percent higher on a year-on-year basis.

The Centre is targeting a fiscal deficit of Rs 16.61 lakh crore for FY23, or 6.4 percent of GDP.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF CENTRE'S FINANCES FOR APRIL-AUGUST (IN RS LAKH CRORE)			
	APR-AUG	% CHANGE YoY	% OF BUDGET TARGET
Fiscal deficit	5.42	15.7%	32.6%
Total receipts	8.48	4.9%	37.2%
Net tax revenue	7.00	8.6%	36.2%
Non-tax revenue	1.17	-21.4%	43.3%
Disinvestment	0.25	193.4%	38%
Total expenditure	13.90	8.9%	35.2%
Capital spending	2.52	46.8%	33.7%

The Centre posted a fiscal deficit of Rs 2.01 lakh crore in August after it recorded a surplus of Rs 11,040 crore in July – the first time it had done so in 28 months. The last time the central government's monthly accounts were in surplus was in March 2020, at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

In August, the Centre's net tax revenue fell 70.7 percent year-on-year to Rs 33,882 crore, while non-tax revenue jumped 213.2 percent to Rs 27,221 crore. This caused total receipts to shrink 50 percent to Rs 62,511 crore.

Total expenditure, meanwhile, dropped by 3.3 percent in August to Rs 2.63 lakh crore, while capital expenditure gained 0.5 percent from last year to Rs 43,658 crore.

The Centre, on August 10, released Rs 1.17 lakh crore to states as tax devolution - double of what it would have normally transferred – after assessing that its collections were doing well.

The net revenue receipts in the month of August halved from August 2021, primarily on account of the double instalment of tax devolved to the state governments given the buoyancy in revenues, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist ICRA, said.

Additionally, various taxes such as corporation tax, personal income tax, excise duty, customs duty and CGST saw a on year decline in August.

"Based on our projection, tax devolution will need to be as high as Rs 9.3 lakh crore this year, overshooting the budget estimates by more than Rs 1 lakh crore. Therefore, the amount left to be disbursed to the states in the remainder of the year is quite substantial, warranting a reassessment of the monthly releases in the next quarter," Nayar said.

For April-August as a whole, the Centre's total receipts stood at Rs 8.48 lakh crore, up 4.9 percent, while total expenditure was 8.9 percent higher at Rs 13.90 lakh crore.

Despite the rise in the fiscal deficit, the Centre's finances continue to look in good shape.

Speaking to reporters late last month, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan had said the fiscal deficit target of 6.4 percent of GDP for FY23 would be met without cutting capital expenditure.

The government has also cut its market borrowing for the financial year by Rs 10,000 to Rs 14.21 lakh crore, as per its borrowing calendar for the fiscal second half. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/april-august-fiscal-deficit-comes-in-at-rs-5-41-lakh-crore-9256881.html>

16. Total government liabilities rise to Rs 146 lakh crore in Q1: Finance ministry report (economictimes.indiatimes.com) Sep 30, 2022

The total liabilities of the government increased to Rs 145.72 lakh crore at the end-June 2022 from Rs 139.58 lakh crore at end-March 2022, according to the latest data on public debt. In percentage terms, it reflects a quarter-on-quarter increase of 4.40 per cent in the first quarter of 2022-23.

Public debt accounted for 88.3 per cent of total gross liabilities at the end-June 2022 slightly up from 88.1 per cent at the end-March 2022, the quarterly report on public debt management released by the Finance Ministry on Friday said.

The weighted average yield on primary issuances of dated securities showed an increase to 6.95 per cent in Q1 of FY23 from 6.66 per cent in Q4 of FY22.

The weighted average maturity of issuances of dated securities was lower at 14.90 years in Q1 of FY23 (17.56 years in Q4 of FY22), it said.

The weighted average maturity of the outstanding stock of dated securities was higher at 11.87 years at the end of Q1 of FY23 compared to 11.71 years at the end of Q4 of FY22, it said.

"The proportion of debt (dated securities) maturing in less than one year was higher at 4.14 per cent at end-June 2022 (3.88 per cent at end-March 2022). The proportion of debt maturing within 1-5 years at 24.76 per cent at end-June 2022 was lower than its level of 25.43 per cent at end-March 2022," it said.

Debt maturing in the next five years worked out to 28.9 per cent of total outstanding debt at end-June 2022 ie 5.78 per cent of outstanding stock on average needs to be repaid every year over the next five years, it said.

Thus, it said, the roll-over risk in dated securities portfolios remains low.

The gross fiscal deficit of the central government for 2022-23 was budgeted at Rs 16,61,196 crore or 6.4 per cent of GDP compared to the revised estimate of Rs 15,91,089 crore (6.71 per cent of GDP) for 2021-22.

The ownership pattern of central government securities indicates that the share of commercial banks stood at 38.04 per cent at the end-June 2022, higher than 37.75 per cent at end-March 2022, it said.

"Share of insurance companies and provident funds at end-June 2022 stood at 26.34 per cent and 16.06 per cent, respectively...share of RBI went downward at 16.06 per cent at end June 2022 from 16.62 per cent at end March 2022," it said. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/total-government-liabilities-rise-to-rs-146-lakh-crore-in-q1-finance-ministry-report/articleshow/94570328.cms>

17. Swachh Bharat 2.0: Moving forward together ([indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com)) Oct 01, 2022

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's independence, much can be said about the progress the country has made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) concerning sanitation.

The concept of sanitation in the Indian context has been around since the Indus Valley civilisation. However, till 2014, sanitation coverage in India was as low as 39 per cent. Around 55 crore people in rural areas were without a toilet facility before 2014 and this severely affected the health and dignity of our people, especially women and children. The greatest and perhaps most significant impact of poor sanitation is on health. Exposure to contaminated drinking water and food with pathogen-laden human waste is a major cause of diarrhoea and can cause cholera, trachoma, intestinal worms, etc, leading to the "stunting" of huge swathes of our children. Poor hygiene and waste management practices also impact the environment with untreated sewage flowing

directly into water bodies and affecting coastal and marine ecosystems, contaminating soil and air, and exposing millions to disease.

Finally, poor sanitary practices impact the economy adversely. A study by the World Bank states that the absence of toilets and conventional sanitation costs India 6.4 per cent of its GDP in 2006. The economic impact of poor sanitation for India is at least \$38.5 billion every year under health, education, access time and tourism.

The launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) by the Prime Minister on October 2, 2014, had a unique goal — to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to make the country Open Defecation Free (ODF). By offering financial incentives for building household toilets, as well as community toilets for slums and migrant populations, the government gave a huge fillip to the toilet infrastructure. To bring changes to the age-old idea that toilets in the home were unclean, the government ran several programmes with the participation of the private sector and NGOs to educate the population on the benefits of ODF in what is acclaimed as one of the largest behaviour change programmes in the world. From 2014 to 2020, more than 10 crore toilets were constructed. The country declared itself ODF on October 2, 2019.

The second phase of the project, which commenced in 2020 and is expected to run till 2025, has set even more ambitious targets — sustaining the achievements of phase 1 and ensuring that treatment of both liquid and solid waste is achieved through the help of technology and private sector engagement.

The Lighthouse Initiative (LHI) commissioned by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav is to be implemented through PPP, across villages in 75 gram panchayats in 15 states in Phase 1. LHI is based on the principle of inclusive sanitation and leaving no one behind. LHI aims to effectively implement solid and liquid waste management structures by employing a participatory and consultative approach through mobilisation of the village communities, corporates, district and block administration and gram panchayat officers. Joint ownership and accountability between local governments, communities and corporates will ensure the success of the initiative.

Managing household and plastic waste as well as wastewater at a village level, defining and implementing solutions to convert waste to achieve a remunerative return not only creates hygienic surroundings for the communities but allows them to become economically self-sufficient in the medium to long term. Moreover, recovery of precious grey water through minimal treatment and treatment of sewage helps tackle scarce water resources, encouraging reuse and conserving water bodies.

The ability of corporates to team up with the village communities to convert their waste to wealth by utilising simple and cost-effective technologies that can be managed by them independently in the long run, as well as their ability to help build the capacity of the gram panchayats in understanding how to manage the various programmes are areas where PPPs can excel.

The India Sanitation Coalition (ISC) is a multi-stakeholder platform that creates meaningful collaborations. These stakeholders include the private sector, government, financial institutions, civil society groups, media, donors, etc. Today, ISC is recognised

as the official intersection between the government and the private sector for engagement in helping build solid and liquid waste management infrastructure sustainably.

In choosing to partner with ISC on the LHI initiative and the early batch of corporates that have come forward such as ITC, Jindal Steel and Power, JSW, Nayara, HCL and foundations such as Ambuja Cement, Tata Trusts and Aga Khan Trust, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has recognised the benefits of working with the private sector. Understanding the on-ground need for solid and liquid waste management infrastructure, it has included activities such as the construction of soak pits, waste stabilisation ponds, drainage channels, compost pits, collection and segregations sheds and biogas plants as part of the Rs1,40,881 crore that will be provided over the next five years. The private sector will supplement this through CSR funding.

Going forward, the ISC will continue to focus on the government's position with regard to the thematic interlinkages between WASH and sectors such as health, education, gender, nutrition and livelihoods. This will include urban and rural challenges and create viable programmes where government funding will be used primarily for infrastructure building and the private sector comes in as a strategic partner providing expertise in management and technology. These successful collaboration "lighthouses" will be documented and disseminated to enable replication across the country, holding the promise of taking forward the remarkable success of the first phase of SBM. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/swachh-bharat-2-0-moving-forward-together-8183415/>

18. Urea subsidy spend makes up 75% of Budget allocation in April-August ([thehindubusinessline.com](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com)) October 01, 2022

The subsidy for urea has consumed three-fourths of the budget allocation in the first five months (April-August) of the current fiscal. This is 83 per cent higher than same period a year ago.

The overall expenditure is a little lower in the first five months compared with the corresponding period last fiscal. This has helped to limit the fiscal deficit to around 33 per cent of the budget estimate, data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) showed. However, experts say there is upward risk to the budget target of fiscal deficit.

In this fiscal's budget, the government allocated over ₹63,000 crore as urea subsidy and ₹42,000 crore for nutrient-based fertilisers. CGA data show the government spent around ₹47,310 crore on urea subsidy during the first five months of the current fiscal, 44 per cent of the budget allocation. Last year, during the same period, it paid over ₹25,769 crore which was 44 per cent of the budget allocation. The government has already doubled the fertiliser subsidy outgo for the current fiscal.

Over ₹13,600 crore were spent on nutrient-based fertilisers, 33 per cent of budget allocation and almost the same during the corresponding period last fiscal. Taking both

into consideration, the overall fertiliser subsidy is now 57 per cent of the budget estimate.

Overall fiscal

Despite higher fertiliser subsidy, the overall expenditure during the April-August period was 35.2 per cent of the budget estimate against 36.7 per cent during the corresponding period of last fiscal.

The total expenditure contracted due to a 4 per cent fall in revenue expenditure whereas capital expenditure displayed a marginal rise of 1 per cent in August. Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said: "While the year-on-year (yoy) growth remains high, capital spending has averaged around ₹50,000 crore per month, lower than the required monthly average of ₹62,500 crore to meet the 2022-23 budget estimate, with a slow pickup in the disbursements under the interest-free Capex loan for State governments."

She also sees several upside risks to the fiscal deficit target of ₹16.6 lakh crore (6.4 per cent of GDP) for FY2023, emanating from the need for additional spending on food, fertilizer and LPG subsidies through the year, the revenue loss to the Centre on account of the excise duty etc. However, "a large part of this would be absorbed by higher-than-estimated non-excise taxes, savings on account of lower wheat procurement, as well as the windfall tax on domestic crude oil production and export duties on petroleum products, limiting the extent of the overshoot in the Govt's fiscal deficit in 2022-23 relative to the budget estimates to around ₹1 lakh crore.," she said. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/urea-subsidy-expenditure-touch-75-per-cent-in-april-august-overall-fertiliser-subsidy-at-58-per-cent/article65954929.ece#:~:text=Fiscal%20Deficit%20at%2032.6%20per%20cent%20of%20Budget%20Estimate%20in%20April%20August&text=The%20subsidy%20for%20urea%20has,same%20period%20a%20year%20ago>.

19. IAF inducts indigenously-built Light Combat Helicopter ([thehindu.com](https://www.thehindu.com)) UPDATED: OCTOBER 03, 2022

"It is a momentous occasion reflecting India's capability in defence production," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said.

Induction of the indigenous Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) marks a new chapter in the Indian Air Force (IAF), said Air Chief Marshal (ACM) V. R. Chaudhari on October 3, 2022 as the twin-engine helicopter was formally inducted into 143 Helicopter Unit 'Dhanush' at Jodhpur Air Force Station. The LCH fully meets the requirements of both Army and Air Force, said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The Army had formally received its first LCH in Bengaluru last week.

"The LCH is at par or better than similar attack helicopters available globally. Selection of the Unit have been specifically selected based on professional competence to ensure quick operationalisation," ACM Chaudhari said speaking at the induction ceremony.

Speaking at the event, CB Ananthakrishnan, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL) said four LCH have been delivered to the IAF and four more will be delivered within this financial year.

More than 200 vendors are involved in production of sub-systems and components, apart from 70 vendors involved in indigenisation, he stated. HAL has also initiated detailed production planning to gear up for exports, he added.

The contract for 10 LSP was signed between IAF and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) on March 30, 2022 and the 143 Helicopter Unit 'Dhanush' which is operating the LCH was raised on June 01, 2022.

The twin-engine LCH designed and developed by HAL is a 5-8 tonne class dedicated combat helicopter. It was conceptualised after the 1999 Kargil conflict when the need for such a dedicated platform capable of operating in high altitudes was felt. It is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take-off at an altitude of 5,000 m (16,400 ft) with considerable load of weapons and fuel significantly augmenting the firepower of the IAF and Army in high altitude areas. The helicopter has a combat radius of 500kms go upto a service ceiling of 21,000 feet which makes it ideal to operate at high altitude areas of Siachen glacier.

The first prototype of the helicopter took first flight on March 29, 2010 and has since undergone extensive testing and evaluation. The LCH is armed with 20mm nose gun, 70 mm rockets, anti-tank guided missile 'Dhruvastra' and air to air missile 'Mistral-2' of MBDA which has a maximum interception range of 6.5km.

Speaking at the Induction Ceremony of Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) in Jodhpur.

In March 2020 the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) which met under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved procurement of 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) variants of LCH at the cost of ₹3,887 crore along with infrastructure sanctions worth ₹377 Crore. Of the 15 helicopters, 10 are for IAF and five for the Army.

The LCH will eventually be deployed along the Line of Actual Control with China in addition to the AH-64E Apache helicopters in service. Both the Army and IAF have a larger requirement of LCH and the contract is yet to be worked out.

The indigenous #LightCombatHelicopter has been christened 'Prachand' meaning fierce. The LCH was accorded the ceremonial water cannon salute.

The Army raised its first LCH Unit on June 01, 2022 at Bengaluru with one LCH presently and the Unit will move to Eastern Command along the LAC on completion by end next year. As reported by The Hindu earlier, the Army plans to acquire 95 LCH of which seven units, with each having 10 helicopters, are planned to be deployed for combat role in the mountains.

The LSP LCH contains approximately 45% indigenous content by value which will progressively increase to more than 55% for Series Production version, the Defence

Ministry had stated earlier. Light combat helicopters have already been included in the import embargo list.

The LCH is equipped with requisite agility, maneuverability, extended range, high altitude performance and around-the-clock, all-weather combat capability to perform roles of Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), Destruction of Enemy Air Defence (DEAD), Counter Insurgency (CI) operations, against slow moving aircraft and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPAs), high altitude bunker busting operations, counter insurgency operations in jungle and urban environments and support to ground forces, the Defence Ministry had stated.

State of the art technologies and systems compatible with stealth features such as reduced visual, aural, radar and infrared signatures and crashworthiness features for better survivability have been integrated in the LCH, officials said.

The IAF operates the older Mi-25 and Mi-35 Russian attack helicopters which are in the process of being phased and has inducted 22 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters from the US. The Army will also start receiving the Apache attack helicopters from early 2023 onwards, six of which have been contracted under an estimated \$800 mn deal from the US in February 2020.

In all, the IAF operates a wide mix of around 500 rotary platforms which includes around 90 Mi-17s, over 130 Mi-17V5s, over 70 ALH including the weaponised variant, 22 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters, one squadron of Mi-35 attack helicopters and 15 CH-47F Chinook heavy lift helicopters.

The Army Aviation currently operates utility helicopters but does not have dedicated attack helicopters in its fleet, though it operates the weaponised version of the Advanced Light Helicopter. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iaf-inducts-indigenously-built-light-combat-helicopter/article65965662.ece>

20. RBI plans to adopt 'expected loss' approach for loan provisions ([telegraphindia.com](https://www.telegraphindia.com)) 01 Oct 2022

The RBI is planning to adopt the “expected loss” approach for loan provisions by lenders.

This practice is currently followed by some large non-banking finance companies (NBFCs). Banks follow the “incurred loss” approach, where money is set aside after an asset becomes stressed.

In the new framework they will have to constantly recognise credit losses given the current conditions of a particular asset and forecast information. This will have to be provided at every reporting date.

RBI governor ShaktikantaDas on Friday said the central bank has proposed to adopt the expected loss approach for loss provisions. As a first step, a discussion paper on the various aspects of the transition will be issued shortly.

Das called the proposed transition a “more prudent and forward looking approach”.

The RBI will also release another discussion paper on a revised framework for securitisation of stressed assets after overhauling the same for standard assets in September 2021. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/rbi-plans-to-adopt-expected-loss-approach-for-loan-provisions-by-lenders/cid/1889753>