

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS (01.02.2023)

1. CAG India takes over chairmanship of audit institutions of G20 nations (economictimes.indiatimes.com) Jan 31, 2023

Under the guiding philosophy for India's Presidency of G20 i.e. Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam, which sees the world as 'One Earth, One Family, and One Future', Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) of India is proposing collaboration of G20 SAIs on two priority areas of Blue Economy and Responsible Artificial Intelligence, it said.

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has taken over the chairmanship of SAI20, with India assuming the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022. The SAI 20 Engagement Group of G20 nations recognises the crucial role of Supreme Audit Institutions in fortifying governance, office of CAG said in a statement.

The SAI20 Engagement Group under CAG of India aims to bring together an ecosystem wherein SAIs are active partners in governance, promoting transparency and accountability, it said.

"Girish Chandra Murmu, CAG of India, firmly believes that the SAI20 collaboration initiative would continue to strengthen governance by fostering cooperation and coordination among member countries in supporting key global issues of economic growth and stability, trade, and sustainable development, thereby leading to effective policy-making and implementation in G20 countries," it said.

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A formal handing over ceremony of the presidency of SAI20 from SAI Indonesia to SAI India was held virtually on Tuesday, it said.

Bahtiar Arif, Secretary General, SAI Indonesia, formally handed over the presidency of SAI20 to Parveen Mehta, Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General (Deputy CAG) who represented SAI India in the meeting, it said. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/cag-india-takes-over-chairmanship-of-audit-institutions-of-g20-nations/articleshow/97500257.cms>

2. CAG India takes over chairmanship of CAG institutions of G20 countries (uniindia.com) Feb 01, 2023

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Deputy CAG outlined that the theme Blue Economy has been chosen to promote the sustainable use of marine and freshwater environments, produces food and energy, supports livelihoods, and drives economic advancement and welfare, is expected to take forward the concept of "LiFE" or "Lifestyle for Environment" introduced by India in the COP26 Glasgow summit. "LiFE" emphasizes mindful and purposeful utilization rather than mindless and wasteful consumption to sustain and revitalize marine and freshwater environments, it said.

The C&AG of India aims to formulate widely applicable auditing guidelines that will enable SAIs to evaluate and assess, within their respective mandates, the development and implementation of policies and programs that balance sustainability with economic progress and welfare, it added.

Deputy CAG informed the gathering that CAG of India plans to enrich the discourse of SAI20 by inviting SAIs of Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and UAE as guest countries and Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI) Chair, International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Secretariat, World Bank and IMF as invited International Organizations, the statement said. <http://www.uniindia.com/cag-india-takes-over-chairmanship-of-cag-institutions-of-g20-countries/india/news/2907809.html>

3. CAG India takes over chairmanship of audit institutions of G20 nations ([dailyexcelsior.com](https://www.dailyexcelsior.com)) 01 Feb 2023

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4. G20: भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक ने G20 देशों के कैग संस्थानों की अध्यक्षता संभाली (jagran.com) 31 Jan 2023

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (CAG) ने मंगलवार को जी-20 देशों के कैग संस्थानों की अध्यक्षता संभाल ली। इंडोनेशिया के कैग ने एक वर्चुअल कार्यक्रम में भारत के कैग को SAI20 की अध्यक्षता सौंपने की औपचारिकता पूरी की। बैठक में भारत के कैग का प्रतिनिधित्व उप नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (डिप्टी CAG) परवीन मेहता ने किया।

SAI20 सदस्य देशों के बीच सहयोग और समन्वय को देंगे बढ़ावा

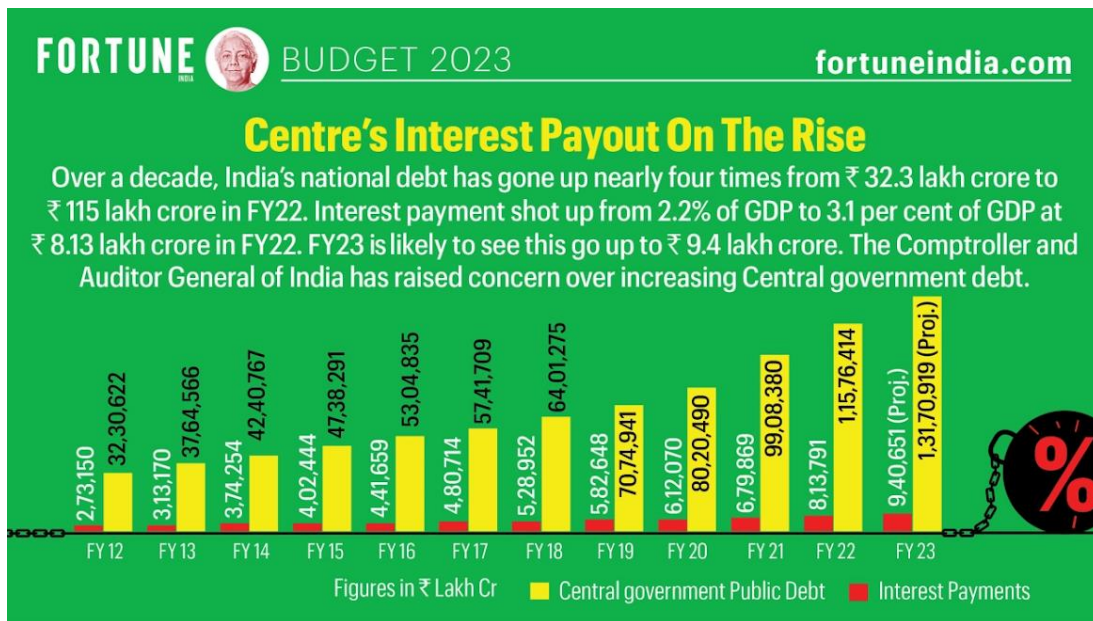
भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू ने कहा कि भारत की अध्यक्षता में SAI20 एंगेजमेंट ग्रुप का उद्देश्य एक ऐसे पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को एक साथ लाना है, जिसमें सुप्रीम ऑडिटर इंडस्ट्रीट्यूट (SAI) शासन में सक्रिय भागीदार हों और पारदर्शी और जवाबदेही को बढ़ावा देते हों। मुर्मू ने विश्वास जताया कि SAI20 सदस्य देशों के बीच सहयोग और समन्वय को बढ़ावा देकर शासन को मजबूत करना जारी रखेगी, जिससे जी-20 देशों में प्रभावी नीति-निर्माण और कार्यान्वयन हो सके।

भारत दो प्राथमिकता वाले क्षेत्रों ब्लू इकोनॉमी और रिस्पॉन्सिबल आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस में सहयोग का प्रस्ताव कर रहा है। डिप्टी कैग परवीन मेहता ने कहा कि समुद्री और मीठे पानी के पर्यावरण के सतत उपयोग को बढ़ावा देने, भोजन और ऊर्जा का उत्पादन करने, आजीविका का समर्थन करने और आर्थिक उन्नति और कल्याण को बढ़ावा देने के लिए ब्लू इकोनॉमी थीम को चुना गया है। रिस्पॉन्सिबल आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस नागरिकों के जीवन में AI सिस्टम

की तेजी से बढ़ती भूमिका और सार्वजनिक सेवाएं प्रदान करने की इसकी क्षमता पर ध्यान केंद्रित करता है। <https://www.jagran.com/news/national-comptroller-and-auditor-general-of-india-assumes-chairmanship-of-cag-institutions-of-g20-countries-23315086.html>

5. **Budget 2023: Centre's Interest Payout on the Rise** (*fortuneindia.com*) 01 February 2023

Interest payment shot up from 2.2% of GDP to 3.1% of GDP at ₹8.13 lakh crore in FY22. FY23 is likely to see this go up to ₹9.4 lakh crore.



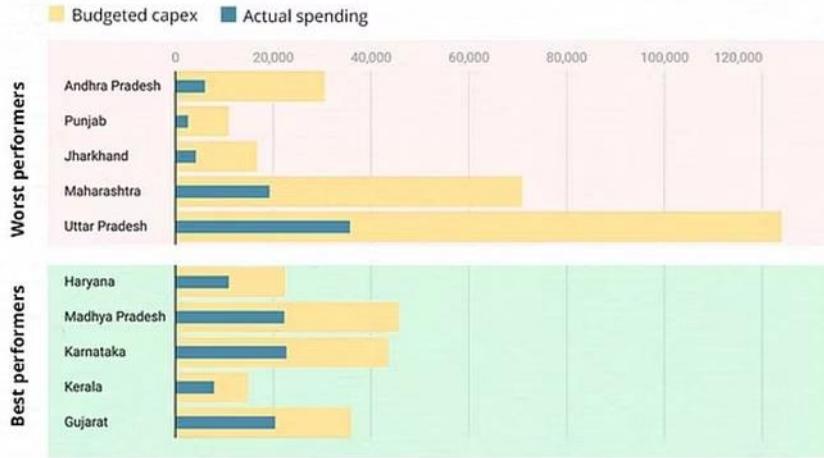
Over a decade, India's national debt has gone up nearly four times from ₹32.3 lakh crore to ₹115 lakh crore in FY22. Interest payment shot up from 2.2% of GDP to 3.1% of GDP at ₹8.13 lakh crore in FY22. FY23 is likely to see this go up to ₹9.4 lakh crore. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has raised concern over increasing Central government debt. <https://www.fortuneindia.com/infographics/budget-2023-centres-interest-payout-on-the-rise/111395>

6. **Budget 2023:** 2022 पूंजीगत खर्च के वादों की राह पर मोदी सरकार, राज्य पिछड़े; पंजाब-बिहार काफी पीछे (*hindi.theprint.in*) 31 January, 2023

आंकड़ों से पता चलता है कि राज्यों ने पूंजी परिव्यय के लिए कुल 7 लाख करोड़ रुपये से थोड़ा अधिक का बजट रखा था, नवंबर 2022 तक केवल 2.58 लाख करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए गए थे. आंध्र प्रदेश बड़े राज्यों में सबसे निचले स्थान पर था.

ANDHRA PRADESH AND PUNJAB MISS BIG ON CAPEX TARGETS

Capital Expenditure status of states for FY 2022-23 (between Apr-Nov 2022). Figures in Rs Crore



Note: States sorted on the basis of % actual capital expenditure to the total capex commitment in the budget.
Data from April-November 2022



जबकि मोदी सरकार देश में पूंजीगत संपत्ति के निर्माण पर अपने बजट 2022 के वादे को पूरा करने के रास्ते पर है, राज्यवार आंकड़ों के विश्लेषण से पता चलता है कि राज्य सरकारें अभी भी इस संबंध में पिछड़ रही हैं, खासकर - आंध्र प्रदेश और पंजाब - जैसे राज्य जो कि दूसरे राज्यों की तुलना में काफी बदतर हैं।

केंद्र सरकार ने पिछले बजट में पूंजीगत व्यय के लिए 7.5 लाख करोड़ रुपये का बजट निर्धारित किया था और वित्त मंत्रालय की मासिक आर्थिक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, वित्तीय वर्ष 2022-23 की पहली छमाही (सितंबर 2022) तक 4.1 लाख करोड़ रुपये (या 54 प्रतिशत) पहले ही खर्च किए जा चुके थे।

हालांकि, भारत के नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक (CAGI) की वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध राज्य के वित्त पर करीब से नज़र डालने से पता चलता है कि राज्य सरकारों द्वारा पूंजीगत व्यय समान रूप से गति नहीं पकड़ पाया है। नवंबर 2022 तक उपलब्ध आंकड़ों से पता चलता है कि सभी राज्यों ने सामूहिक रूप से अब तक अपने कुल बजटीय पूंजीगत व्यय का केवल 36 प्रतिशत ही खर्च किया है।

पूंजीगत व्यय, या कैपेक्स, दीर्घकालिक निवेश है जो कि सरकारें आर्थिक गतिविधियों को आसान बनाने या राजस्व के अतिरिक्त स्रोत उत्पन्न करने के लिए करती हैं। ये परियोजनाएं लंबे समय में वित्तीय लाभ की सुविधा प्रदान करती हैं।

जबकि केंद्र सरकार राजमार्गों, रेलवे, रक्षा और शहरी बुनियादी ढांचे और स्वास्थ्य पर कैपेक्स में भारी निवेश करती है, राज्य सरकारों के पास उन विषयों के लिए पूंजीगत व्यय बजट भी होते हैं जो राज्यों की सूची का हिस्सा हैं. हालांकि, कुछ ओवरलैप संभव है.

विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार, वित्तीय अनिश्चितताएं और राजस्व घाटा कुछ ऐसे कारण हैं जो राज्यों को उनके कैपेक्स बजट को पूरा करने से रोकते हैं.

दिप्रिंट ने CAGI वेबसाइट से सभी राज्यों (केंद्र शासित प्रदेश नहीं) के लिए मासिक वित्तीय संकेतक पर नज़र डाली ताकि इस बात का विश्लेषण किया जा सके कि राज्य अपने कैपेक्स खर्च में कितना पीछे है.

आंध्र प्रदेश, पंजाब पिछड़े

सीएजीआई के आंकड़ों के अनुसार, जबकि कुल मिलाकर राज्यों ने अपने पूंजीगत परिव्यय के लिए 7 लाख करोड़ रुपये से थोड़ा अधिक का बजट रखा था, नवंबर 2022 तक केवल 2.58 लाख करोड़ रुपये ही खर्च किए गए थे. तब जबकि वित्तीय वर्ष का आधे से अधिक समय पहले ही बीत चुका था, यह डेटा अभी भी अनंतिम है और वित्तीय वर्ष के अंत में अभी भी बदलाव और सुधार की गुंजाइश है.

बड़े राज्यों में, आंध्र प्रदेश पूंजीगत व्यय लक्ष्यों की प्राप्ति के मामले में सबसे नीचे था. राज्य ने पूंजी परिव्यय के लिए कुल 30,680 का बजट रखा था, लेकिन खातों से पता चलता है कि नवंबर 2022 तक केवल 6,188.5 करोड़ रुपये ही खर्च किए गए थे, जो कि उसकी बजट प्रतिबद्धताओं का सिर्फ 20.2 प्रतिशत था.

पंजाब, जो आमतौर पर पूंजीगत व्यय पर बहुत कम राशि खर्च करता है, दूसरे स्थान पर रहा. राज्य ने इस वित्तीय वर्ष में पूंजीगत व्यय पर कुल 10,981 करोड़ रुपये की उम्मीद की थी, लेकिन उसी समय तक केवल 2,641.45 करोड़ रुपये ही खर्च किए हैं, जो कि अपनी बजटीय प्रतिबद्धता के 24 प्रतिशत से थोड़ा अधिक है.

झारखंड ने अपनी 16,770 करोड़ रुपये के कैपेक्स का केवल 25 प्रतिशत खर्च किया है, महाराष्ट्र ने अपनी 70,819 करोड़ रुपये की प्रतिबद्धताओं का 27 प्रतिशत खर्च किया है, जबकि उत्तर प्रदेश - जिसकी सबसे बड़ी कैपेक्स प्रतिबद्धता 1.24 लाख करोड़ रुपये थी - ने नवंबर 2022 तक केवल 35,658 करोड़ रुपये या 28 प्रतिशत खर्च किए थे.

कैग के आंकड़ों के अनुसार, वास्तविक पूंजीगत व्यय के संदर्भ में अच्छा प्रदर्शन करने वाले राज्यों में केवल गुजरात (56.8 प्रतिशत), केरल (53.8 प्रतिशत) और कर्नाटक (52.3 प्रतिशत) हैं

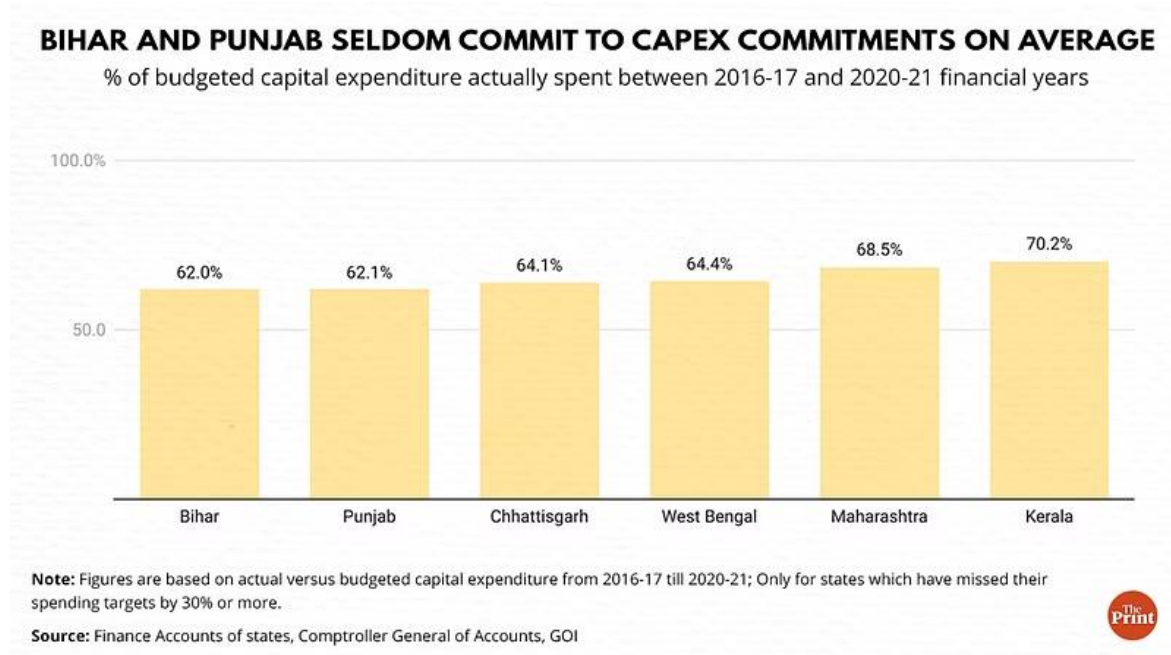
. इन राज्यों ने इस वर्ष नवंबर 2022 तक अपने अनुमानित पूंजीगत व्यय बजट का आधे से अधिक खर्च कर दिया है.

पंजाब और बिहार बार-बार कर रहे वही काम

ऐसी संभावना है कि शेष चार महीने की अवधि (दिसंबर 2022-

मार्च 2023) में, राज्य कुछ बड़ी परियोजनाओं को वित्तपोषित कर सकते हैं और कुल पूंजीगत व्यय का पैसा खर्च कर सकते हैं. ऐसा होने की संभावना का अनुमान लगाने के लिए दिप्रिंट ने 2016-17 से 2020-

21 तक पिछले पांच वित्तीय वर्षों में राज्यों द्वारा औसत रूप से खर्च किए गए धन के डेटा को देखा. इसके लिए, दिप्रिंट ने प्रत्येक राज्य के वित्तीय खातों से डेटा को स्कैन किया और उन्हें अपने बजट की संख्या के साथ विभाजित किया, यह देखने के लिए कि वे अपने लक्ष्य से कितने पीछे हैं.



उपलब्ध आंकड़ों के अनुसार, पंजाब पिछले पांच वित्तीय वर्षों में पूंजीगत व्यय पर अपने बजटीय आवंटन को खर्च करने में नियमित रूप से पीछे रहा है. वित्तीय वर्ष 2016-17 से 2020-21 के बीच पंजाब ने अपने बजट में पूंजी परिव्यय पर 50,468 करोड़ रुपये आवंटित किए, लेकिन खर्च केवल 31,320 करोड़ रुपये ही किया. औसतन इसने पिछले पांच वर्षों में अपने अनुमानित पूंजीगत व्यय का केवल 62 प्रतिशत ही खर्च किया है.

बिहार भी यही काम बार-

बार करता रहा है. इसी अवधि के दौरान, बिहार ने भी 1.76 लाख करोड़ रुपये के पूंजीगत

व्यय की परिकल्पना की, लेकिन केवल 1.077 लाख करोड़ रुपये या अपने कैपेक्स लक्ष्य का 62 प्रतिशत खर्च करने में सफल रहा.

छत्तीसगढ़ ने इस अवधि के दौरान कुल कैपेक्स 67,860 करोड़ रुपये का 64 प्रतिशत खर्च किया. बाकी सभी राज्यों ने 2018-

22 की अवधि में अपने बजटीय पूंजीगत व्यय का कम से कम 70 प्रतिशत खर्च किया था.

हालांकि, कुछ राज्य कैपेक्स खर्च करने का एक बहुत अच्छा रिकॉर्ड दिखाते हैं. उदाहरण के लिए, कर्नाटक ने इन पांच वर्षों के दौरान कुल 1.76 लाख करोड़ रुपये का कैपेक्स का लक्ष्य रखा और वास्तव में 1.744 लाख करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए, जो परिकल्पित खर्च का लगभग 99.1 प्रतिशत था.

मध्य प्रदेश (96 प्रतिशत लक्ष्य उपलब्धि के साथ), झारखंड (95 प्रतिशत), ओडिशा (89.6 प्रतिशत), तेलंगाना (84.1 प्रतिशत) और गुजरात (81.5 प्रतिशत) भी बजटीय पूंजीगत व्यय के लिए प्रतिबद्ध रहे.

क्यों कुछ राज्य अपने कैपेक्स को कम करते हैं

विशेषज्ञों का मानना है कि इतने सारे राज्य अपने बजटीय पूंजीगत व्यय का पैसा खर्च नहीं करने के कारण विभिन्न कारकों को जिम्मेदार ठहरा सकते हैं.

नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ पब्लिक फाइनेंस एंड पॉलिसी (एनआईपीएफपी) में एसोसिएट प्रोफेसर मनीष गुप्ता ने कहा,

“जीएसटी मुआवजे की समाप्ति और राज्यों द्वारा कम बाजार उधारी के कारण राज्यों द्वारा पूंजीगत व्यय कम रहा है, राज्य सरकारों के बजट से बाहर उधारी को शामिल करने के बारे में देरी और अनिश्चितता के कारण उनकी वार्षिक उधारी तय की गई है.”.

उन्होंने कहा: “इस बात की संभावना है कि इन वित्तीय अनिश्चितताओं के कारण कुछ राज्यों ने अपने पूंजीगत व्यय के वित्तपोषण में धीमी शुरुआत की हो.”

जबकि यह इस वर्ष के लिए कम कैपेक्स के कारणों की व्याख्या कर सकता है, यह अभी भी पंजाब जैसे बार-बार अपराधियों के लिए जवाब नहीं देता है.

पटियाला में पंजाबी विश्वविद्यालय में प्रोफेसर एमेरिटस, लखविंदर सिंह गिल ने कहा, “पंजाब एक कर्ज में डूबा राज्य है और लंबे समय से यह राजस्व घाटे पर चल रहा है - कम आय अर्जित कर रहा है, लेकिन राज्य चलाने के लिए अधिक खर्च कर रहा है.”

उन्होंने कहा: “पंजाब के राजस्व के स्रोत इतने सूख गए हैं कि उसे अपने कर्मचारियों को वेतन देने के लिए ऋण लेने की आवश्यकता है. पैसा एक फंजिबिल एसेट है, और पूंजीगत व्यय को कम करना सबसे आसान है.”

गिल ने आगे कहा,

“इसलिए, जब पैसा आता है, तो सरकार वादा किए गए कैपेक्स को रद्द करने के लिए कोई न कोई बहाना ढूंढ लेती है और अपने राजस्व घाटे को संतुलित करना जारी रखती है, इसलिए कैपेक्स कम रहता है.”

गुप्ता ने कहा: “वास्तविक और बजटीय अनुमानों के बीच भारी अंतर होने से अक्सर राज्य के वित्तीय दृष्टिकोण पर रेड डॉट लग जाता है.

तो क्या राज्य अपने कैपेक्स को लंबे समय तक जारी रख सकते हैं? गुप्ता के अनुसार इसका उत्तर नहीं है.

गुप्ता ने कहा,

“पूंजीगत व्यय भविष्य के राजस्व स्रोत के निर्माण के लिए खर्च किया गया धन है.”

उन्होंने कहा: “आप आज एक बड़ी परियोजना में निवेश करते हैं जो भविष्य में आर्थिक गतिविधियों को बढ़ाएगी और रिटर्न भी देगी. राज्य अपनी कैपेक्स परियोजनाओं में कटौती करना जारी रखते हैं और मूल रूप से अपने भविष्य के राजस्व स्रोतों में भी कटौती कर रहे हैं. यह उनके आर्थिक विकास पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव डालेगा.” <https://hindi.theprint.in/bud-expectation/budget-2023-2022-promises-of-capital-expenditure-but-modi-government-states-backward-punjab-bihar-far-behind/464238/>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

7. CAG raps shipping corporation in Kerala, says bad moves hit treasury ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) 01 February 2023

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: An inquiry by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has exposed how the decision of the Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC), a state-run PSU, to build a sea-worthy vessel without studying the scientific and business angles of the venture cost the state exchequer dearly.

The CAG has also sought an explanation from KSINC, which is directly overseen by the chief minister, on the non-generation of revenue and additional expenditure.

Said the audit report, a copy of which is with TNIE, “The Company could not get the anticipated business even when it hired a vessel. The venture was around Rs 53 lakh in loss considering the hire charges paid and income from transportation alone. While the company

had already incurred a loss in a similar initiative, a proposal was initiated again to acquire a higher-capacity barge as an outer sea bunkering vessel.”

The CAG also found issue with the KSINC not utilising funds on time. Though the government released Rs 6 crore in March 2013 to the company towards the cost of the vessel, it was not utilised until December 2017. As per the CAG report, KSINC had the required funds specifically released by the government for stage payments amounting to Rs 6.13 crore as demanded by the contractor. However, the payments were released with a delay ranging from nine to 433 days.

The inquiry also said inefficient fund management in KSINC by not releasing payments as per the contractual obligations despite having government funds led to undue delay in the construction of barge. Against a 15-month deadline for construction, the barge remains undelivered even after 10 years.

“Since the vessel has not been delivered till date, no progress is seen. Venturing into a failed business model has resulted in creating an asset with public money with a cost escalation of around 20% and ultimately not finding any business opportunity as envisaged in the viability study,” said the report.

It said the KSINC sought government funds for projects without conducting scientific market or business viability studies and basing the entire project on a financial viability report prepared by KSINC officials that is not backed by concrete market operational data.

“The government releases funds without further analysis or seeking expert opinions, leading to idling of government or public funds in assets that are unable to generate revenue either to the company or to the exchequer,” said the CAG report. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2023/feb/01/cag-raps-shipping-corporation-in-kerala-says-bad-moves-hit-treasury-2543182.html>

8. Lokayukta probe demanded into Smart City works (timesofindia.indiatimes.com) Feb 01, 2023

Mangaluru: The opposition in the Mangaluru City Corporation (MCC) has demanded a probe by the Lokayuka or any competent authority, into the Smart City works undertaken in the city.

At the council meeting held on Tuesday, corporator AC Vinayraj cited the CAG performance audit on the implementation of the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) in Karnataka, that observed the non-utilisation of ICT-enabled solid waste management system in smart cities, that resulted in infructuous expenditure of Rs 15.4 crore and dilution of tender clause, leading to awarding of the tender to otherwise ineligible bidder, as well as the implementation of projects in contravention of scheme guidelines.

He also brought to notice that the report stated that only five (7.95%) out of 63 projects were undertaken on a revenue sharing method. “Out of this, only one project is a SCMfunded revenue model project, out of 58 SCM funded projects. That shows the inadequacy of the selection of projects on the revenue model,” he said.

In response, MSCL general manager Arun Prabha said, “We have given our reply with records to the authorities concerned.”

Naming of road

The council of the Mangaluru City Corporation has given its approval for naming the road from Morgan's Gate to National Highway-66, as Shri Shri Bhikshu Lakshmanananda Swamiji Road.

The proposal will be sent to the government for approval, said chief whip Premananda Shetty. Meanwhile, the council has referred the proposal of naming Pumpwell to Padil Junction road as Kankanady Garodi Road, to the Town Planning and Reforms Standing Committee, he said. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mangaluru/lokayukta-probe-demanded-into-smart-city-works/articleshow/97509177.cms>

9. Dy CM rebuts claim of 'unaccounted' funds for COVID ([theshillongtimes.com](https://www.theshillongtimes.com)) Feb 01, 2023

Shillong: An RTI activist's claim of unaccounted central funds to tackle COVID-19 pandemic has drawn a rebuttal from Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong who has given an assurance that not a single paisa will remain unaccounted.

Activist Dispersing Rani had earlier said that funds worth Rs 43 crore were unaccounted out of the total Rs 119 crore received by the state as central grants-in-aid through National Health Mission for COVID-19 activities, as per RTI findings.

Maintaining that it is wrong to say that the money is unaccounted for, Tynsong said that the Centre had not released the full amount of the grant-in-aid when Health Minister James PK Sangma had responded to a query in this regard on the floor of the Assembly.

As per him, the Centre does not release the whole instalment earmarked at the same time. The funds are released in a phased manner, the Deputy CM added.

"The whole instalment of Centre's grant-in-aid was not released when the Health minister had replied in the Assembly. The full amount was released later," he clarified.

Tynsong suggested that Rani must have compared the figures of his RTI findings and James' reply in the Assembly. "But I can assure you that not even a single paisa will remain unaccounted since the heads of accounts have to be approved by the AG and it will be reflected in the CAG report which will be tabled in the Assembly during the budget session in March," he told reporters.

He maintained that there can be no room for misuse of any funds whether it is central or state, since the CAG has kept all records.

Rani had on Monday revealed that the Centre had released an amount of Rs 5.61 crore in Phase I and Rs 104.12 crores in Phase II as per the RTI information received from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

He had recalled the reply of Health Minister James PK Sangma to a question raised by former MLA Adelbert Nongrum, during the last Assembly session, wherein the minister had mentioned that Rs 76 crore was sanctioned by the central government.

"As per the reply of Sangma, Rs 43 crore was unaccounted. This is only proves that there is large scale corruption when it comes to COVID-19 expenditure," he had

said. https://theshillongtimes.com/2023/02/01/dy-cm-rebuts-claim-of-unaccounted-funds-for-covid/#google_vignette

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

10. Govt to borrow record ₹15.4 lakh crore in FY24 to bridge revenue gap ([thehindu.com](https://www.thehindu.com)) Feb 01, 2023

The government plans to borrow a record ₹15.4 lakh crore from dated securities in FY24 to meet its expenditure requirement to prop up the economy.

This is higher than the total borrowing of ₹14.21 lakh crore for the current financial year ending March 31, 2023.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Budget on February 1 said the net market borrowings from dated securities are estimated at ₹11.8 lakh crore to finance the fiscal deficit in 2023-24.

“The balance financing is expected to come from small savings and other sources. The gross market borrowings are estimated at ₹15.4 lakh crore,” she said.

The government has raised ₹12.93 lakh crore till January 27, which is 91% of the overall borrowing target of ₹14.21 lakh crore estimated for 2022-23.

The indebtedness of the Centre and State governments together is equal to 83% of the annual gross domestic product (GDP).

The Finance Minister retained the fiscal deficit target at 6.4% despite an increase in the subsidy bill.

“Coming to 2023-24, the total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at ₹27.2 lakh crore and ₹45 lakh crore, respectively. The net tax receipts are estimated at ₹23.3 lakh crore,” she said.

She pegged the fiscal deficit at 5.9% of GDP for FY24.

“In my Budget Speech for 2021-22, I had announced that we plan to continue the path of fiscal consolidation, reaching a fiscal deficit below 4.5% by 2025-26 with a fairly steady decline over the period. We have adhered to this path, and I reiterate my intention to bring the fiscal deficit below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26,” she said.

Ms. Sitharaman had pegged gross market borrowing through dated securities for 2022-23 at ₹14,95,000 crore.

However, the government in September 2022 decided to cut the gross borrowing to ₹14.21 lakh crore during FY23. The gross borrowing for 2021-22 was ₹12,05,500 crore.

With regard to the net borrowing, the government estimated a record ₹11.6 lakh crore raising from the market in 2022-23.

This was nearly ₹2 lakh crore higher than the current year's Budget estimate of ₹9.7 lakh crore.

The total market borrowings of the government for 2022-23 are estimated at ₹11,58,719 crore, according to the previous Budget document.

The revised estimates for the same for 2021-22 are ₹8,75,771 crore against the Budget estimates of ₹9,67,708 crore. <https://www.thehindu.com/business/budget/budget-2023-govt-to-borrow-record-154-lakh-crore-in-fy24-to-bridge-revenue-gap/article66458053.ece>

11. Budget: Fiscal deficit pegged at 5.9% of GDP for 2023-24 ([livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com)) Feb 01, 2023

Sticking to the path of fiscal consolidation, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday pegged the gap between the Centre's revenue and expenditure at 5.9% of gross domestic product (GDP) for the financial year 2023-24.

The fiscal deficit target for the current fiscal was retained at 6.4% of GDP, despite a spike in expenditure on the back of better-than-expected nominal GDP, which is the denominator.

"We have adhered to the fiscal consolidation path... aim to bring fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26 with a fairly steady decline. For 2023-24, we have set a target of 5.9% of GDP," said Sitharaman during her budget speech.

Mint had reported earlier that the Union Budget will retain the fiscal deficit for the current fiscal at 6.4% of GDP and contain it to below 6% of GDP in 2023-24, sticking to the fiscal consolidation roadmap.

Sitharaman proposed increasing total expenditure to ₹45 trillion in 2023-24 from ₹41.9 trillion as per the revised estimate. Meanwhile, it has estimated total receipts at ₹27.2 trillion compared to ₹24.3 trillion.

Sitharaman proposed to raise the capital expenditure target by 33% to ₹10 trillion for the next fiscal starting 1 April, which is 3.3% of the country's economic output, which is expected to act as a multiplier to boost economic growth.

The finance minister also rationalized personal income tax to support consumption by the middle class to shore up domestic demand and consumption.

The move is consistent with the Economic Survey commentary, which said that the government is on course to meet the fiscal deficit target of 6.4% of GDP in 2022-23.

"We estimate the total spending in the current fiscal to exceed the Budget Estimate (BE) by Rs. 2.3 trillion, lower than the net cash outgo announced in the first supplementary demand for grants (Rs. 3.3 trillion), after taking into account our expectations of expenditure savings by ministries/departments. This implies a modest YoY rise of 7% in total spending in Q4 FY2023,," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA Ltd. <https://www.livemint.com/economy/budget-fiscal-deficit-pegged-at-5-9-of-gdp-for-202324-11675235361767.html>

12. Defence Budget Raised 13% to 5.93 Lakh Crore ([ndtv.com](https://www.ndtv.com)) Feb 01, 2023

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that the budget proposals will lead the country towards its goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy and one of the top three economies globally within a few years.

India's budget saw a 12.95 per cent hike for the 2023-24 financial year, with a total allocation of ₹ 5.93 lakh crore, on Wednesday. The capital outlay has also increased by ₹ 10,000 crore, reaching ₹ 1.62 lakh crore.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the budget underscored the government's commitment to supporting "growth and welfare-oriented policies" that will benefit all sections of society.

He stated that the budget proposals will lead the country towards its goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy and one of the top three economies globally within a few years.

"The Union Budget for 2023-24 presented by FM Smt. @nsitharaman under the guidance of PM Shri @narendramodi is focused on growth and welfare, with a priority to provide support to farmers, women, marginalised sections and the middle class," he tweeted.

"By creating jobs through investments in infrastructure projects paired with increased spending on agriculture, housing, healthcare and manufacturing sectors will help create more opportunities for everyone and help in driving economic growth further ahead!," he said.

"The increase in Income Tax exemption limit to ₹ 7 lakhs and several other tax-related reforms will provide a huge relief to the middle class including salaried individuals and retired people. I congratulate the FM and thank Pradhanmantri ji for taking this people-friendly decision.

"The Union Budget 2023-24 is expected to bring about positive changes in the country that will lead us towards achieving our goal of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy and 'Top Three' economies within few years," he said in another tweet. <https://www.ndtv.com/business/defence-budget-raised-13-to-5-93-lakh-crore-3742855>

13. Railway Budget: Rs 2.40 lakh crore outlay for Indian Railways, highest ever since 2013-14 ([financialexpress](https://www.financialexpress.com)) Feb 01, 2023

Presenting the budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday increased railways' capital expenditure to a record high of Rs 2.40 lakh crore.

In her budget speech, she stated that the railways' outlay has increased by nine times compared to the amount provided in the financial year 2013-14

The railways' capital expenditure was around Rs 45,980 crore in 2014, the year when Indian railways was infamous for highly congested routes and inefficient to meet the growing demands.

Sitharaman further announced that 100 critical transport infrastructure projects will be identified on priority basis to provide last and first mile connectivity to transport coal, fertilisers

and food grains. A total investment of Rs 75,000 crore has been kept aside for the same that includes Rs 15, 000 crore for private sources

The railways is also planning to upgrade over a thousand coaches of premier trains, such as the Shatabdi, Rajdhani, Tejas and the Duronto. These will be equipped with modern interiors and have better passenger comfort. Moreover, significant allocations will be made to replace old tracks and launch more Vande Bharat Express trains. Moreover, Indian Railways is poised at manufacturing 100 more Vistadome coaches to attract tourism.

The government allocated funds for the manufacture of 35 hydrogen fuel-efficient trains. It also plans to introduce 4,500 new coaches, 5,000 LHB coaches, and 58,000 wagons.

Indian Railways has increased the numbers of mechanised cleaning contracts at stations and coaches in trains.

In the Union Budget for the 2022-23 financial year, the railways was allocated a total of Rs 1.4 lakh crore. Out of this, Rs 1.37 crore was allocated for capital expenditure, while Rs 3,267 crore was for revenue expenditure. <https://www.financialexpress.com/budget/railway-budget-rs-2-40-lakh-crore-outlay-for-indian-railways-highest-ever-since-2013-14-2967708/>

14. PM-CARES fund charitable, RTI Act not applicable: Trust to HC ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) Feb 01, 2023

The PM Cares Trust is a public charitable trust and has not been created by or under the Constitution or by any law made by Parliament or a state legislature, the trust has told the Delhi high court.

In an affidavit on January 28 in response to a plea by a lawyer Samyak Gangwal seeking to declare the PM-CARES Fund as “State” under the Constitution to ensure transparency in its functioning, the trust has said it is not a “State” under Article 12 of the Constitution and does not qualify as a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

It said no information about funding could be given to a third party as the funds are not used for any government purposes while adding that the contributions as well as the corpus of PM-CARES do not have even a remote connection with the Consolidated Fund of India.

It reiterated that the corpus is not a fund of the Government of India and the amount does not go into the Consolidated Fund of India.

“There is no control of either the Central Government or any State Government/s, either direct or indirect, in functioning of the Trust in any manner whatsoever. The composition of the Board of Trustees consisting of holders of Public Office ex Officio is merely for administrative convenience and for smooth succession to the Trusteeship,” the trust told the high court in a 57-page affidavit filed through advocate Rajat Nair.

It said the trust is neither intended to be nor is it owned, controlled or substantially financed by any government or any instrumental of the government.

“That the PM-CARES Fund/Trust does not owe its genesis to a decision or function of appropriate government. The funds of the Trust do not have any government character as no guidelines can be laid down for disbursement of the amount from the Funds of PM-CARES Trust,” it said.

It said that the trust accepts only voluntary donations by individuals and institutions. “Contributions flowing out of budgetary sources of Government or from the balance sheets of the public sector undertakings are not accepted. Conditional contributions, where the donor specifically mentions that the amount is meant for a particular purpose, are not accepted in the Fund,” the affidavit said.

On Tuesday, senior advocate Shyam Divan for the petitioner contended that the fund is the “State” and highest constitutional functionaries have represented it to be an initiative of the Government of India and called for donations and contributions from the public.

He said if it is assumed that the fund is not the “State”, then symbols such as the Government of India, Ashoka Pillar or the government’s website cannot be used as that gives an impression to the public that it is the “State”.

The matter was argued at length by the petitioner’s counsel following which it was posted for a later date for solicitor general Tushar Mehta to argue his case.

Detailing the transparency maintained in the donations and the funds received by them, the trust told the court that the benefit of the objects of the trust have been made available to the general public irrespective of caste, creed, sex, region, language and religion.

“Audited Reports of the PM CARES Fund are already available on the website *pmcares.gov.in. Subsequent audited details of accounts will also be made available on the website, as and when due. Hence, assumptions of the petitioner regarding arbitrariness or non-transparency are devoid of merit,” the affidavit said, adding that its funds are audited by an auditor who is a chartered accountant drawn from the panel prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

It further stated that PM-CARES Fund accepts only voluntary donations by individuals and institutions and contributions flowing out of budgetary sources of the government or from the balance sheets of the public sector undertakings are not accepted.

“Contributions made to PM-CARES Fund/Trust are exempted under the Income Tax Act, 1961, but that by itself would not justify the conclusion that it is a Public Authority,” it said.

The trust said the PM-CARES Fund is administered on the pattern of the Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund (PMNRF) as both are chaired by the Prime Minister. As the national emblem and domain name ‘gov.in’ are being used for the PMNRF, it is also being used for the PM CARES Fund, the trust said.

It said the composition of the board of trustees, consisting of holders of public office ex officio, is merely for administrative convenience and for smooth succession to the trusteeship and is neither intended to be nor in fact result into any governmental control in the functioning of the trust in any manner whatsoever.

Another petition filed by the same petitioner in 2020 seeking to declare PM-CARES a ‘public authority’ under the Right to Information (RTI) Act is pending before the court.

Earlier, the court had taken exception to the short reply filed by the Union government and directed it to file a detailed response on the contentions raised in the petition. The trust, while responding to the petitions, questioned the locus of the petitioner and said that he had neither contributed to the fund nor had any legal injury been caused to him.

Seeking dismissal of the plea, the trust said the petitions have been filed to gain publicity. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pmcares-fund-charitable-rti-act-not-applicable-trust-to-hc-101675191702890.html>

15. January GST collection at ₹1.55 lakh crore, second highest-ever ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) Feb 01, 2023

The GST collection in January surged to over ₹1.55 lakh crore, the second highest-ever mop-up, the finance ministry said on Tuesday.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of January 2023 till 5:00 PM on 31.01.2023 is ₹1,55,922 crore of which CGST is ₹28,963 crore, SGST is ₹36,730 crore, IGST is ₹79,599 crore (including ₹37,118 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹10,630 crore (including ₹768 crore collected on import of goods)," the ministry said in a statement.

The revenues in the current financial year up to January 2023 are 24 per cent higher than the GST revenues during the same period last year.

This is for the third time, in the current financial year, GST collection has crossed ₹1.50 lakh crore mark. The GST collection in January 2023 is the second highest next only to the ₹1.68 lakh crore gross mop-up reported in April 2022.

"Over the last year, various efforts have been made to increase the tax base and improve compliance. The percentage of filing of GST returns (GSTR-3B) and of the statement of invoices (GSTR-1), till the end of the month, has improved significantly over years," the ministry said.

In the October-December 2022 quarter, a total of 2.42 crore GST returns were filed till the end of the next month compared to 2.19 crore in the same quarter of the last year. This is due to various policy changes introduced during the year to improve compliance, it added. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/business/january-gst-collection-at-rs-1-55-lakh-crore-second-highestever-101675215541432.html>

16. Economic Survey 2023: DBT has helped transfer more than Rs. 26.5 lakh crore till date for central schemes ([moneycontrol.com](https://www.moneycontrol.com)) JANUARY 31, 2023

Launched in 2013, the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme replaced the then existing delivery process. Through the use of IT, the scheme transferred subsidies directly into the Aadhar-linked bank accounts of targeted beneficiaries.

Since its advent, Rs 26.5 lakh crore has been transferred for central programmes. Thanks to such direct transfers, the union government had managed to save about Rs 2.2 lakh crore as of

March 2021 by removing the names of 9.4 crore beneficiaries across databases — names that were either duplicate, or fake, or non-existent.

Within the span of the past decade, the DBT has already expanded from 24 schemes in 43 districts, to 200 central schemes and over 2,000 state government schemes pan India.

The number of central schemes rose to 426 in the year 2019-2020, when more than Rs 3,81,000 crore was transferred to 144.7 crore beneficiaries, helping provide relief to those whose livelihoods were impacted.

The number of schemes fell to 316 in 2020-21, and 313 in 2021-22, but the funds transferred rose to over 5,52,00 crore (179.9 crore beneficiaries) and over 6,30,000 crore (179.9 crore beneficiaries), respectively. In FY 2022-23, as of 5th Jan 2023, over Rs 3,80,000 crore has been distributed to 159.5 crore beneficiaries for 310 programmes.

The DBT scheme has enabled the accurate identification and targeting of beneficiaries, and made it easy to avail of services through online applications. It ensures transparency in the transfer of funds as well, and has eliminated the existence of middlemen and agents, thus curbing leakages in the delivery process.

India's DBT implementation has won praise from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as well as many other international organisations, for efficiently providing support to the underprivileged sections of the society. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economic-survey-2023-dbt-has-helped-transfer-more-than-rs-26-5-lakh-crore-till-date-for-central-schemes-9975061.html>