

## **NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS (07.01.2023 to 09.01.2023)**

**1. Pension liability under House panel's lens ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) Updated: Jan 09, 2023**

Amid the political row over the old pension scheme (OPS) versus the new pension scheme (NPS), a parliamentary panel has called for discussions as reverting to the old system by only three states -- Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan -- would mean a total liability of over ₹3 lakh crore, which may surpass ₹31 lakh crore if implemented nationwide.

The parliamentary standing committee on finance, led by Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker Jayant Sinha, has called a meeting this week for the first round of discussion on the issue after a number of states ruled by opposition parties have resolved to go back to the old pension scheme, which economists said would be fiscally undesirable.

“It is an important issue. We couldn't take it up earlier due to time constraints,” said Sinha, a former finance minister. “But in the next two months, we will extensively discuss it and come out with a report.”

At a book launch on Friday, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, who was deputy chairman of the erstwhile Planning Commission during Manmohan Singh's government, called it an “absurd” move and a “recipe for financial bankruptcy”. Reacting to Ahluwalia's remark, Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot said employees are entitled to feel secure after completing around 35 years of service.

Congress-ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh have announced reverting to the old pension scheme, even as the Congress won Himachal Pradesh in the latest round of assembly polls banking on a slew of promises, including one to go back to OPS. Punjab, ruled by the Aam Aadmi Party, too, has made a similar promise.

This week, experts, representatives of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, a government think tank, and the expenditure secretary will brief the parliamentary panel on the issue of pension liability of the Centre and the states. The Reserve Bank of India and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority will brief the panel as well.

If all states shift to OPS, it would result in a pension liability of ₹31.04 lakh crore, according to the October 2022 edition of Ecowrap, a State Bank of India's research report. Reverting to the OPS by some states also seems to be a tool used by them for political purposes with huge liabilities to the public exchequer, it said. “The pension liabilities of three states, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan, is estimated at ₹3 lakh crore,” the report said.

**Pension has become a key part of the Centre's committed expenses and in 2019-20, 19% of the Centre's revenue expenditure of ₹26.15 lakh crore went to pensions, said a Comptroller and Auditor General of India report on state finances in 2019-20.**

At the heart of the old ‘pay as you go scheme’, operational till 2004, lay an intergenerational disparity, analysts said. Under it, contributions from the current generation of workers were used to pay for pensions of current pensioners, making it an unfunded pension scheme because it represented a direct transfer of resources from the current generation of taxpayers to fund the

pensions. It meant that the old system was fiscally ruinous, according to Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser of the State Bank of India, the country's largest lender.

"Any return to the old scheme will not be fiscally viable," Ghosh said. According to Ghosh's research, pension liabilities of state governments over the long term showed a sharp increase. The compounded annual growth in pension liabilities for the 12-year period ended 2021-22 was 34% for all state governments. As of 2020-21, the pension outgo as a percentage of revenue receipts stood at 13.2%, Ghosh said.

"Some states have informed the Centre that they would like to start the old pension scheme. However, the Centre has no proposal under consideration for restoration of old pension scheme," a Union government official aware of the matter said, requesting anonymity.

While Punjab has notified shifting from NPS to OPS in November, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have intimated the Centre that they want to restart the old system for their respective state government employees.

"Some states have asked the PFRDA to return the accumulated corpus of their respective subscribers under NPS, which is legally not possible," the official said. During the pre-budget consultations with finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on November 25, Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel reiterated the state's demand to refund the NPS amount.

The OPS is applicable for government employees recruited before January 1, 2004. It ensures a defined benefit after retirement. The benefits include 50% of the last pay drawn, or a 10-month average emolument, whichever is higher; also dearness allowance on the pension amount; revision of pension with successive Pay Commissions; additional pension after a certain age; commutation of pension family pension for dependents of several categories.

In contrast to the OPS, the NPS works on defined contributions. It has two tiers – Tier- I and II. Contribution to Tier-I is mandatory for all government servants governed by the NPS. These employees have to contribute 10% of their basic pay plus DA and the government makes a 14% contribution from April 1, 2019.

Tier-II is optional. It is at the discretion of concerned officials and does not offer matching contributions by the government. It is a voluntary savings option with flexibility of contribution and withdrawal of funds. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pension-liability-under-house-panel-s-lens-101673201944670.html>

**2. CAG paints a grim picture of public sector enterprises** (*bizzbuzz.news*) Jan 8, 2023

**Return on investment fell to 16.4% in 2020-21 from 37.33% in 2010-11; However, RoE in 251 PSEs, improved to 16.34% in 2020-21 from 13.54% in 224 PSEs in 2019-20** CAG

There was a consistent decline in the return on investment (RoI) on the basis of compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) in 58 listed public-sector enterprises (PSEs) in 10 years from 2010-11 to 2020-21.

According to a recent report by the Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG), RoI of PSEs was 37.33 per cent in 2010-11, which came down to 16.4 per cent in 2020-21. In fact, there was not a single year when there was no dip in RoI or it was flat.

Infusion by the Central government in PSEs is in the form of equity, grants, subsidy, etc., for their operational and administrative expenses, the CAG report says. Financial year 2000-01 has been considered as the inception year.

The rate of real return (RORR) has shown a decreasing trend since 2006-07. It was in the range between 10 per cent and 23 per cent from 2016-17 to 2020-21. The company-wise analysis of RORR for the preceding three years revealed that while listed companies gave RORR between 33 per cent and 51 per cent, unlisted PSEs gave negative returns ranging between 3 per cent and 8 per cent during the same period.

There were 717 central PSEs under the audit jurisdiction of the CAG as on March 31, 2021. These included 508 government companies, 203 government-controlled other companies, and six statutory corporations. The above-mentioned CAG report deals with 453 government companies and corporations (including six statutory corporations) and 180 government-controlled other companies. The accounts of 84 PSEs were in arrears for three years or more, or were under liquidation.

Government companies and corporations earned a total profit of Rs195,677 crore during 2020-21 of which, 72 per cent (Rs140,083 crore) was contributed by 97 government companies and corporations in three sectors -power, petroleum, and financial services. It may be mentioned here that PSEs enjoy considerable market dominance in these three sectors.

The return on equity (RoE) in these 251 PSEs, however, improved, going up to 16.34 per cent in 2020-21 from 13.54 per cent in 224 PSEs in 2019-20. <https://www.bizzbuzz.news/industry/cag-paints-a-grim-picture-of-public-sector-enterprises-1189970>

### **3. The Tiff over Centre's Spending ([fortuneindia.com](https://fortuneindia.com)) Jan 6, 2023**

ON DECEMBER 9, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the first batch of supplementary demand for grants in Lok Sabha. She sought parliamentary approval for additional expenditure of ₹3.26 lakh crore, over and above the ₹39.5 lakh crore earmarked in Union Budget FY23. The minister hinted even this will not be sufficient and government will seek Parliament's approval for one more batch of supplementary grants before the end of the financial year. The additional cash outgo is 8.3% of budgeted expenditure for the year. Sitharaman justified the expenditure by pointing out recession in global economies, both developed and emerging, weakening global trade and geopolitical tensions.

Experts were expecting this. "It is on anticipated lines, mainly because of increased allocations for food and fertiliser subsidies," says Rajani Sinha, chief economist, CARE Ratings. "Net cash outgo under supplementary demand for grants, which is somewhat smaller than our expectations, is dominated by fertiliser subsidy, food subsidy, payments to oil marketing companies for domestic LPG operations and funds towards MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme). Additionally, capex has been augmented by around ₹31,000 crore, which should ensure that the government meets its annual target. With savings likely under other heads, we do not see the supplementary demand resulting in a

meaningful breach of the fiscal deficit target of 6.4% of GDP," says Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA.

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# ₹31,000 CRORE

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▲ **ADDITIONAL FUNDS SOUGHT FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE DURING FY23.**

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# 8.3%

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▲ **SUPPLEMENTARY DEMAND FOR GRANTS AS PER CENT OF ORIGINALLY PROPOSED EXPENDITURE.**

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In fact, mid-year tweaks in Centre's spending plan and multiple demand for grants after presentation of Budget has been a routine practice under present and past governments. There are well laid down Constitutional provisions and rules that instruct Central government what to do when it has to spend more than what was proposed in the Budget. This was done as it can be difficult to assess exact spending needs well before the start of the financial year during uncertain times. "When the Union Budget was presented, the full impact of the Ukraine-Russia tensions was not known. Also, the foodgrain supply scheme, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, was only up to September. To be fair to the government, you can't have a handle on global economy and financial and money markets two months before the financial year starts. You have to make assumptions," says Devendra Kumar Pant, chief economist, India Ratings. "Due to evolving domestic and global macro and financial conditions, mid-year adjustments in expenditure allocations are required. Supplementary demand for grants takes care of this."

While almost everyone agrees on the need for supplementary grants, the quantum of additional funds sought and nature of the proposed expenditure are usually a matter of debate. For instance, A.M. Ariff, a Member of Parliament representing Alappuzha constituency, questioned the quantum of funds sought in the latest supplementary demand by pointing out that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament has more than once expressed concern over lack of foresight and bad planning on part of Budget controlling authorities of various ministries and departments. "The PAC reiterated the need for scrupulous scrutiny of Budget proposals, rigorous monitoring of expenditure and strict compliance with financial rules to eliminate the possibility of expenditure being under-spent and wrongful appropriation.

But even after that, proper planning and effective monitoring mechanisms for a disciplined Budget system are lacking in our country," he says.

## Demand For Grants As Proportion Of Budget Estimates

YEAR	Expenditure (BE)	Supplementary Demand For Grants*	% Increase
2008-09	7,50,883.53	1,58,858.96	21.2
2009-10	10,20,837.68	57,505.22	5.6
2010-11	11,08,749.24	1,43,319.61	12.9
2011-12	12,57,728.83	1,08,470.30	8.6
2012-13	14,90,925.29	71,771.40	4.8
2013-14	16,65,297	39,595.35	2.3
2014-15	17,94,892	47,967.04	2.7
2015-16	17,77,477	71,747.41	4
2016-17	19,78,060.45	2,61,154.86	13.2
2017-18	21,46,734.78	3,08,953.05	14.4
2018-19	24,42,213.30	1,48,537.93	6.1
2019-20	27,86,349.45	1,05,596.87	3.8
2020-21	30,42,230.09	5,79,637.39	19
2021-22	34,83,235.63	4,30,326.00	12.4
2022-23	39,44,908.67	3,25,756.69	8.3

IN ₹CR; \* SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS DURING THE FISCAL YEAR + DEMANDS FOR EXCESS GRANTS FOR EXPENDITURE RAISED AT A LATER STAGE; SOURCE: MINISTRY OF FINANCE

The government had sought 12.4% of the originally budgeted expenditure in demand for supplementary grants in FY22. This number was 19% in pandemic year FY21. In FY17 and FY18, it was 13.2% and 14.4%, respectively. The finance minister defended the latest demand by referring to UPA government's move in FY09 when, in response to the global financial crisis, it proposed two supplementary demand for grants accounting for 20% of Budget estimates for the year.

A retired bureaucrat says the issue is not about excess expenditure but Budget marksmanship. "You are supposed to prepare the Budget after carefully considering revenue and expenditure during the year. Your final expenditure is expected to be close to what was budgeted. The Constitution considers this seriously. That is why there is provision for a contingency fund for extraordinary situations. But what has happened, especially beginning 2021, is that revenue estimates have been very poor. Either they are undershooting, that is, the realisations are much less like in FY20, or much more than estimated, as was the case in FY22, and likely in FY23 too. On expenditure side, too, a lot of ad-hocism has come in. For instance, in FY21, when government decided midway through the year to clear Food Corporation of India's subsidy bills given in the form of loans, food subsidy outgo shot up from ₹1 lakh crore to ₹5 lakh crore.

Such practices are uncalled for. The government could have done that clean-up in next financial year. But it perhaps wanted to show it was providing a very large Covid-19 stimulus. This happens when political objective takes precedence over constitutional budgetary marksmanship," he says.

Early this year, the PAC, headed by Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, had asked ministries and departments to give due seriousness to estimating budgetary requirements at Budget/supplementary demand stage and avoid repeated supplementary grant proposals. The committee also pointed out that the increase in the corpus of the Contingency Fund of India from ₹500 crore to ₹30,000 crore in FY22 was aimed at meeting immediate requirement of funds for uncertain situations.

Incidentally, National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM) had, in a report commissioned by finance ministry, looked into the excess expenditure incurred by various ministries and departments from FY01 to FY18 and made 12 recommendations for building an informed system of budgeting and expenditure control. The report also looked at how the issue of excess expenditure is looked at by parliaments of various developed countries like Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and U.K.. The PAC had wanted the finance ministry to look at NIFM's recommendations in the right spirit and make necessary arrangements in consultation with Comptroller and Auditor General of India and Controller General of Accounts. It also asked the Department of Economic Affairs of the finance ministry to appraise the PAC about specific measures undertaken in this regard.

The forthcoming Budget FY24 will indicate if PAC's recommendations have had an impact on the annual Budget making exercise or not. <https://www.fortuneindia.com/long-reads/the-tiff-over-centres-spending/111067>

#### **4. 73 elephants, 4 lions run over by trains in 4 years along with 63,000 other animals: CAG report ([downtoearth.org.in](http://downtoearth.org.in)) Jan 09, 2023**

More than 63,000 animals, including animals like Asiatic lions (4) and Indian elephants (73) listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, had been run over by trains between 2017-18 and 2020-21. Unmanned level crossings (ULC) were the reason for the death of animals, stated the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Performance Audit of Derailment in Indian Railways, released last month.

India is home to around 29,000 elephants, showed the 2017 census. The country is the last remaining home of the Asiatic lions in the world, with 674 individuals in the Gir National Park and surrounding areas, according to the 2020 count.

In June 2015, the Ministry of Railways (MoR) had circulated the recommendations of World Wildlife Fund-India to stop elephant deaths on railway tracks to six zonal railways (ZR).

The recommendations included measures to prevent animal deaths, especially in the case of elephants in the forest passages for Indian Railways.

There were 63,345 cases of animal deaths between 2017-18 and 2020-21, stated the CAG report.



The general advisories to prevent train accidents involving elephants, approved by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and MoR, had been jointly issued to Railways in 2010, the document said.

The advisories include — clearance of vegetation on the sides of the railway track, underpasses and overpasses across the railway track to allow elephants to escape, signboards to pre-warn loco pilots, sensitisation programmes for loco pilots, guards and station masters, engagement of elephant trackers and to keep railway track free from food waste that attracts elephants.

Also read: Activists point to ‘frightening trend’ of wild elephants being brought into captive elephant trade

Joint inspections were conducted in 102 sections across 18 divisions on nine ZRs by officials of the Audit Department and Engineering Department to verify the status of implementation of measures in identified reserve forest passages.

Despite more than 10 years from the date of issue, the important precautionary measures had not been implemented in many sections, the officials found.

For the safety of Asiatic lions on railway premises, a standard operating procedure (SOP) was signed between officers of Bhavnagar Division of Western Railway zone and the Forest Department in December 2014.

The precautions to be taken by the staff of the railway, as well as the forest department, were laid down in the SOP.

Precautions included speed restrictions in areas where lion movement was frequent, clearance of vegetation along the track, putting up of sign boards near tracks and training of staff and review of the situation every six months by railway and forest officials.

“During the joint inspections conducted by Audit with the Railway Engineers, sufficient signages, fencing and watch towers were not provided at vulnerable locations,” the report noted.

This implies that action towards the safety of Asiatic lions was lacking on the part of the railway administration, it added.

The report recommended that Indian Railways make stringent efforts to complete the work for the early elimination of ULCs to reduce the safety hazards.

It also suggested to ensure that the joint advisories issued by the MoEFCC and MoR be followed scrupulously to prevent animal deaths. This in turn will also help in preventing derailments on this account. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/73-elephants-4-lions-run-over-by-trains-in-4-years-along-with-63-000-other-animals-cag-report-87011>

**5. How Did 50 ASI-Protected Monuments Disappear? ([indiatimes.com](https://www.indiatimes.com)) Jan 08, 2023**

50 of India's 3,693 centrally protected monuments under ASI, according to the Union Ministry of Culture's submission to the Parliament, are now untraceable, raising serious concerns. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture received the report, "Issues Relating to Untraceable Monuments and Protection of Monuments in India."

**What is ASI?**

The Government of India's Ministry of Culture is home to the Archaeological Survey of India, or ASI. It works to protect and preserve the nation's historic buildings and archaeological sites as well as conduct archaeological research. The provisions of the 1958 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (AMASR Act) are used by ASI to regulate all archaeological activities carried out in the nation.

The Antiquities and Art Treasure Act of 1972 is also governed by it. James Cunningham, a British Army engineer who had a passion for Indian archaeology, founded it in 1861.

After gaining independence, it became a statutory body under the AMASR Act of 1958.

The Director-General of the ASI is in charge, and New Delhi serves as its headquarters.

ASI safeguards and preserves more than 3500 protected monuments and archaeological sites of national significance.

**How do monuments under ASI protection become untraceable?**

To oversee archaeological excavations and conservation, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was founded in 1869. Numerous protected monuments were placed under the ASI's care between the 1920s and the 1950s.

Following independence, the functioning of ASI was hampered by the poor policies of the succeeding governments, which placed a greater emphasis on infrastructure, education, and health than on preserving cultural heritage. The ASI officials claim that activities like encroachments, the building of dams and reservoirs, and rapid urbanisation have slowly sunk many monuments and heritage sites.

14 monuments have been engulfed by rapid urbanisation, according to the ASI submission in Parliament. By building dams and reservoirs, as many as 12 monuments have been submerged, and 24 have vanished.

Only 248 of the 3,693 monuments are reportedly guarded, according to the report. Due to financial limitations, the government could only afford to provide 2,578 security personnel at 248 locations, according to the report.

**Which monuments are missing?**

Eleven monuments are missing from Uttar Pradesh, two from each of Delhi and Haryana, and others are missing from Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, among other states.



Other missing monuments include: the Guns of Emperor Sher Shah, Tinsukia (Assam); the Ruins of Copper Temple, Paya, Lohit (Arunachal Pradesh); Kos Minar, Mujesar, Faridabad (Haryana); Kutumbari Temple, Dwarahat, Almora (Uttarakhand); Rock Inscription, Satna (Madhya Pradesh); Old European Tomb, Pune (Maharashtra); 12th Century Temple, Baran (Rajasthan); and Telia Nala Buddhist ruins, Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh).

According to the Ministry, untraceable monuments are those that, despite numerous ASI efforts, could not be located on the ground for a sizable period of time.

### Is it the first time?

As cited by the Indian Express, the ASI officials claim that no physical surveys of any monuments were ever done following Independence. Nevertheless, according to a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report from 2013, the nation's at least 92 centrally protected monuments were believed to be missing.

The CAG report claims that the ASI lacked information on the precise number of monuments it was responsible for protecting. The CAG report recommended that ASI officers conduct routine inspections of each protected monument. Even though the Ministry approved the proposal, there was little evidence of appropriate action. <https://www.indiatimes.com/explainers/news/explained-how-did-50-asi-protected-monuments-disappear-589674.html>

6. रेल की पटरी पर हुई 63 हजार जानवरों की मौत, पढ़िए क्या कहते हैं आंकड़े ([abplive.com](http://abplive.com)) January 7, 2023

कई बार ऐसी खबरें सामने आई हैं कि ट्रेन से कोई जानवर टकरा गया और उसकी मृत्यु हो गई. इस तरह की खबरें सुनकर मन दुःखी जरूर होता है, लेकिन हम कर भी क्या सकते हैं? अब जानवर को कैसे समझाया जाए कि ट्रेन के आगे मौत है. जानवर तो इस दुनिया की टेक्नोलॉजी से अलग अपनी प्राकृतिक दुनिया में जीता है. खैर, इस तरह की हर खबर हमें दुःख देती है, लेकिन जानवरों की मौत से जुड़े कैग के आंकड़े आपको झकझोर कर रख देंगे. कैग के आंकड़े बताते हैं कि ट्रेन की पटरियों पर हजारों की संख्या में जानवरों की मौत हुई है.

### इतने जानवर हुए मौत का शिकार

कैग के आंकड़े बताते हैं कि भारत में साल 2017-18 से 2020-21 के बीच 3 एशियाई शेरों और 73 हाथियों के साथ 63,000 से अधिक जानवरों की मौत रेलवे पटरियों पर हुई है. कैग ने केंद्रीय पर्यावरण मंत्रालय के साथ मिलकर रेलवे की तरफ से इस तरह की घटनाओं को रोकने के लिए उठाए गए कदमों पर चिंता भी जताई है. दरअसल, कैग एक नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक है, और इसने अपनी रिपोर्ट पिछले महीने संसद में पेश की थी. कैग ने रिपोर्ट 'परफॉर्मेंस ऑडिट ऑन डिरेलमेंट इन इंडियन रेलवे' में कहा है कि रेलवे को यह कन्फर्म करना चाहिए कि उन गाइडलाइंस का सख्ती से पालन हो रहा है जिन्हें जानवरों की मौत को रोकने

के लिए पर्यावरण और वन मंत्रालय एवं रेल मंत्रालय ने जारी किया था. इस तरह की घटनाओं को रोकने के लिए दी गई सलाह ही इन आंकड़ों में कमी ला सकती है.

### 3 सालों की रिपोर्ट में क्या मिला?

कैंग ने इन 3 सालों में पाया कि 73 हाथियों और चार शेरों समेत 63,345 जानवर ट्रेन की पटरियों पर अपनी जान गवा चुके हैं. कैंग ने आगे कहा कि हाथियों से जुड़े ट्रेन हादसों को रोकने के लिए दोनों मंत्रालयों ने सामान्य सलाह को रेलवे के लिए 2010 में संयुक्त रूप से जारी किया था. अब हम सलाह की इतनी बात कर रहे हैं तो आइए इस सलाह को जान भी लेते हैं. सलाह में रेलवे पटरी के किनारों पर वनस्पति की सफाई आदि को शामिल किया गया था. इससे जानवर चराई के लिए पटरी के पास नहीं आएंगे. हालांकि इन सलाहों को मानने में कई तरह की कमी सामने आई हैं. <https://www.abplive.com/gk/63-thousand-animals-died-on-the-railway-track-study-says-2302026>

**7. रेलवे के 29 कर्मचारियों ने फर्जी दस्तावेजों पर 32 साल की नौकरी, विभाग को जांच करने में लगे 21 साल** ([livehindustan.com](http://livehindustan.com)) 08 Jan 2023

रेलवे के 22 कर्मचारियों द्वारा फर्जी दस्तावेज के सहारे 29 से 32 साल तक नौकरी करने का चौंकाने वाला मामला सामने आया है। हैरत की बात यह है कि रेलवे को इसकी जानकारी नौ साल बाद लगी। इसके बाद जांच पूरी करने में विभाग को 21 साल लग गए। इस दौरान फर्जी दस्तावेज पर नौकरी कर रहे लोग रेलवे से वेतन और भत्ता भी लेते रहे।

रेलवे को इस मद में 10 करोड़ से अधिक का नुकसान हुआ। कैंग की रिपोर्ट से यह मामला सामने आया। कैंग की ओर से संसद के शीतकालीन सत्र में रिपोर्ट पेश की गई थी। इसमें कहा गया है कि कैंग के जुलाई 2020 को मध्य रेलवे के विद्युत विभाग के कार्मिक अभिलेखों की जांच से पता चला कि मई 1989 से अप्रैल 1992 के बीच खलासी, मिस्त्री, मोटर वैन ड्राइवर के रूप में 22 ने निर्माण संगठन (महानगरी परिवहन परियोजना-रेलवे) में नौकरी हासिल की थी। उनके द्वारा जमा दस्तावेज फर्जी हैं, इसका पता मध्य रेलवे को नौ साल बाद (1998, 2001 और 2004) चला। इस आधार पर रेलवे ने सितंबर 2001 से अक्टूबर 2004 के बीच कर्मचारियों को आरोप पत्र जारी किया।

नसीहत भी काम नहीं आई : कैंग ने मध्य रेलवे फर्जी दस्तावेजों की समय पर जांच करने में विफल रहा। कैंग इस मामले में जिम्मेदार अफसरों पर कार्रवाई की सिफारिश करती है। इससे पूर्व कैंग ने अप्रैल 2022 में फर्जी दस्तावेजों की मदद से 22 लोगों के रेलवे में नौकरी पाने व समय पर जांच पूरी नहीं करने के बारे में रेलवे बोर्ड के सामने रखा था। तीन को रिटायरमेंट से चार दिन पहले हटाया 22 फर्जी कर्मचारियों में से 18 को अक्टूबर 2021 में नौकरी से

हटाया गया। तीन कर्मियों को सेवा से तब हटाया गया, जब उनकी सेवानिवृत्ति के चार से पांच दिन बचे हुए थे। इन सभी को वेतन-भत्तेमद में रेलवे ने 10.37 करोड़ जारी किए। रेलवे की सतर्कता का यह आलम तब है, जब बोर्ड ने जुलाई 1993 में सभी जोनल रेलवे को पत्र लिखा था, जिसमें कहा गया कि नौकरी पाने के लिए फर्जी दस्तावेज लगानेवालों को तुरंत सेवा से बर्खास्त कर दिया जाए। <https://www.livehindustan.com/ncr/story-29-railway-employees-served-32-years-on-fake-documents-indian-railways-took-21-years-to-investigate-7601162.html>

#### 8. **Draconian, Toothless-II** (*thestatesman.com*) January 8, 2023

The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has completely failed to control air pollution in Delhi NCR and the country as a whole. On the other front of water pollution, it has so far been ineffective to clean up the rivers and the water bodies. It also could not regulate solid waste management as the mountains of garbage continue to pollute the cities.

The flagship programme of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change had been the Ganga Action Plan. At the initiative of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Ministry of Environment created in 1985 a large division for the 'Ganga Action Plan', headed by an Additional Secretary and endowed with a huge budget. It was a multi-pronged project with a string of programmes and schemes aiming at bringing back the pristine glory of the Ganga.

The programme had been in operation since 1986 and till 2014, hundreds of crores of rupees had been spent on various schemes spread over the entire Ganga basin starting from Gangotri to Sagar Island at the estuary of the river. Funds were sanctioned by the Central Government, but the specific schemes had to be implemented by the state Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.

By 2015, the Ganga Action Plan had already completed 30 years with no visible impact which prompted people to question the wisdom and effectiveness of the project. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) was entrusted with the task of monitoring the water quality of the Ganga and the Board had accordingly set up monitoring stations at certain strategic places.

They sent periodical reports which indicated that the water quality of the Ganga had generally been improving but the progress was very slow. Occasionally, the Ministry would be thrilled to get reports that dolphins and turtles had been sighted near Varanasi and Allahabad leading to the conclusion that the water quality and the biological oxygen demand (BOD) must have improved.

But the ground reality told a different story. The CPCB had been sending reports which would please their bosses in Delhi and what the Ministry would like to hear. Members of the public, environmental activists and voluntary organisations pointed out that far from being restored, the condition of the Ganga was fast deteriorating. There is a strong belief that Ganga-Jal which is used for all pujas and auspicious occasions can never collect bacteria or sediment even when kept in vessels for years and the river purifies itself.

This age-old faith gets a rude shock when people visit the Ganga at Kanpur, Allahabad, Triveni Sangam, Varanasi, and further downstream at Patna where Ganga water is not fit even for bathing, what to speak of drinking. At Kanpur, the large number of tanneries, totally against

all existing orders, merrily continued discharging untreated toxic waste into the Ganga, but nobody was there to prevent it, least of all to prosecute them.

Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) had been constructed, but none of the CETPs was in working condition, partly due to technological problems and partly due to lack of electricity and lack of coordination to share the costs. Since these plants required substantial investment and their maintenance was also an expensive proposition, it was perceived that sharing of costs among the tanneries would make sense. Unfortunately, common responsibility was nobody's responsibility and the system became non-functional because of disputes, nonpayment by smaller units and lack of a common administration.

The end result was that hundreds of tanneries at Kanpur were daily discharging several tons of foul and toxic waste-water to the river making the Ganga at Kanpur absolutely polluted. The effluents even made the holy river unsuitable to support aquatic life including fish. Electric crematoria built in the major towns all along the Ganga basin continued to remain non-operational except in West Bengal. Dead bodies continued to float on the sacred river. And quiet flowed the holy Ganga but there was not a drop to drink.

The condition of river Yamuna had been worse. Plans after plans had been drawn up by the Ministry of Environment with the active assistance of the World Bank to clean up the Yamuna mainly through construction of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) which would prevent untreated industrial sludge and municipal sewage flowing into the river and also through construction of oxidation ponds at various places. But nothing improved the ground situation during the last three decades; on the other hand, the condition of the river went from bad to worse.

The overflowing population of Delhi which increased from 4 million to 24 million in six decades (1950-2010), spilled on to the river fronts, the migrant population occupying large parts of the riverbed for habitation. Finding that Yamuna had been emasculated to such an extent that it was incapable of causing floods, the immigrant workers merrily established settlement colonies along the river banks. The CETPs have never really worked. The oxidation ponds slowly died out and gave way to housing colonies.

The untreated industrial waste-water and the sewers of entire Delhi and of the surrounding towns continued to flow into the river. On the other hand, to meet the everincreasing demands for water from an evergrowing population, more and more water was being drawn out of Yamuna.

The barrage constructed north of Delhi diverted almost the entire water of Yamuna to meet the drinking water needs of Delhi and contributed to choking of the river to death because there was hardly any water left for free flow downstream. What continued to flow was nothing but a mixture of sewer water, industrial effluents and sludge, waste materials of the cremation grounds, garbage, and plastic bags.

Occasional mass campaigns by NGOs to clean up the river have had only ritual values without substance. There is perhaps no major river in the world which is as polluted as the Yamuna. It is virtually a flowing drain occasionally getting life-support from the upstream dams and barrages which are forced to release surplus water in the monsoon season causing overflow of its banks and unnatural floods. But for all practical purposes, the mythical and romantic river Yamuna is dead. It is doubtful if the Central Government and the Delhi Government will ever

be able to revive and restore the Yamuna to its pristine glory as has been done for the Thames in London and the Seine in Paris.

The Indian consciousness adoring the divine love stories, the songs of Gita Govindam and the millions of arts, dance and music forms associated with Radha-Krishna and the Yamuna will receive a rude shock to imagine about this river today. The Ganga Action Plan in various avatars during the first 30 years of its existence – GAP-I (1985), GAP-II (1993), National River Conservation Plan (NRCP1995), and the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NRGBA2009) – failed the nation.

Some of the failures were highlighted by the CAG's Report No. 5A of 2000 on the Ganga Action Plan. In 2014 when a new regime came to power at the Centre, the entire Ganga Action Plan was taken out of the Ministry of Environment and placed under a newly created Ministry of Jal Shakti. The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) or Namami Gange was launched in 2015 as an umbrella programme, integrating the earlier plans and schemes with new initiatives and the clean-up campaigns.

The National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (National Ganga Council) with the Prime Minister as the Chairman was created under the EPA in 2016 as a supreme decision-making authority for the entire Ganga Basin Management. Namami Gange with an initial outlay of Rs. 20,000 crore has been a gigantic multi-pronged programme for the entire Ganga basin including all the tributaries (Yamuna etc.) and the catchment area. The Ganga basin constitutes 26 per cent of the country's land mass and supports 43 per cent of India's population.

According to the Ministry of Jal Shakti, so far 315 projects worth Rs.28,854 crore have been sanctioned and are under operation. In addition, a "Clean Ganga Fund" was created receiving contributions from individuals, institutions, corporates, NRIs and OCIs, which is supporting specific programmes with people's participation. While significant progress has been made towards cleaning up the Ganga, everything is not fine with the grand project.

There is a question mark about the real achievements against the blitzkrieg of publicity. The Performance Audit Report (No.39 of 2017) of the Comptroller and Auditor General on 'Rejuvenation of River Ganga (Namami Gange)' has revealed a number of deficiencies including lack of long-term action plans for the Ganga basin, non-identification of conservation zones, tardiness in project implementation, non-utilization of allotted funds, non-establishment of Ganga Monitoring Centre etc. But, with the Prime Minister personally monitoring the progress as head of the Ganga Council, hopes are high for the possibility of purification of mother Ganga. <https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/draconian-toothlessii-1503144903.html>

## **STATES NEWS ITEMS**

**9. Former Jai Ram Thakur govt spent Rs 623.49 cr without provision: CAG ([uniindia.com](http://uniindia.com)) January 6, 2023**

Himachal government has spent Rs 623.40 crore (6,23,39,68,317) during the financial year 2021-22 without budget provision, revealed in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) placed in the state assembly by Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri on Friday.

The CAG has raised many serious questions on the financial management of previous Himachal government. The report described the amount spent without budget as a financial irregularity and advised the government to follow the provisions of the Government Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act in future. Failure to do so, the state's fiscal deficit is estimated to increase from 4.98 percent to 5.84 percent in the current financial year.

In the financial year 2021-22, the government did not present the proof of expenditure of Rs 7.87. That's why CAG has kept it in suspense account. According to the CAG, most of the departments did not submit their utilization certificates after spending the budget of various schemes. On non-receipt of certificates for works worth more than Rs 4752 crore, the central government has repeatedly written to the concerned departments to give certificates. Still, the departments did not submit the certificates for 1796 works worth Rs 2359.15 crore. Revenue Receipts 37110 Crore, Revenue Expenditure 42470 Crore According to CAG, by the end of the financial year 2022-23, the state's revenue receipts are estimated to be Rs 37,110 crore. <http://www.uniindia.com/former-jai-ram-thakur-govt-spent-rs-623-49-cr-without-provision-cag/north/news/2892827.html>

**10. CAG puts question mark over Rs 4,752 crore spent in 2020-21, 2021-22 by Himachal govt ([thenewzradar.com](http://thenewzradar.com)) January 7, 2023**

The report of the Comptroller and Accountant General of India, placed before the Himachal Assembly on January 6, 2023, during the winter session, paints a very poor picture of the outgoing BJP government's ability to keep track of works done for Rs 4,752 crore in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

As per the CAG report during the year 2021-22, 1,823 utilisation certificates (UCs) for a total amount of Rs 2,392.99 crore were not submitted by the bodies and authorities concerned against the grants-in-aid provided.

In addition to this, 1,796 UCs for a total amount of Rs 2,359.15 crore due for submission up to 2020-21 were also outstanding as of March 31, 2022. Thus, a total of 3,619 UCs for an amount of Rs 4,752.14 crore were due for submission as of March 31, 2022.

In view of the non-submission of UCs, there is no assurance that the amount of Rs 4,752.14 crore has actually been spent/utilised for the purpose for which it was sanctioned/authorised by the Legislature.

The CAG report also highlighted another anomaly regarding the drawing and disbursing officers (DDOs) drawing advances of contingent nature from the Treasury and also for all other routine nature of expenditures like medical reimbursement,

travel expenses, contingency/GIA/scholarships/other charges, etc., for which there was no mechanism to identify the advances drawn through abstract contingent (AC) bills and adjustment through detailed contingent (DC) bills.

Therefore, the CAG report pointed out, neither the Treasury nor the Principal Accountant General (A&E) office had any record relating to details of advances drawn through AC bills



and pendency thereagainst. Advances drawn and not monitored/accounted for, increase the possibility of misutilisation/misappropriation. <https://thenewzradar.com/cag-puts-question-mark-over-rs-4752-crore-spent-in-2020-21-2021-22-by-himachal-govt/>

**11. कैग ने उठाए सवाल, 2021-22 में सरकार ने बिना बजट के खर्च कर दिए 623 करोड़ रुपए** ([himachal.punjabkesari.in](http://himachal.punjabkesari.in)) 6 Jan 2023

हिमाचल प्रदेश विधानसभा में रखी गई वर्ष 2021-22 की भारत के नियंत्रण एवं महालेखा परीक्षा (कैग) की रिपोर्ट में राज्य सरकार के वित्तीय प्रबंधन पर सवाल उठाए गए हैं। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार वर्ष, 2021-22 के विनियोग लेखों में 623 करोड़ 39 लाख 68 हजार 317 रुपए बिना बजट प्रावधान के खर्च किए गए। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि सरकार ने 7 लाख 87 हजार 379 रुपए के खर्च के व्यय प्रमाण प्रस्तुत नहीं किए। इस कारण कैग ने इस राशि को सस्पेंस अकाउंट की श्रेणी में रखा है, साथ ही सरकार वित्तीय वर्ष, 2019-20 में 1 करोड़ 37 लाख 37 हजार 681 की गैर राशि के प्रमाण भी सरकार प्रस्तुत नहीं कर सकी। वहीं 1 करोड़ 5 लाख रुपए के राजस्व खर्चों व 13 लाख 34 हजार 767 की राशि के पूंजीगत व्यय के प्रमाण में सरकार प्रस्तुत नहीं किए गए। वर्ष 2020-21 में 22 लाख 76 हजार 615 रुपए के खर्च के व्यय प्रमाण सरकार भी प्रस्तुत नहीं किए गए, जिसे कैग ने सस्पेंस अकाउंट श्रेणी में डाला है। कैग ने केंद्र प्रायोजित योजना के तहत 50 लाख रुपए का व्यय बिना प्रावधान के किए जाने की बात कही है। इसी तरह 369 लाख रुपए का प्रावधान राज्य में सूखे जैसी स्थिति में पीने के पानी को तालाबों द्वारा उपलब्ध करवाने की बात कही गई है। कैग ने कई अन्य विभागों की कार्यप्रणाली पर भी सवाल उठाए हैं।

मनमर्जी से खर्च कर दी राशि

वित्त वर्ष के आरंभ में 2392.99 करोड़ रुपए के 1,823 उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र संबंधित विभागों की ओर से दिए जाने थे लेकिन कई विभागों की तरफ से 2359.15 करोड़ रुपए के 1,796 उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र जमा नहीं करवाए गए। वित्त वर्ष के दौरान 4752.14 करोड़ रुपए के उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र दिए जाने के बारे में केंद्र सरकार के संबंधित मंत्रालयों की ओर से सरकार को पत्र लिखा गया। राज्य सरकार की ओर से केंद्र सरकार से प्राप्त धनराशि मनमर्जी से खर्च कर दी गई। <https://himachal.punjabkesari.in/himachal-pradesh/news/government-spent-rs-623-crore-without-budget-1747325>

**12. CAG Report: हिमाचल सरकार ने बिना बजट प्रावधान के खर्च किए 623.40, 1796 उपयोगिता प्रमाणपत्र नहीं किए जमा** ([amarujala.com](http://amarujala.com)) 6 Jan 2023

हिमाचल प्रदेश के उप मुख्यमंत्री मुकेश अग्निहोत्री ने शुक्रवार को भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखापरीक्षक(कैग) के प्रतिवेदन(वर्ष 2021-2022) को विधानसभा सदन के पटल पर रखा।

रिपोर्ट में वर्ष 2021-22 के लिए राज्य सरकार के बजट दस्तावेजों की समीक्षा में बजट प्रावधानों में कई विसंगतियों को दर्शाया गया है। कैग ने की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 2021-22 के दौरान राज्य सरकार ने विस्तृत अनुमानों के बिना किसी बजट प्रावधान के 12 अनुदानों में 18 प्रमुख शीर्षों के तहत 623.40 करोड़ का खर्च किया। कैग ने कड़ी टिप्पणी करते हुए रिपोर्ट में कहा, संविधान के अनुच्छेद 204 के प्रावधानों के अनुसार पारित कानून में किए गए विनियोग के अलावा राज्य की संचित निधि से कोई पैसा नहीं निकाला जाएगा। इसके अलावा किसी योजना, सेवा पर पुनर्विनियोग से अतिरिक्त धनराशि प्राप्त करने के बाद या अनुपूरक अनुदान या विनियोग या राज्य की आकस्मिकता निधि से अग्रिम से बिना निधि के प्रावधान के व्यय नहीं किया जाना चाहिए। इसके बावजूद 2021-22 के दौरान राज्य सरकार ने विस्तृत अनुमानों के बिना किसी बजट प्रावधान के 12 अनुदानों में 18 प्रमुख शीर्षों के तहत 623.40 करोड़ का खर्च किया।

हिमाचल में 5.84 फीसदी पहुंचा राजकोषीय घाटा

कैग की रिपोर्ट में खुलासा हुआ है कि सरकार का राजकोषीय घाटा सकल राज्य घरेलू उत्पाद (जीएसडीपी) का 5.84 फीसदी तक पहुंच गया है। राजकोषीय घाटे की पूर्ति सरकार कर्ज लेकर करती है। चालू वित्त वर्ष में हिमाचल की राजस्व प्राप्तियां 37110.67 करोड़ रहने का अनुमान है। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि वित्त वर्ष 2021-22 में सरकार ने 7,87,379 रुपये खर्च के व्यय प्रमाण पेश नहीं किए। नतीजतन, कैग ने इस राशि को सस्पेंस अकाउंट में रखा है। वित्त वर्ष 2019-20 में 1,37,37,681 की गैर राशि का प्रमाण भी सरकार प्रस्तुत नहीं कर सकी। साथ ही 1, 5,2876 के राजस्व खर्चों व 13,34,767 की राशि के पूंजीगत व्यय के प्रमाण में सरकार प्रस्तुत नहीं कर सकी। 2020-21 में 22,76,615 रुपये खर्च के व्यय प्रमाण सरकार पेश नहीं कर सकी।

राजस्व प्राप्तियों में कर राजस्व के तौर पर 11268.14 करोड़, गैर कर 2797.99, केंद्रीय करों में हिस्सेदारी की एवज 18770.42 तथा केंद्रीय अनुदान के तौर पर खजाने में 4274.4 करोड़ आने का अनुमान है। केंद्र से जीएसटी मुआवजा मिलना जून से बंद है। चालू वित्त वर्ष में सरकार को मुआवजे के तौर पर 558.37 करोड़ की कम राशि मिलेगी। छठे पंजाब वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशें लागू करने के बाद पेंशनरों को एरियर के भुगतान पर सरकार को 1009.80 करोड़ का अतिरिक्त भुगतान करना होना। नियंत्रक महालेखा परीक्षक ने रिपोर्ट में कहा कि दोनों मर्दों की वजह से प्रदेश का राजस्व घाटा 1456.32 करोड़ होगा। राजकोषीय घाटा 1642.49 करोड़ तक पहुंच जाएगा। एफआरबीएम प्रावधानों के तहत राजकोषीय घाटा सकल घरेलू उत्पाद का 3.5 प्रतिशत से अधिक नहीं होना चाहिए, मगर यह 5.84 प्रतिशत तक पहुंचने का अनुमान है।

2021-22 में करों से हुई 17,063 करोड़ की आय प्रदेश में 2020-21 के बजाय 2021-22 में करों से आय बढ़ गई। 2021-22 में करों से आय 9,714.58 करोड़ हुई, जो 2020-21 में 8,083.31 हो गई। कुल करों से आमदनी 2021-22 में 17,063.62 हुई, 2020-21 में 12,837.23 हो गई। 2021-22 में कुल राजस्व प्राप्तियां 37,309.30 थीं, जो 2020-21 में 33,438.27 हो गई।

सलाह के बिना नए उप शीर्षों, विस्तृत लेखा शीर्षों को खोलना भारत के संविधान के अनुच्छेद 150 के अनुसार राज्य के लेखों को भारत के नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक की सलाह के अनुसार रखा जाना है। वर्ष 2021-22 के दौरान प्रदेश की राज्य सरकार ने प्रधान महालेखाकार (लेखा व हकदारी) की सलाह लिए बिना बजट में 136 नए उप शीर्ष खोले। राज्य सरकार ने इन शीर्षों के तहत बजट प्रावधान प्रदान किए और 2021-22 के दौरान इनमें 2,641.81 करोड़ का व्यय किया।

2,392.99 करोड़ की कुल राशि के 1,823 उपयोगिता प्रमाणपत्र प्रस्तुत नहीं किए वर्ष 2021-22 के दौरान 2,392.99 करोड़ की कुल राशि के 1,823 उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र (यूसी) जो देय थे, राज्य के निकायों और प्राधिकरणों द्वारा प्रदान सहायता अनुदान के एवज में प्रस्तुत नहीं किए गए। इसके अलावा 2,359.15 करोड़ की कुल राशि के 1,796 उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र जोकि वर्ष 2020-21 तक प्रस्तुत करने के लिए देय थे, 31 मार्च 2022 तक लंबित थे। इसी प्रकार 4,752.14 करोड़ की राशि के 3,619 उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र 31 मार्च 2022 तक प्रस्तुत करने के लिए लंबित थे। यूसी जमा नहीं करने से इस बात का कोई आश्वासन नहीं है कि 4,752.14 करोड़ की राशि वास्तव में उस प्रयोजन के लिए खर्च, उपयोग की गई है, जिसके लिए इसे अनुमोदित किया गया था।

पर्याप्त प्रावधान किया गया था लेकिन कोई खर्च नहीं किया गया योजना के दिशा-निर्देशों, तौर-तरीकों का अनुमोदन नहीं होने, प्रशासनिक स्वीकृति के अभाव में कार्य प्रारंभ नहीं करने, बजट जारी नहीं करने आदि के कारण सरकार की कई नीतिगत पहलों को आंशिक रूप से क्रियान्वित किया या क्रियान्वित नहीं किया जाता है। वर्ष 2021-22 के दौरान 25 अनुदानों के अंतर्गत 68 प्रमुख शीर्ष थे जिनमें विभिन्न योजनाओं पर 363.04 करोड़ का बजट प्रावधान किया गया था, लेकिन कोई व्यय नहीं किया गया था। इससे हितधारकों को अपेक्षित लाभ नहीं मिल पाता है। हालांकि, बजट दस्तावेजों में आवश्यक कार्रवाई एवं सुधार के लिए मामला राज्य सरकार के समक्ष उठाया गया था।

जीएसटी लागू होने से हुए नुकसान पर राज्य ने 1, 167.99 करोड़ मुआवजा

माल एवं सेवा कर (जीएसटी) 1 जुलाई 2017 से लागू किया गया था। वर्ष 2021-22 के बाद का माल एवं सेवा कर संग्रह वर्ष 2020-21 में 3,466.58 करोड़ की तुलना में 1,015.57 करोड़ की वृद्धि (29.30 प्रतिशत) के साथ 4,482.15 करोड़ था। इसमें आईजीएसटी की अग्रिम मूल्यांकन राशि 308.20 करोड़ शामिल है। इसके अतिरिक्त केंद्रीय माल एवं सेवा कर के तहत राज्य को शुद्ध आय के अपने हिस्से के रूप में सौंपे गए 2,105.41 करोड़ प्राप्त हुए। माल एवं सेवा कर के तहत कुल प्राप्तियां 6,587.56 करोड़ थीं। वर्ष 2021-22 के दौरान माल एवं सेवा कर के कार्यान्वयन से उत्पन्न होने वाले राजस्व के नुकसान के कारण राजस्व प्राप्ति के रूप में राज्य ने 1, 167.99 करोड़ मुआवजा प्राप्त किया। इसके अलावा, राज्य को जीएसटी. मुआवजे के बदले केंद्र सरकार से बैंक टू बैंक ऋण के रूप में 2021-22 (31 मार्च 2022 तक कुल 24,412.22 करोड़ का कुल ऋण के दौरान 2.606.22 करोड़ भी प्राप्त हुए, जिसे राज्य के किसी भी मानदंड के लिए जो वित्त आयोग की ओर से केंद्रीय व्यय विभाग के निर्णय के अनुसार निर्धारित किया जा सकता है ऋण के रूप में नहीं माना जाएगा।

राजस्व और पूंजीगत व्यय के बीच गलत वर्गीकरण

वर्ष 2021-22 में लेन-देन की नमूना जांच के दौरान प्रदेश सरकार ने पूंजी अनुभाग के बजाय राजस्व अनुभाग में मुख्य शीर्ष 2000 के तहत गलत तरीके से 2.77 करोड़ का व्यय दर्ज किया। राज्य के राजस्व/राजकोषीय अधिशेष/घाटे पर गलत वर्गीकरण का प्रभाव हुआ है।

राजस्व प्राप्तियां 37110 करोड़, राजस्व व्यय 42470 करोड़

वर्ष 2021-22 में कुल प्राप्तियां(राजस्व व पूंजीगत) 37,31,631.53 लाख रुपये रहीं। जोकि वर्ष 2020-21 की कुल प्राप्तियों 33,44,114.73 लाख रुपये से अधिक थीं। कैग के अनुसार, वित्त वर्ष 2022-23 के अंत तक राज्य की राजस्व प्राप्तियां 37,110 करोड़ रुपए रहने का अनुमान है। राजस्व प्राप्तियों में 735.36 करोड़ रुपए की बढ़ोतरी होगी। चिंता इस बात को लेकर है कि आय कम और राजस्व व्यय 42,470 करोड़ का अनुमानित है। अनुमानित से राजस्व व्यय 2191 करोड़ रुपए ज्यादा है। <https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/shimla/cag-report-2021-2022-laid-on-the-table-of-the-himachal-vidhan-sabha-hp-govt-expenditure-done-without-budget-p>

**13. आर्थिक संकट की ओर हिमाचल, कैग की रिपोर्ट में राजकोषीय घाटे का संकट** ([divyahimachal.com](http://divyahimachal.com)) January 6, 2023

केंद्र से वित्त आयोग की ग्रांट कम होने और जीएसटी की मुआवजा राशि बंद होने से हिमाचल में राजकोषीय घाटे का संकट गहराने लगा है और प्रदेश गंभीर आर्थिक संकट की ओर बढ़ रहा है। विधानसभा के शीतकालीन सत्र में सदन के पटल पर रखी गई कैग की रिपोर्ट में राज्य के लिए चिंताजनक हालात हैं। राज्य का राजकोषीय घाटा बढ़ रहा है। मौजूदा वित्त वर्ष में

राजकोषीय घाटा जीडीपी का 5.84 प्रतिशत रहने का अनुमान जताया गया है। धर्मशाला के तपोवन में जारी विधानसभा के शीतकालीन सत्र के दौरान शुक्रवार को सदन के पटल पर कैंग की रिपोर्ट रखी गई। दरअसल, हिमाचल प्रदेश को केंद्र से जीएसटी का कंपनसेशन मिलना बंद हो गया है। वहीं वित्त आयोग की ग्रांट में भी साल दर साल कमी आई है। लगातार बढ़ रहे राजस्व घाटे के कारण बिगड़ रही आर्थिक स्थिति पर भारत के नियंत्रक व महालेखा परीक्षक यानी कैंग ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में गंभीर सवाल उठाए हैं। कैंग ने टिप्पणी दर्ज की है कि हिमाचल सरकार को एफआरबीएम कानून के प्रावधानों के मुताबिक राजस्व घाटा नियंत्रित करने की जरूरत है।

कैंग की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार हिमाचल में मौजूदा वित्त वर्ष के दौरान रेवेन्यू रिसिप्ट्स यानी राजस्व प्राप्तियां 37110.67 करोड़ रहने का अनुमान है। राजस्व प्राप्तियों में कर राजस्व के तौर पर 11268.14 करोड़, गैर कर राजस्व के रूप में 2797.99 करोड़ रूपए, केंद्रीय करों में हिमाचल की हिस्सेदारी की रूप में 18770.42 करोड़ के अलावा केंद्रीय अनुदान के तौर पर खजाने में 4274.4 करोड़ आने का अनुमान है। केंद्र से जीएसटी मुआवजे के तौर पर राज्य को मिलने वाला हिस्सा जून 2022 से बंद हो गया है। इसका परिणाम यह हुआ है कि मौजूदा वित्त वर्ष में सरकार को केंद्र से जीएसटी कंपनसेशन के रूप में मिलने वाले 558.37 करोड़ रूपए का नुकसान होगा। वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशों को लागू करने के बाद हिमाचल में पेंशनरों को एरियर के भुगतान पर सरकार को 1009.80 करोड़ का अतिरिक्त भुगतान करना पड़ेगा। नियंत्रक महालेखा परीक्षक ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि इन दोनों मदों से प्रदेश का राजस्व घाटा 1456.32 करोड़ होगा। साथ ही राजकोषीय घाटा 1642.49 करोड़ तक पहुंच जाएगा।

एफआरबीएम प्रावधानों के तहत राजकोषीय घाटा सकल घरेलू उत्पाद का 3.5 प्रतिशत से अधिक नहीं होना चाहिए, मगर यह 5.84 प्रतिशत तक पहुंचने का अनुमान है। सरकारी सिस्टम की सुस्ती इस कदर है कि वर्ष 2020-21 और वर्ष 2021-22 के करोड़ों रूपए के विकास कार्यों के उपयोगिता प्रमाण जमा ही नहीं करवाए गए। यह भी सुनिश्चित नहीं है कि ग्रांट-इन-एड के तौर पर विभिन्न विभागों, संस्थाओं को जारी रकम की उपयोगिता यानी यूटिलाइजेशन हुई है या नहीं। कैंग की रिपोर्ट में यह खुलासा हुआ है। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार वर्ष 2021-22 में कुल 1823 उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र तय नियमों के हिसाब से जमा ही नहीं किए गए। ये उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र कुल 2392.99 करोड़ रूपए के कार्यों के थे। यही नहीं, इससे पूर्व के वित्तीय वर्ष यानी 2020-21 के भी 1796 यूसी जमा नहीं किए गए हैं। ये 1796 यूसी 2359.15 करोड़ रूपए के कार्यों के थे। इन्हें 31 मार्च, 2022 तक जमा करवाया जाना जरूरी था। इस तरह वर्ष 2020-21 व 2021-22 यानी दोनों वित्तीय सालों के कुल 3619 यूसी जमा होने बाकी हैं। कैंग की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि यह भी सुनिश्चित

नहीं है कि उक्त रकम खर्च हुई है या नहीं। दोनों वित्तीय वर्षों के कुल 3619 यूसी 4752 करोड़ रुपए से अधिक के कार्यों से संबंधित हैं। इस तरह 31 मार्च, 2022 तक 4752 करोड़ रुपए से अधिक के कार्यों के उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र जमा होने थे, जो विभिन्न निकायों व एजेंसियों ने जमा नहीं करवाए। ये रकम ग्रांट-इन-एड के तौर पर मिली थी।

### **नई सरकार को कैग की यह सलाह**

नियंत्रक महालेखा परीक्षक की रिपोर्ट में राजकोषीय घाटा नियंत्रित करने के लिए सरकार ने अनुत्पादक खर्चों को कम करने, बाहरी सहायता प्राप्त परियोजनाओं यानी एक्सटर्नल एडेड प्रोजेक्ट्स के लिए केंद्रीय मदद से धन जुटाने की सलाह दी गई है। <https://www.divyahimachal.com/2023/01/himachal-towards-economic-crisis-fiscal-deficit-crisis-in-cag-report/>

### **14. Himachal Pradesh Loan: हिमाचल पर बढ़ रहा कर्ज का बोझ, 74 हजार 662 करोड़ रुपये हुआ लोन का भार (abplive.com) January 7, 2023**

Himachal Pradesh Loan: केंद्र के वित्त पोषण पर चलने वाले हिमाचल प्रदेश पर लगातार कर्ज का दबाव बढ़ता ही चला जा रहा है. पूर्व में वीरभद्र सिंह (Virbhadra Singh) सरकार ने साल 2012 से साल 2017 के दौरान 19 हजार 200 करोड़ रुपये का कर्ज लिया. साल 2012 में जब प्रो. प्रेम कुमार धूमल (Prem Kumar Dhumal) ने सत्ता छोड़ी थी, तब प्रदेश पर 28 हजार 760 का कर्ज था. साल 2017 में यह कर्ज बढ़कर 47 हजार 906 हो गया. ऐसे में अगर हिमाचल प्रदेश में कर्ज लेने की रफ्तार इसी तरह बनी रही, तो साल 2027 तक राज्य पर एक लाख करोड़ रुपये से अधिक का कर्ज हो जाएगा.

हिमाचल प्रदेश पर मौजूदा वक्त में 74 हजार 662 करोड़ रुपये का कर्ज हो गया है. जयराम ठाकुर सरकार ने पांच साल के अंतराल में 26 हजार 716 करोड़ रुपये का कर्ज लिया. यह जानकारी शुक्रवार को विधानसभा सत्र के दौरान एफआरबीएम संशोधन विधेयक के पारित होने के वक्त सामने आई. इस विधेयक के जरिए सरकार लोन लेने की सीमा को प्रदेश की जीडीपी के 6 फीसदी तक बढ़ा रही है. इससे पहले सरकार अपनी जीडीपी का केवल 3 फीसदी लोन ले सकती थी. बढ़ी हुई कर्ज सीमा से लोन 31 मार्च तक लेना होगा. पूर्व सरकार के दौरान इस बाबत अध्यादेश पारित करवाया गया था.

### **कर्ज के बोझ को कम करने का किया जा रहा प्रयास**

विधेयक में इस शर्त को भी जोड़ा गया है कि केंद्र सरकार से मिला 50 साल का लंबी अवधि का कर्ज इस लिमिट में न जोड़ा जाए. हिमाचल प्रदेश में मुख्यमंत्री सुखविंदर सिंह सुक्खू की नेतृत्व वाली सरकार ने आने वाले दो वित्तीय वर्षों में इस लोन लिमिट को 3.5 फीसदी तक



सीमित रखने का लक्ष्य रखा है. सरकार ने एफआरबीएम एक्ट के प्रावधानों को लागू करने की प्रक्रिया का अधिकार भी कैग को दिया है.

पूर्व सरकार ने जमा नहीं करवाए उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र हिमाचल प्रदेश के शीतकालीन सत्र में तीन बैठकों में नौ घंटे तक चली कार्यवाही के दौरान दो विधेयक ध्वनिमत से पारित हुए. इनमें राज्य सरकार की कर्ज लेने की सीमा को बढ़ाने और जीएसटी रिटर्न भरने के दौरान सरलीकरण का बिल शामिल रहा. हिमाचल प्रदेश विधानसभा में सदन पर रखी गई रिपोर्ट से यह बात भी सामने आई कि पूर्व सरकार ने 2 हजार 392 करोड़ रुपये खर्च के उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र अब तक जमा नहीं करवाए हैं.

### ढीला पड़ रहा सरकार का सिस्टम!

साथ ही सीएजी की रिपोर्ट में टिप्पणी की गई है कि यह सुनिश्चित नहीं है कि उक्त रकम खर्च हुई है या नहीं. दोनों वित्तीय वर्षों के कुल 3 हजार 619 यूसी 4 हजार 752 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक के कार्यों से संबंधित हैं. इसी तरह 31 मार्च 2022 तक 4 हजार 752 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक के कार्यों के उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र जमा होने थे, जो निकार्यों और एजेंसियों ने जमा नहीं करवाए. सरकार को यह रकम ग्रांट-इन-एड के तौर पर मिली थी. सरकारी धन खर्च करने के बाद उपयोगिता प्रमाण पत्र दर्ज न करवाना सरकारी सिस्टम के धीरे रवैया को भी साफ दर्शाता है.

<https://www.abplive.com/states/himachal-pradesh/himachal-pradesh-loan-himachal-debt-increased-to-74-thousand-662-crores-rupees-ann-2301953>

### 15. CAG audit of urban waste management in Odisha finds not a single sanitary landfill ([citizenmatters.in](https://citizenmatters.in)) January 9, 2023

On December 2nd, a performance audit report by the CAG of India on Solid Waste Management by Urban Local Bodies in Odisha got tabled in the state assembly. This CAG audit covered the five year period (April 2015 to March 2020) and was conducted with the objective to assess whether the planning of waste management in ULBs were effective, efficient and economic.

The period under review is of interest to all the researchers concerned with the compliance of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, as Odisha state has been facing the legal battle with regard to compliance at National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi since 20th August 2018. The latest hearing in this ongoing case took place on December 22, 2022 and the case has been listed for next hearing on January 19, 2023.

The performance review undertook a monitoring and evaluation of the waste management system, including adequacy of awareness creation, citizen engagement for effecting behavioural change, complaint, redressal mechanism for citizens, assessment of environmental impacts. It also assessed whether the internal control and monitoring mechanism was adequate and effective.

Out of 114 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) responsible for implementation of the SWM Rules 2016 in the state, CAG auditors selected 21 ULBs consisting of 5 Corporations, 10 Municipalities and 6 Notified Area Councils, along with 2 smart cities in Odisha, namely Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

#### Absence of state policy for Integrated Solid Waste Management

The Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 (notified on April 8, 2016) stipulates that every state government should prepare a state level policy and strategy for Integrated Solid Waste Management within one year of notifying these rules. Audit scrutiny however found that Odisha's Housing and Urban Development Department had not notified any state policy for integrated Solid Waste Management as of February 2022.

In the absence of a state policy, no long term or short term management, nor any action plan, could be developed in the state. The waste generated was merely disposed of in landfill sites without any processing by the ULBs as of March 2020. In a very indicting comment, CAG auditors pronounced that "There was no sanitary landfill in the State and dumping of solid waste is being done in open areas".

Replying to this criticism in the CAG audit report, the department stated (in April 2022) that the Odisha Urban Sanitation Policy and Odisha Urban Sanitation Strategy were notified in 2017, which also covered Municipal Solid Waste Management. CAG auditors took this reply on record and countered by stressing that "The fact, however, remained that no integrated/exclusive State policy and strategy for Solid Waste Management have been framed".

#### Missing: MCCs and MRFs

In July 2019, the Odisha government had issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for creation of Micro Composting Centres and Material Recovery Facilities for decentralised management of Solid Waste in the state. Micro composting centres (MCCs) would receive the segregated biodegradable waste from generators at a local level and convert it to compost. Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) would sub-segregate the collected dry waste from a designated area and decide on further processing and recycling channels.

The Odisha Government once again issued an updated and revised SOP for creation of Micro Composting Centres and Material Recovery Facilities (also called Wealth Centres in local parlance) in December 2020.

The idea of Micro Composting Centres and Material Recovery Facilities holds significant potential to improve the lives of sanitation workers, organised under Self Help Groups who manage these facilities. The monthly newsletter of the Urban Sanitation division of the Housing and Urban Development Department presents some inspiring stories. However, the CAG audit has pointed out that the establishment of these MCCs and MRFs needs to pick up pace, since Odisha faced a shortfall as on March 2021.

CAG audit scrutiny found that out of the proposed 271 Micro Composting Centres and 173 Material Recovery Facilities to be constructed in 114 Urban Local Bodies, as of March 2021, 165 Micro Composting Centres and 140 Material Recovery Facilities were constructed. Citing annual reports of Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) during the period 2015 to 2020, auditors argued that none of the ULB in Odisha have a sanitary landfill site for disposal of solid waste.

Based on their observations during Joint Physical Verification, CAG auditors also pointed out that sampled ULBs disposed solid waste on road sides of highways, river banks and in open areas.

However, in its reply to this audit observation (May 2022), the state government contended that all ULBs had established MCC and MRF wherein the waste were processed/ disposed of. Audit report found this reply unsatisfactory and stressed that “MCCs/ MRFs were not operational in test checked ULBs as of March 2020”.

#### Absence of surveys on waste generation by ULBs

Short term or long term action plans were not prepared by ULBs and in absence of such planning exercise, planning and selection of infrastructural intervention on Solid Waste Management in ULBs were, to a large extent, driven by perceived availability of funds, rather than a robust need-based analysis.

The SOP (July 2019) had stipulated in unambiguous words that “..for assessment of design capacity for Micro Composting Centres, ULBs are required to conduct quantification of waste through sample surveys for a duration of ten days by selecting a few households in each ward which are representative in nature”.

As per the SOP, a Micro Composting Centre with a capacity of handling 1.5 Tonne Per Day waste is required to be established to process waste generated from a population of 10000, that is about 2200 households. Appendix VII on page 91 of the report shows Design Capacity Requirement and Provided for at Micro Composting Centres in test-checked ULBs.

Test-checked ULBs had not conducted any survey on waste generation during the period 2015-20 but had adopted per capita estimates that had a low level of reliability. The lack of a survey for arriving at the quantum and type of waste generated by various sections of society has seriously impacted proper planning and strategy selection and implementation of SWM.

In the absence of a waste minimisation strategy from the Odisha government, the ULBs did not take up any initiatives to promote activities to minimise waste during 2015-20.

#### Segregation of waste

CAG audit scrutiny found that segregation at source was limited in 21 test-checked ULBs. Also, the state government’s failure to notify domestic hazardous waste had led to dumping of mixed waste in landfills. Audit finds that test-checked ULBs were operating waste disposal facilities without valid authorization from State Pollution Control Board and the necessary environment clearances.

Absence of proper segregation of waste led to mixing of solid waste with plastic waste, bio-medical waste, e-waste and slaughterhouse waste. Auditors pointed out that this could possibly lead to toxic waste residues seeping underground and contaminating ground water in addition to air and soil pollution. Mismanagement of plastic waste was leading to deaths of cattle due to its consumption.

2019 photograph of Wet and Dry separate dustbins placed at a bus stop in Shastrinagar SAIL office bus stop, Bhubaneswar, India

Separate dustbins for wet and dry waste may be spotted in some areas in Bhubaneswar, but CAG auditors pointed out that sampled ULBs disposed of solid waste largely on road sides of highways, river banks and in open areas.

During joint survey and site visits to landfills by Audit and ULB officials, it was found that in 11 ULBs (Bhadrak, Baripada, Chandbali, Choudwar, Rayagada, Chhatrapur, Baragarh, Bolangir, Nuapada, Jeypore and Ranapur) habitations were within 200 metres from landfills and within 500 metres of buffer zones in the case of four ULBs (Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Cuttack Municipal Corporation, Rourkela Municipal Corporation and Puri).

Audit also found landfills in five ULBs (Bhubaneswar, Rourkela, Jeypore, Jharusuguda and Sundargarh) within the distance of 20 kms from airport/airbase. During Joint Site Verification exercise, it was reported by the inhabitants residing near the landfills that their health condition has deteriorated.

Absence of local area specific committees on SWM

Requisite committees were formed only at the state level in compliance with SWM Rules 2016, but audit scrutiny found that local area specific committees were not formed at District and ULB level in any of the test-checked districts, leading to poor support for effective implementation of Solid Waste Management plans. There was shortage of manpower in all cadres especially in posts of Environment Engineers (25%), Health Inspectors (20%) and sweepers (20%) who are directly accountable for management of waste.

Such a comprehensive performance audit exercise which could have paved the way for course correction suffered due to the lackadaisical attitude of implementing authorities and officers in responding to Audit queries. Most of the replies received by auditors were mere assurances that the view of the report would be considered in the future.

Will this comprehensive performance review of Solid Waste Management by Urban Local Bodies in Odisha lead to citizen groups taking up the issue and pushing the authorities for effecting course correction?

Will Urban Local Bodies and Housing and Urban Development Department pay attention to the series of recommendations that CAG auditors have issued at the end of this performance review? These are some questions that readers are left with and will require sustained follow-up and tracking. <https://citizenmatters.in/cag-audit-of-solid-waste-management-performance-in-odisha-ulbs-32586>

**16. To ensure accountability in delivery of schemes, govt sets up audit panel** ([indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com)) January 8, 2023

In a first of its kind, Rajasthan government has set up a Social and Performance Audit Authority (SPAA) to ensure accountability in delivery of government schemes and programmes.

Naresh Kumar Thakral, Secretary, Finance (Expenditure), who has been made the Commissioner of the authority, said that under SPAA, audits of government schemes will be undertaken on two counts: social and performance.

Social audit will be undertaken along the lines of social audit in MGNREGA. Thakral said that Resources Persons will be engaged at the district, block and village levels as per requirement.

“They’ll be given a week-long orientation about the scheme, programme, etc. they have to audit and post the orientation, they will go to the spot and verify it for themselves and file a report,” he said. Social audit will not necessarily require high qualification of the resource persons, who will be empaneled as per requirement and paid on a per day basis.

For performance audit, SPAA will engage personnel from Valuation Wing under the Planning Department as well as the Department of Treasuries and Accounts, with the latter reportedly having excess personnel, among others.

Post the social and performance audit, the auditors will file a report online. Thakral said that the Audit Management System (AMS) under the Local Fund Audit Department (LFAD), which was set up a few months ago, will be customised for audit reports under SPAA.

Following the announcement in the 2021-22 budget, the cabinet gave its approval to set up the authority in August 2022, and it was constituted in September, 2022.

Thakral said that while there are already a few audit authorities such as LFAD, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), etc., they are largely focussed on auditing accounts, compliance with budget rules, etc. “Schemes or projects are launched with certain objectives. So the performance audit will check whether this is being achieved,” he said.

While approving the SPAA in August last year, the state government had said that it will ensure transparency, public participation, public satisfaction and quality along with accountability in public welfare schemes of the state government. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/jaipur/to-ensure-accountability-in-delivery-of-schemes-govt-sets-up-audit-panel-8368027/>

#### **17. Two more Chandigarh cops arrested in ₹1.1-crore salary scam ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) Jan 7, 2023**

The crime branch of Chandigarh Police has arrested two more police personnel in the ₹1.1-crore salary scam that had rocked the police department in 2019.

With the arrest of ASI Vinod Kumar and constable Rajbir Singh, the number of accused arrested in the scam has now reached eight.

According to investigators, ASI Kumar was then posted in the accounts branch and performing treasury duties. Constable Rajbir Singh was also posted in the accounts branch and was tasked with preparing bills for salary, pay arrears, LTC leave encashment, etc.

The duo was produced before a court on Friday and sent to four-day police custody.

#### **Anonymous complaint exposed scam**

It was an anonymous complaint that had blown the lid off the scam in 2020. The complaint had spurred the checking of salaries of police personnel for December 2019 and excess deposits were discovered in 35 accounts.

The crime branch had then constituted a special investigation team (SIT), and a special audit for 2015 to 2020 was conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the request of the police department. The audit had pointed out excess payments amounting to ₹1.1 crore.

Following the revelation, a case was registered under Sections 201, 409, 420, 467, 468, 471, 477-A and 120-B of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 13(1)(b) & 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act at the Sector-3 police station on February 25, 2020.

Investigations had revealed that the accused used to deposit money in the salary accounts of police personnel with fake entries of inflated conveyance allowances and ration/food allowances, among others. The accused would deposit the money under the understanding that the account holder will keep a part of it, while the rest was distributed among the accused. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/two-more-chandigarh-cops-arrested-in-1-1-crore-salary-scam-101673043822077.html>

**18. ASI among two held in Chandigarh police salary scam ([tribuneindia.com](https://tribuneindia.com))** Jan 07, 2023

Chandigarh: Two more accused, including an ASI, have been arrested by the Crime Branch of the UT police in the salary scam detected in February 2020.

The accused have been identified as ASI Vinod Kumar, then posted in the accounts branch and performing treasury duties, and Constable Rajbir Singh, also posted in accounts branch and performing duties as a dealing hand to prepare bills for salary, pay, arrears, LTC leave encashment, etc.

SP Crime Manoj Kumar Meena said nine accused, who were part of the core team involved in the scam, had been arrested in the case so far. An audit by the Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) on disbursement of pay and allowances in the Police Department for 2017-18 to 2019-20 had revealed various irregularities. Inadmissible payment on account of pay and allowances, LTC and other benefits amounting to Rs 1.60 crore were made to police personnel due to deficiencies in internal & IT controls and connivance of dealing assistants and officials, and gross negligence on part of the drawing and disbursing officers was discovered during the audit.

After the anomaly was pointed out in the audit, a sum of Rs1.10 crore was recovered from the employees. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/asi-among-two-held-in-chandigarh-police-salary-scam-468050>

**19. Bihar achieves less than 1/3rd mining rev collection target by Dec ([hindustantimes.com](https://hindustantimes.com))** Jan 08, 2023

PATNA: Bihar has managed to achieve just one-third of its revenue target of ₹3004 crore for 2022-23 from the mining sector as it could achieved just ₹962 crore till December 2022, said officials aware of the development.

This development came to light during the district-wide review of revenue collection by the mines and geology minister Ramanand Yadav two days ago. Additional chief secretary Harjot Kaur Bamhrah, who is also the managing director of the Bihar state mining corporation Ltd, and other senior officials were also present.



With the revenue collection just one-third of the target so far and most of the districts showing unsatisfactory performance, the minister told the officials to step up efforts and crack down on illegal sand mining, transportation, and storage by the mafia.

“All the officials have to ensure that they meet their targets. Barring a few districts, all districts have performed below par. The e-auction of sand ghats has to be completed in all the districts,” the minister said.

After a three-year break, the Bihar government in September 2022 had initiated the process for regular settlement of ghats (banks) of all rivers for sand mining following the Supreme Court order in a bid to ease the high costs of construction in the state and check illegal mining, which was flagged in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) as well.

Sheikhpura, Madhepura, Supaul, Kishanganj, and Khagaria were the top-performing five districts in revenue collection, while the five worst performing districts were Lakhisarai, Munger, Jehanabad, Gaya, and Rohtas.

However, districts like Patna, Saran, Bhojpur, Aurangabad, Kaimur and Rohtas, which are said to be worst affected by the flourishing racket of illegal sand mining, are nowhere in the list of top revenue-generating districts, though they have been in the news due to frequent raids and clashes for mining, political and official nexus abetting it and removal of top officials for their alleged involvement.

According to a senior department official, the minister has directed that the mineral development officers of the worst performing districts be issued a show cause. “If their performance does not improve, departmental action will be initiated against them,” Yadav said.

Bihar government has been trying to regulate the vexed mining sector since 2016 and in 2017 a new policy was also formed, but things did not improve and illegal mining went on. The official said that sand mining being a high-stake business, the total trade could be in the range of ₹7,000-8,000 crore annually in the naturally endowed Bihar due to construction boom, even though the government gets just a paltry amount through revenue. Sand mining could generate ₹428.06 crore in revenue in the fiscal year 2015-2016 and ₹457.65 crore in 2016-2017.

“We hope revenue generation picks up in the remaining three months, but achieving the target seems unlikely. Bihar is among the top two states as far as availability of sand is concerned, with reserves in 29 of the 38 districts, but it has serious legacy issues due to involvement of mafia with huge clout,” said another officer.

Due to high stakes, there have been frequent gang wars for control over illegal sand mining even during the prohibited monsoon period despite Bihar cabinet’s decision to crackdown on the mafia involved with rampant illegal sand mining by amending the Bihar miners rules, 2019. The amendment, incorporated last year, empowers the authorities to confiscate all vehicles involved with illegal mining and impose hefty fine for their release.

“Sand is an important ingredient for construction and it has no substitute. However, for the common man, construction of house is becoming increasingly difficult due to escalating prices in the last one decade. For ₹1000/100 cubic feet, it is now in the range of ₹8000 to ₹10000. That defies logic. The unusually high cost is what tempts truckers load a little extra,” said a

sand trader Jitendra Kumar. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/patna-news/bihar-achieves-less-than-1-3rd-mining-rev-collection-target-by-dec-101673194330984.html>

**20. Fadnavis relaunched his pet project junked by Thackeray** ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) January 8, 2023

Mumbai: Deputy Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis' pet project, the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan (JSA), is all set to be relaunched by the Maharashtra government. The water conservation project, which was the flagship programme of the Fadnavis-led BJP government, was scrapped by the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government after it came to power in November 2019, and a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was set up by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray to probe the scheme's alleged irregularities after a CAG report raised questions on it.

Around ₹9,500 crore was spent in phase one to implement the scheme in 22,593 villages. The state cabinet approved the second phase of the JSA on December 13, and an order on its revival was issued by the government in the first week of the new year.

For Phase 2, which is expected to begin in March this year, the state has roughly identified 3,000 villages where new work will be started, and 8,000 to 10,000 villages where maintenance and restoration work will be done. Villages will be selected by a district-level committee.

Eknath Davale, principal secretary of the agriculture and soil-water conservation department, said that efficient use of water was the focus of the second phase. "In the first phase, the focus was on creating decentralised water bodies spread across the villages of the state," he said. "Now in the second phase, along with creating water bodies, we will concentrate on the efficient use and equitable distribution of water. To achieve this, we will fund villages and farmers through various schemes."

Davale told HT that the government planned to give from ₹100,000 to ₹25 lakh per hectare to each farmer group comprising 20 to 25 farmers to be spent on a common water body which would be shared by the whole group. "We aim to assist 2,000 such farmers' groups," he said. "We will also provide ₹10 lakh per gram panchayat (village council) as a watershed development fund."

Besides reviving the JSA on the government level, Fadnavis has involved his own team to ensure a political benefit along with the social benefits of the scheme. One of his trusted aides from his private staff has been entrusted with monitoring the implementation of the scheme. This officer will ensure the speedy and effective implementation of the scheme as well as private and corporate participation. "JSA 2.0 will be implemented in about two years," said an office-bearer. "But the start of work and successful implementation of the scheme in 2023 to create water banks in these villages will translate into vote banks during the elections."

Meanwhile, there is no word on the inquiry into the JSA project launched by the Thackeray government. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/fadnavis-relaunched-his-pet-project-junked-by-thackeray-101673119723626.html>

21. लेखा विभाग के प्रिंसिपल अकाउंटेंट जनरल ने कुलपति चक्रवाल से की मुलाकात, कई परियोजनाओं पर हुई चर्चा, साथ काम करने की बनी सहमति ([ibc24.in](http://ibc24.in)) January 8, 2023

बिलासपुर। गुरु घासीदास विश्वविद्यालय (केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय) के कुलपति प्रोफेसर आलोक कुमार चक्रवाल से दिनांक 08 जनवरी, 2023 को सुबह 10 बजे छत्तीसगढ़ के भारतीय लेखा परीक्षा और लेखा विभाग के प्रिंसिपल अकाउंटेंट जनरल (ऑडिट) यशवंत कुमार (आईए एंड एएस) ने सौजन्य मुलाकात की। दोनों पक्षों ने शासन द्वारा संचालित विभिन्न योजनाओं की वितरण प्रणाली, प्रबंधन, संचालन आदि को प्रभावी बनाने पर परस्पर सहयोग एवं परियोजनाओं पर साझा काम करने पर चर्चा की। इस अवसर पर कुलसचिव प्रो. मनीष श्रीवास्तव भी उपस्थित रहे।

सौजन्य भेंटवार्ता के दौरान कुलपति प्रो. चक्रवाल ने केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा प्रारंभ की गई स्वावलंबी छत्तीसगढ़ परियोजना के विषय में जानकारी प्रदान करते हुए कहा कि हमारे विद्यार्थी प्रतिभावान, मेहनती, कर्मठ और संकल्पशील हैं जो किसी भी संस्था के लिए भविष्य की संपत्ति साबित होंगे। उन्होंने कहा कि दोनों संस्थानों के परस्पर सहयोग से हमारे विद्यार्थियों को सजीव रूप से व्यावहारिक लेखा गतिविधियों की जानकारी मिलेगी साथ ही उनकी कार्यकुशलता में वृद्धि होगी।

कुलपति प्रो. चक्रवाल ने कहा कि वाणिज्य, अर्थशास्त्र और राजनीति विज्ञान के विद्यार्थियों, शोधार्थियों और शिक्षकों को विभिन्न योजनाओं की वितरण प्रणाली, प्रबंधन, संचालन आदि को समझने के साथ ही उन्हें त्रुटिमुक्त बनाने में लेखा परीक्षा विभाग से सहयोग मिलेगा। शासन की विभिन्न परियोजनाओं पर साथ-साथ कार्य एवं सहयोग करने पर दोनों के बीच सहमति बनी। उन्होंने उम्मीद जताई कि आने वाले वर्षों में विद्यार्थियों को सैद्धांतिक के साथ व्यावहारिक ज्ञान प्राप्त होगा जिससे उनकी रोजगारपरकता में वृद्धि होगी।

छत्तीसगढ़ के भारतीय लेखा परीक्षा और लेखा विभाग के प्रिंसिपल अकाउंटेंट जनरल (ऑडिट) यशवंत कुमार (आईए एंड एएस) ने शासन की विभिन्न नीतियों और उनके क्रियान्वयन में उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों की भूमिका को अहम बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि कुलपति प्रो. चक्रवाल के सशक्त नेतृत्व में गुरु घासीदास विश्वविद्यालय अकादमिक गतिविधियों में निरंतर प्रगति कर रहा है। यहां के विभिन्न विभागों के विद्यार्थियों को जागरूक एवं उद्यमिता संपन्न बनाने लिए उन्हें परियोजनाओं गतिविधियों से जोड़ना बेहतर विकल्प है। उन्होंने उम्मीद जताई कि आने वाले समय में लेखा परीक्षा विभाग और केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय संयुक्त रूप से परियोजना पर कार्य करेंगे। कुलपति प्रो. चक्रवाल ने उन्हें विश्वविद्यालय में अधोसंरचना विकास, सौर ऊर्जा

के साथ अकादमिक गतिविधियों के विषय में भी विस्तार से जानकारी प्रदान की। इस अवसर पर कुलपति महोदय ने यशवंत का स्मृति चिह्न भेंट कर सम्मान किया। <https://www.abc24.in/chhattisgarh/principal-accountant-general-of-the-accounts-department-vice-chancellor-prof-chakrawal-met-1354045.html>

## **SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING**

**22. Asset monetisation pace slows, likely to miss FY23 target** ([financialexpress.com](https://www.financialexpress.com)) January 9, 2023

After achieving the target for the first year rather comfortably, the Centre's ambitious National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) may miss the goal in FY23 by a wide margin as the railways, telecom and petroleum sector slip on their goals.

As against the FY23 NMP target to generate Rs 1.62 trillion in revenues and investments, officials indicated that the shortfall could be about Rs 50,000 crore.

Railways, which is the biggest component of the Rs 6 trillion NMP in the four years through FY25, telecom and petroleum sectors are seen the worst performers while mining would be doing the heavy lifting for the second consecutive year. "With the end-of-the-year position not looking good, the railways' target has been reduced to about Rs 30,000 crore for FY23 from Rs 57,222 crore while the target for "coal and other mining" have been increased to about Rs 37,500 crore from Rs 6,060 crore," an official told FE.

Coal and other mining had yielded upfront revenues and capex to the tune of Rs 58,000 crore in FY22 against the target of Rs 3,394 crore. In FY23 also, the actual achievement of the coal and other mines monetisation by way of revenues in upfront premium, annual royalties and investment by private players are expected to be higher than the revised target. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has asked officers to find out from different ministries how much they would achieve and whether the shortfalls would be covered next year or not and the reasons for not meeting targets. Last year, a sum of about Rs 1 trillion was raised through the monetisation route as against the target of Rs 88,200 crore thanks to mining sector.

Railways collected just Rs 800 crore via monetisation through redevelopment of one railway station and some railway colonies in the last fiscal year as against the target of Rs 17,810 crore. According to the NMP, railways need to monetise 120 stations, 30 trains and 1,400 km track, among others in FY23. But, it has achieved little so far. Officials are concerned that other ministries are taking a leaf from railways non performance and doing little for the cause of asset recycling to generate a much needed investment cycle.

As against the target of Rs 20,180 crore, the department of telecom has not been able to monetise any of the telecom assets so far and doubts have emerged if it could achieve anything. The original plan was to mobilise Rs 15,780 crore by inviting private investors to bid for Bharat Broadband Network's 300,000 km of optical fibre networks to upgrade, operate and maintain across the country, including states. Now, that has been put on the backburner. Another Rs 4,400 crore was estimated from BSNL/MTNL tower monetisation through rent-operate-transfer (ROT) concession model, but bids are yet to be called for these. <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/asset-monetisation-pace-slows-likely-to-miss-fy23-target/2940474/>

**23. India should propose a G Minor at the G20 for greater inclusion** ([livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com)) Jan 09, 2023

In December, India began its yearlong G20 presidency, taking over from Indonesia amid rising geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty. Surging inflation has raised the specter of a global recession. Supply chains, made more efficient but also more vulnerable by globalization and the digital revolution, are crumbling under the weight of COVID-related disruptions and the war in Ukraine, both of which have revealed and deepened the fault lines of the international order.

During the Great Recession of 2008-09, the G20 arguably helped to prevent a worse crisis by persuading the world's biggest economies to coordinate their fiscal and monetary policies. With the global economy at a critical juncture, following decades of relentless globalization that have made markets increasingly interconnected, the group could once again play this role.

To confront the looming global crisis, G20 countries must, first and foremost, coordinate macroeconomic policies. During and after the Great Recession, developed economies attempted to boost growth by keeping interest rates at or close to zero – or even negative. While this was necessary, ultra-low rates soon became a trap, preventing countries that wanted to raise interest rates from doing so, lest their currencies appreciate and their exports decline.

The COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the spike in inflation have freed the world's largest economies from the low-interest-rate trap. But this transition could have been less painful had governments coordinated their macroeconomic policies. With the global economy on the verge of recession, the G20 must provide leadership on this issue and help policymakers avoid their predecessors' mistakes.

The pandemic and the war in Ukraine have also shown that in our globalized, interlinked world, every crisis is likely to have disproportionate economic effects. In a standard oligopoly, as described by the nineteenth-century economist Augustin Cournot, a few firms produce the same good, but this is no longer the case. For example, cars had once been produced in their entirety by a single manufacturer. Today, however, many firms manufacture the different parts separately – one company makes the chassis, another the wheels, and so on – creating what I have called a vertically serrated industry.

These intricate production processes have led to greater vulnerabilities. In a classic oligopoly, if a war or a pandemic broke out and 10% of manufacturers stopped producing cars, 10% fewer cars would be produced. Nowadays, however, if the world's wheel manufacturers shut down, car production would fall by 100%. This is precisely what is happening today, as a chip shortage has disrupted the global car industry, leading to sharp price increases.

A vertically serrated industry could also be weaponized. Governments could, for example, threaten to shut down production of a critical component, such as computer chips, knowing that this would bring global production to a halt. Some policymakers, like US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, have touted friend-shoring, whereby countries like the United States intend to reduce their reliance on geopolitical rivals by limiting the sources of critical goods to a few trusted allies. But this approach could further exacerbate tensions and push the world closer to a disastrous war. Instead, the world's superpowers must commit to avoiding such tactics. The G20 could play a central role in facilitating tense negotiations, designing international agreements, and overseeing coordination strategies.

But first, G20 countries must overcome their tendency to favor the interests of major economies. The pandemic, during which lower-income countries were deprived of access to vaccines due to hoarding by developed economies, has highlighted the need for global solidarity. As a 2020 letter to the G20 written by former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and others noted, the group could provide the sort of coordinated global leadership needed to address health disparities between the Global North and South.

But even beyond the pandemic, emerging and developing economies, particularly in Africa and the Pacific, often find themselves at the mercy of major powers, their prosperity contingent upon election outcomes in developed countries. This year, the G20 could take a giant step forward by enabling several smaller countries to participate in its deliberations and make their voices heard.

We could call this proposed group G Minor. While the G20 represents the world's largest economies, the G Minor would represent the needs of emerging and developing countries that lack the diplomatic and military clout required to protect their interests on their own. Forming such a group would be an admirable gesture of inclusion, enabling India to make its mark on the G20 and achieve a more just international order. <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/columns/india-should-propose-a-g-minor-at-the-g20-for-greater-inclusion-11673196443225.html>

**24. India's GDP growth estimated to slip to 7% in 2022-23: Govt data** ([thedispatch.in](http://thedispatch.in)) January 6, 2023

The Indian economy is estimated to grow at 7 per cent in the 2022-23 fiscal, down from 8.7 per cent a year ago, mainly due poor performance of mining and manufacturing sectors.

As per the first advance estimates of national income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Friday, the manufacturing sector output is estimated to decelerate to 1.6 per cent in the current fiscal from 9.9 per cent in 2021-22.

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Similarly, mining sector growth is estimated at 2.4 per cent in the current fiscal as against 11.5 per cent in 2021-22.

“Real GDP or GDP (Gross Domestic Product) at Constant (2011-12) Prices in the year 2022-23 is estimated at Rs 157.60 lakh crore, as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2021-22 of Rs 147.36 lakh crore, released on 31st May, 2022,” an NSO statement said.

It stated that growth in real GDP during 2022-23 is estimated at 7.0 per cent as compared to 8.7 per cent in 2021-22.

The NSO estimates are a tad higher than the 6.8 per cent GDP growth projection of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

It also said the nominal GDP or GDP at Current Prices in the year 2022-23 is estimated at Rs 273.08 lakh crore, as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2021-22 of Rs 236.65 lakh crore.



The growth in nominal GDP during 2022-23 is estimated at 15.4 per cent as compared to 19.5 per cent in 2021-22.

The agriculture sector is projected to see a growth of 3.5 per cent in FY2022-23, higher than the 3 per cent expansion recorded in the previous financial year.

Trade, hotel, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting segment is estimated to grow at 13.7 per cent from 11.1 per cent in 2021-22.

Financial, real estate and professional services segment is projected to grow at 6.4 per cent in the current fiscal, up from 4.2 per cent in 2021-22.

However, construction sector growth is expected to decelerate to 9.1 per cent from 11.5 per cent a year ago.

Similarly, public administration, defence and other services growth is estimated to drop to 7.9 per cent this fiscal from 12.6 per cent in FY22.

The growth in gross value added (GVA) at basic prices is pegged at 6.7 per cent this fiscal, down from 8.1 per cent in 2021-22. <https://www.thedispatch.in/indias-gdp-growth-estimated-to-slip-to-7-in-2022-23-govt-data/>

## **25. Draconian, Toothless~I ([thestatesman.com](http://thestatesman.com)) January 7, 2023**

Whenever Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) crosses the 300 mark not only are Delhi'ites worried, but their sons and daughters living abroad are deeply concerned about their parents' health and wonder why the government can't control the monstrous air pollution of the capital city. Immediately starts the political slugfest and the acrimonious cacophony on TV channels playing out the blame game. This has been going on for more than one decade with no change on the ground; on the other hand, the situation worsens every subsequent year.

Our son, a university professor in the United States, who has conducted considerable research on 'emission wars' has been asking us to abandon Delhi and settle down in a relatively clean city in south India. But for people who have been living in Delhi for decades, it's a hard and painful decision which we haven't been able to take leaving our destiny to the city's future.

Delhi with a high-density population of 30.2 million (2020) in an area of 1484 square kilometre and an estimated 11.2 million registered vehicles (2018) on the roads is one of the most polluted cities in the world, if not the worst. The winter months ~ November to February ~ are especially bad when the city, enveloped in smog and haze, cannot breathe fresh air and see the blue sky. Measured in a modern Spectrometer, one cubic meter of the city's air in peak winter may contain more than a trillion particles including PM2.5, PM10 and other noxious chemicals and smoke and harmful bacteria and viruses. Against the WHO's (World Health Organization) guideline of 5 microgram per cubic meter, Delhi's PM2.5 concentration ranges from an average of 110.2 to 220.7 microgram during the months of December and January, which is more than 25 times the WHO norm.

For example, on 29 December 2022, Delhi recorded a pollution level of 385 (US AQI) and PM2.5 level at 335, which was 67 times more than the WHO's recommended level. In the past,



PM2.5 had been recorded soaring up to 829.2 microgram, more than 80 times the WHO norm. Hundreds of research papers have been published in the Americas, Europe, and India about the impact of air pollution on human health. Some of the studies have shown that Delhi's atmosphere is toxic and extremely harmful for senior citizens and the young children. The PM2.5 particles are more lethal as they penetrate the tissues of the lungs and then enter the blood stream. Exposed for a long time, this may not only cause Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) but also cardiac problems, and even cancer. The studies also reveal that a large number of school-going children in Delhi are likely to lose 25 per cent of their lung capacity. The severe air pollution has the effect of reducing life expectancy of Delhi citizens by about nine years.

A higher level of pollution affects not only the elders and the children; the risk starts with the normal healthy people also. A study by Greenpeace and the Swiss firm IQAir conducted in 2021 claimed that about 54,000 premature deaths in Delhi in the previous year were due to air pollution. The same is the situation for almost all the cities of North India. In 2017 alone, India's air pollution was linked to the death of 1.24 million people and accounted for 12.5 per cent of total deaths in the country that year.

It's a cruel irony that these tragic events are occurring in spite of the fact that India has been one of the first countries in the world to have enacted a comprehensive environment law. As a sequel to the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm in 1972, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (EPA) was passed by Parliament under Article 253 of the Constitution to give effect to international agreements signed by the country. It provided the framework for the environment regulation regime in India covering all industries and infrastructure activities.

The Act was passed with great hopes of restoring the glories of our national rivers, the lakes, the wetlands, the hills, and the seashores. It was a comprehensive Act aimed at prevention of pollution of air, water, and soil of the country with special emphasis on pollution in the urban areas; it also contained directions for better management of hazardous material, solid waste management and effluent plants. It contained extremely strict provisions for punishment, termed draconian by the legal fraternity, for violation of the Act. It was called draconian especially because of Clause 18 of the Act which says: "No civil court shall have jurisdiction to entertain any suit or proceeding in respect of anything done, action taken, or order or direction issued by the Central Government or any other authority or officer in pursuance of any power conferred by or in relation to its or his functions under this Act." The Act envisaged establishment of a Central authority with almost unlimited powers.

The chief architect of the Act was T N Seshan, former Chief Election Commissioner, who was the Environment Secretary at that time. Seshan wanted to showcase the enactment of the Act as his singular personal achievement to cover himself with glory. It was soon discovered that the Act was promulgated in great haste. It suffered from many flaws ~ lack of clarity, lack of implementability and legal infirmities. Moreover, there was no mechanism in place to enforce the law. In a vast country like India and in a federal set up, a law cannot be imposed unilaterally. In the final analysis, it is the States who are the main stakeholders and are primarily responsible for the protection of forests and environment. It was as complicated an affair as the introduction of a single tax like the GST throughout the country. Seshan had been a brilliant Secretary. But his super-ego prevented him from conducting wider consultations with all the stakeholders ~ the States, the Centre, environmentalists, legal experts, and the law enforcing agencies. In fact, there should have been a high-powered committee or council to frame a common

environmental law. Not only were the States not taken into full confidence, he could not also take his own officers on board and ignored their opinions.

In spite of all the fanfare, the Environment Act, 1986 remained a non-starter. There was no doubt that the Act of 1986 was draconian. It was apparently intended to be so because of the enormity of the problems of all-round environmental destruction and degradation undermining the quality of life of the citizens.

But nobody in the Ministry gave serious thought as to how it should be implemented and what should be the institutional mechanism for effective enforcement of the draconian provisions of the Act.

Several organisational structures were created with a view to administering the Act, but this was done in the usual manner of bureaucratic proliferation. Each State created a Department of Environment and Forest and a State Pollution Control Board. At the Central level, a Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) with a battery of experts, supervisors and technicians and testing laboratories was constituted to study and monitor environmental pollution for the whole country and initiate action against the offenders strictly following “the polluter pays” principle.

But none of the high-powered Pollution Control Boards was equipped with enforcement powers; they were practically powerless and toothless. They had to depend on the same general police forces of the States, for whom environmental crimes would receive the least priority. To expect effective and prompt punitive action from a police force largely perceived by the public as non-professional and ineffective would be asking for the moon. The Pollution Control Boards should have been entrusted with the powers of enforcement; they had no legal powers to impose fines or close down a polluting industry. It is not known if any of the offenders has been prosecuted for polluting the Ganga by discharging effluents from the tanneries of Kanpur or for destroying the Yamuna by the unregulated industries of Delhi. It speaks volumes for the weakness of the so-called ‘Draconian Act’ when we realise that not even a single offending industrialist has so far been sent to jail for deliberately flouting the provisions of the Environment Act, 1986. The CPCB which was designed as the main instrument of implementation of the Environment Act lapsed into a semi-academic institution doing research, collecting, and collating data from the states and casually monitoring the environmental situation.

Fortunately for the country, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) was later established and has since assumed the responsibility of enforcing environmental laws suo moto, or on the basis of complaints, and has started setting new norms for environmental pollution and protection of the environment. The Delhi’ites haven’t noticed any active role played by CPCB to combat air pollution in the NCR. <https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/draconian-toothless-1503144643.html>