

## **NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS (17.12.2022 to 19.12.2022)**

### **1. 50 Centrally Protected Monuments Untraceable, 11 in UP ([newsclick.in](https://www.newsclick.in)) DEC 19, 2022**

In a shocking revelation, the Union Ministry of Culture and the Archeological Survey of India have reported that about 50 of the country's 3,678 centrally protected monuments cannot be traced on the ground.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has attributed their loss to either rapid urbanisation or problems tracing the monument sites because of their remoteness, The Tribune reported. The revelations were made by the Ministry of Culture and the ASI in a report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Culture. The report was presented before the Parliament this week.

In its last report on the subject, the Comptroller and Auditor General noted that 92 monuments were missing. Parliament panel also asked the ASI to conduct a physical survey of all the monuments.

Following rap from the CAG, the ASI physically inspected 1,655 of the 3,678 centrally protected monument sites. After this exercise, the actual status of the monuments was established.

The missing monuments include Barakhamba Cemetery in the national capital, two monuments in Haryana and 11 in Uttar Pradesh, which is the highest.

“If even monuments in the Capital city cannot be maintained properly, it does not bode well for monuments in remote places in the country,” said the panel.

In the status report to the panel, the ASI stated that 42 of the 92 missing monuments flagged by the CAG had been located on the ground, but 24 of them were totally untraceable, as many as 14 were lost due to rapid urbanisation, and 12 submerged under dams or reservoirs.

The panel directed the government to maintain digital log books containing textual, photographic and video records of the state of physical preservation of all monuments and their exact location coordinates, the Tribune reported.

The panel pulled up the ministry for differentiating between the untraceable monuments and those lost to urbanisation and dams. “The distinction made by the ministry regarding the monuments lost to urbanisation/reservoirs and 24 monuments which are untraceable is an academic one since monuments lost to urbanisation/reservoirs are as irrecoverable as the ones which are at present untraceable with scant hope of being found in future. Moreover, the fact that the ASI had been unable to prevent the loss of the 14 monuments to urbanisation and 12 to reservoirs/dams and only located them after the study by the CAG suggested that the ASI had no cognisance of these monuments prior to the study. The number of monuments lost from public viewing must therefore be held to be 50 taking into account those lost to urbanisation or reservoirs,” said the Parliamentary Committee.

The panel's status report says, “it is of paramount importance to ensure the protection of historical monuments across the country and the same is also reflected in Article 49 of the

Constitution of India”. The constitutional provision states the “Protection of monuments and places and objects of national importance— It shall be the obligation of the State to protect every monument or place or object of artistic or historic interest, 1 [declared by or under law made by Parliament] to be of national importance, from spoliation, disfigurement, destruction, removal, disposal or export, as the case may be.” <https://www.newsclick.in/50-centrally-protected-monuments-untraceable-11-UP>

## **2. 50 protected monuments missing on ground, 2 in Haryana** ([tribuneindia.com](http://tribuneindia.com)) DEC 19, 2022

As many as 50 of the country’s 3,678 centrally protected monuments are nowhere to be found on the ground, with the Archaeological Survey of India attributing their loss to rapid urbanisation or difficulties in tracing the sites due to their remoteness.

The startling admission by the Ministry of Culture and the ASI is part of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Culture’s crucial report, “Issues relating to Untraceable Monuments and Protection of Monuments in India”, presented to Parliament this week.

### **Action after cag rap**

Following CAG rap, the ASI inspects 1,655 of the 3,678 centrally protected sites  
Parliament panel asks the ASI to conduct physical survey of all monuments  
Lost to urbanisation

The ASI says 24 monuments are completely untraceable, 14 have been lost to urbanisation and 12 have been submerged under dams or reservoirs  
Barakhamba Cemetery among the lost sites  
Haryana: Kos Minar, Mujesar, Faridabad; Kos Minar,

Shahabad, Kurukshetra

Uttarakhand: Kutumbari

Temple, Dwarahat, Almora

Delhi: Barakhamba Cemetery; Inchla Wali Gumti, Mubarakpur

R’sthan: Inscription in Fort, Tonk; 12th Century Temple, Baran

UP: Ruins of three small linga temple Ahugi, Mirzapur

The missing monuments include Barakhamba Cemetery in the heart of the Capital, two monuments in Haryana and the maximum (11) in Uttar Pradesh.

The committee in its report notes that the actual status of the monuments in question was determined only after the ASI conducted a physical inspection of 1,655 of the 3,678 centrally protected monuments following a rap by the Comptroller and Auditor General, which in its last report on the subject had noted that 92 monuments were missing.

The ASI, in a status report to the panel, said 42 of the 92 missing monuments flagged by the CAG had been located on the ground while 24 were completely untraceable, 14 were lost to rapid urbanisation and 12 had been submerged under dams or reservoirs.

Rapping the ASI for making an academic distinction for the monuments destroyed, the parliamentary committee directed the government to maintain digital log books containing textual, photographic and video record of the state of physical preservation of all the monuments and their exact location coordinates.

“The distinction made by the ministry regarding the monuments lost to urbanisation/reservoirs and 24 monuments which are untraceable is an academic one since monuments lost to urbanisation/reservoirs are as irrecoverable as the ones which are at present untraceable with scant hope of being found in future. Moreover, the fact that the ASI had been unable to prevent the loss of the 14 monuments to urbanisation and 12 to reservoirs/dams and only located them after the study by the CAG suggested that the ASI had no cognisance of these monuments prior to the study. The number of monuments lost from public viewing must therefore be held to be 50 taking into account those lost to urbanisation or reservoirs,” said the committee.

The panel also said it was perturbed to learn that Barakhamba Cemetery in the heart of the Capital was among the untraceable monuments.

“If even monuments in the Capital city cannot be maintained properly, it does not bode well for monuments in remote places in the country,” said the panel. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/50-protected-monuments-missing-on-ground-2-in-haryana-462334>

### **3. Search is on for 24 ‘missing’ monuments of country via old records ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) Dec 18, 2022**

Even after five years since it conceded that 24 centrally protected monuments are untraceable, the culture ministry has not given up hope. The ministry has told the standing committee on transport, tourism and culture that with the help of old revenue records, revenue maps and published reports, these historical structures might be located in the future.

However, the ‘dismayed’ panel recommended that the Archeological Survey of India (ASI), the national watchdog of heritage sites under the ministry, undertake a survey of all the 3,693 centrally protected monuments to check their physical ‘existence’ and to ensure their adequate maintenance and protection.

In its 324th report titled-- Issues relating to Untraceable Monuments and Protection of Monuments in India---tabled in Rajya Sabha last week, the Committee stated that it is perturbed to note that having found out that at least 24 monuments are untraceable out of the sample of monuments studied, no further surveys were conducted for the remaining monuments, even nearly a decade after the original study.

“A physical survey of all the Centrally Protected Monuments must mandatorily be carried out by ASI from time to time as per a fixed time schedule. Digital log books may be maintained which may contain textual and photographic or video record of the state of physical preservation of the monument, exact location coordinates and clearly demarcated prohibited and regulated areas in the vicinity of the monument,” the panel recommended.

It further suggested that digital records might be made accessible to the general public to avoid any ambiguities.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in its 2013 report on 'Performance Audit of Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities' reported that 92 monuments are 'missing'. Subsequently, the ASI carried out a mega exercise to locate the reportedly untraceable monuments. The efforts bore fruits and many of them were 'traced out'. The Survey found 42 sites physically existed and 14 were 'affected' due to rapid urbanisation. About 12 sites, it stated that they existed but were submerged under dams or water reservoirs but 24 heritage properties were 'untraceable'.

In its response to the panel, the ministry stated that the exact location and condition of untraceable monuments could not be determined because of various factors such as rapid urbanisation, non-availability of proper details about their location in the gazette notification, remote areas and dense forests despite the strenuous efforts.

However, it added that the chances of tracing those monuments with the help of scientific tools and archival records cannot be ruled out. "Field explorations and periodic surveys are being conducted from time to time by the field offices of ASI and with the help of old revenue records, revenue maps and published reports, these monuments may also be traced out... exercise of removing these 24 untraceable monuments has not been initiated by the ASI as there are chances that some of these monuments can be traced out in near future," the panel in its report noted.

The 24 untraceable heritage sites:

\*Assam

Guns of Emperor Sher Shah, Tinsukia

\*Arunachal Pradesh

The Ruins of Copper Temple, Lohit

\*Haryana

Kos Minar, Faridabad

Kos Minar, Kurukshetra

\*Uttarakhand

Kutumbari Temple, Almora

\*Delhi

Bara Khamba Cemetery

Inchla Wali Gumti, Mubarakpur Kotla

\*Madhya Pradesh

Rock Inscription, Satna

\*Maharashtra

Old European Tomb, Pune

Burj, Agarkot

\*Rajasthan

Inscription in Nagar Fort, Tonk

12th Century Temple, Baran

\*Uttar Pradesh

Ruins of three small linga temple circle 1000 AD, Ahugi Mirzapur

Three sites with megaliths on the western and north eastern toes of the hill, Chandauli

Tablet on treasury building, Varanasi

Telia Nala Buddhist ruins, Varanasi

A Banyan grove containing traces of ancient building, Amavey, Ballia

Closed Cemetery, Katra Naka, Banda

Gunner Burkill's Tomb, Mehroni, Lalitpur

Three Tomb, Lucknow-Faizabad Road, Lucknow

Cemeteries at miles 6 and 7, Jahraila Road, Lucknow

Cemetery at Gaughat, Lucknow

Large ruined site called Sandi-Khera, Pali, Hardoi

\*West Bengal

Ruins of fort, Nadia

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2022/dec/18/search-is-on-for-24-missing-monuments-of-country-via-old-records-2529203.html>

## **STATES NEWS ITEMS**

### **4. Fake challans for scooters, cars issued to carry sand in Bihar: CAG report ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) Dec 16, 2022**

PATNA: Like the infamous fodder scam, motorcycles, auto rickshaws, and cars were purportedly used as modes of transport to carry sand from different ghats, says the report of the comptroller and auditor general (CAG) for the year ending March 2021, which was tabled in the state legislature on Friday.

Talking to the media after presenting the reports to the heads of state legislature, auditor general (audit) Ramawatar Sharma said that 46,935 e-challans out of the 2,43,811 issued in 14 districts were generated for unrealistic vehicles, having registration numbers of ambulances, buses, auto rickshaws, cars, motorcycles etc.

“As many as 21,192 out of the 33,191 e-challans verified by the audit in 16 works divisions, were found to be fake and had been used in different construction works. The fake challans account for about 63.35% of the total e-challans,” said Sharma, adding that in 15,723 cases in 11 district mining officers (DMOs), 11 to 861 e-challans were generated for one vehicle, in one day, to carry sand.

In four districts, the concerned lessees generated e-challans more than 10 times to 142 times a day, for a particular vehicle, while dispatching stones, during year 2018-2020. Moreover, it was found that 12 ghats were mined for sand in three districts without obtaining environmental clearance (EC), said the report.

Eight DMOs had extended the lease for sand mining till December 2021 without realizing the security deposit leading to loss of about ₹ 94.97 crore. The state also suffered revenue loss of ₹9,741 crore on account of non-realisation of stamp duty and registration in eight districts the lessees for the period of 2015-19, which was extended till September 2021.

The audit report further state that the panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) were unable to levy and collect taxes for want of the Bihar Panchayat (gram panchayat, audit, budget and taxation) Rules despite recommendation of the state finance commissions and relevant provisions in the BPRA, 2006.

The PRIs in the state did not have adequate staff to discharge the devolved functions. At GP level, 4,751 posts (56% of the sanctioned strength) of the panchayat secretary were vacant, whereas 455 posts of block panchayati raj officer (BPRO) (64% of the total sanctioned strength) were vacant at the block level.

As of November 2019, utilisation certificates (UCs) of only ₹13,695.45 crore (46.71%) were submitted by the PRIs against total grants of ₹29,319.83 crore, released during the period up to 2017-18.

Similarly, UCs of ₹5,443.55 crore out of total ₹10,508.78 crore grant released by the urban development and housing department (UDHD) during the period 2015-16 to 2018-19 (up to November 2018) are pending for adjustment. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/patna-news/fake-challans-for-scooters-cars-issued-to-carry-sand-in-bihar-cag-report-101671211933959.html>

**5. Two, three, four-wheelers, ambulances, used to transport sand in Bihar: CAG report ([newsroomodisha.com](https://newsroomodisha.com)) Dec 17, 2022**

Patna: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in its latest report, has exposed rampant illegal sand mining in Bihar, and made shocking revelations about its modus operandi.

It said that the sand mafia have used motorcycles, scooters, ambulances, e-rickshaws, cars, buses, trucks, as well as earth mover machines for the transportation of sand in various districts of Bihar.

The CAG report is based on E-challans issued by the state Geology and Mining Department. It has also taken help of the students of National Institute of Technology (NIT) Patna. The NIT students, in their report submitted to the CAG, claimed that illegal mining is taking place in every ghat earmarked for the evacuation of sand in Bihar and it is an increasing trend.

CAG analysed the E-challans of 14 districts and found that 47 vehicles which cannot be used for the transportation of sand were issued e-challans from the department. The department had issued 2.5 lakh e-challans to those 47,000 vehicles.

As per the report, 62,843 e-challans issued to bike and scooters and 6,44,000 tons of sand were transported on them.

As many as 39,000 e-challans issued to auto-rickshaws for the transportation of 3,85,000 tons of sand.

A total of 10 e-challans issued to ambulances and 124 tons of sand transported on them.

Also 9,245 e-challans issued to cars and 87,000 tons of sand transported from them. Even the Mining Department has issued challans to fire brigade vehicles for the transportation of 8 tons sand.

As per the report, the Mining Department has issued 181 e-challans to one bike and 139 E-challans to cars for the transportation of sand in one day.

Besides, it has issued challans to trucks, buses, tractors and earth mover machines as well. <https://newsroomodisha.com/two-three-four-wheelers-ambulances-used-to-transport-sand-in-bihar-cag-report/>

**6. Sand, stones can be transported in ambulances, autos: CAG report ([telegraphindia.com](https://telegraphindia.com)) 19 Dec 2022**

Sand and stones can be transported in ambulances, crop harvesters, construction equipment vehicles, fire tenders, motorcycles, scooters, e-rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, cars and buses in Bihar, said a CAG report.

The state has achieved the dubious distinction in the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on “systems and controls in assessment and collection of mineral receipts” for the financial year 2020-21 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on Friday.

At least 2.44 lakh e-challans examined in 14 of the 38 districts in the state by the CAG officials were generated by using such unrealistic vehicles to transport sand and stones, which are precious minerals for the construction and infrastructure sectors. The mineral is abundantly available in Bihar.

“These e-challans were actually fake. They were generated by using registration numbers of bikes, ambulances, fire tenders, auto-rickshaws, cars, earth movers, and other such vehicles and used by contractors and mining lease owners for showing the transportation of sand and stones,” Bihar accountant general (audit) Ramawatar Sharma told reporters.

To top it, these vehicles and construction equipment supposedly undertook 11 to 715 trips in a day. It was not possible to carry sand in these vehicles, nor they could undertake so many movements in a single day.

Sharma also added that around 63.85 per cent of e-challans verified by the audit officials were found to be fake.

The CAG officials asserted that such dubious and fake e-challans could have been used either to justify sand or stone extractions or to get the royalty on them released or to indulge in other kinds of irregularities. This went unchecked because there was no linkage between e-challans and the regional transport office databases, so the type of vehicles could not be automatically checked.

The CAG report on “performance and compliance audit” for 2020-21 found that the agriculture department did not have any existing list of potential beneficiaries for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) due to which 71.45 lakh people were deprived of scheme benefits of Rs 3,444 crore.

PM-KISAN provides support of Rs 6,000 per annum to all eligible farmer families in three instalments of Rs 2,000 each every four months to supplement their financial needs to ensure proper crop health and appropriate yields, as well as, their domestic needs.

The report points out that there were 1.64 crore-farm owners but only 82.5 lakh or 50 per cent could be registered for the welfare scheme till August 2021. It has criticised the agriculture department for not having the correct database and for not providing any option to farmers for offline applications.

Another serious anomaly detected by the CAG has been that the state was to provide irrigation facilities on 85.41 lakh hectares, but water availability and crop yield indicated that it could have been available on 21.37 lakh hectares. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/sand-and-stones-can-be-transported-in-ambulances-auto-rickshaws-cag-report/cid/1904597>

**7. Fines realised by e-challans not remitted to govt account** ([timesofindia.indiatimes.com](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com)) 19 Dec 2022

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has stumbled upon large-scale irregularities in the remittance of fine/penalty collected by the transport department from violators after implementation of echallan through electronic devices.

According to the CAG report, Rs6.27 crore realised through e-challan by hand held devices (HHD) was not remitted to the government's account. It added that the remittance of Rs7.03 crore in government account could not be verified due to non-maintenance of account/cash book for amount collected through HHD.

Rule 37 of the Bihar Financial Rules (BFR) provides that all transactions must be brought into account immediately and money received should be duly credited into the government account. "Audit scrutinized (between April 2020 and August 2021) the account in HDFC Bank for collection of fine through HHD and observed that in DTO, Patna, Rs4.76 crore credited in HDFC Bank through HHD was transferred to the account of DTO, Patna, in Indian Bank instead of government account," the CAG report said.

Similarly, in DTO, Gopalganj, Rs81.19 lakh was credited (between March 2020 to March 2021) in HDFC Bank through HHD was transferred to the account of DTO, Gopalganj in State Bank of India instead of government account. "This was in violation of Rule 37 of BFR and instruction of the transport department which stipulates that revenue realised must be remitted into the government account by the next day of transaction," the report said. The CAG noticed similar incidents in Muzaffarpur and Purnia.

The CAG also said 3,061 challans worth Rs1.97 crore were irregularly modified and fines unpaid were reduced by Rs90.96 lakh. It added 71,274 e-challans for Rs24.17 crore were issued to defaulting vehicle owners/drivers but neither was any action taken against them nor were any efforts made for seizure of vehicles or documents.

CAG report also stated that audit scrutiny revealed non-short realization of taxes and road safety cess, leviable taxes not realized from transport vehicles and other irregularities involving Rs227.09 crores.

The transport department levies and collects taxes on vehicles in the state in terms of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, Bihar Motor Vehicles Taxation (BMVT) Act, 1994 and BMVT Rules, 1994. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/fines-realised-by-e-challans-not-remitted-to-govt-account/articleshow/96331410.cms>

## **8. CAG finds lack of financial discipline in Finance department in Bihar ([uniindia.com](http://uniindia.com)) 16 Dec 2022**

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India detected lack of financial discipline in the Finance Department which failed to ensure transparent financial management at district level and could not maintain proper and effective functioning of the District Accounts Officer. Auditor General (Accounts) Bihar Ramawtar Sharma briefed news persons about the CAG report for the year ended on March 31 2019 after it was tables in the state assembly here on Friday. <http://www.uniindia.com/cag-finds-lack-of-financial-discipline-in-finance-department-in-bihar/east/news/2880449.html>

## **9. Fake challans issued for motorcycles, cars, e-rickshaws to carry sand in Bihar: CAG report ([aninews.in](http://aninews.in)) Dec 17, 2022**

Fake challans were made mentioning e-rickshaws, motorcycles and cars that were used to transport sand from different ghats in Bihar (/topic/bihar) in what could be a major illegal

mining scam, according to the recently tabled report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) for the year ending March 2021.

CAG tabled its report on Friday.

Addressing the mediapersons, Accountant General (Audit), Bihar (/topic/bihar), Ramawatar Sharma said, "In all ghats that were studied, we found illegal mining. Every year this illegal mining is increasing. Mining activities are being carried out without environmental clearances. Unrealistic vehicles were used to carry sand."

"We analysed that the trend of unrealistic e-challans were mostly used in the month of June. 46,935 e-challans out of the 2,43,811 issued in 14 districts were generated for unrealistic vehicles. These vehicles carry registration numbers of ambulances, buses, auto rickshaws, cars, motorcycles etc."

Sharma said the challans were made to justify the illegal extraction. In the challans, it was shown that 6,44,189 metric tons of sand were transported by motorcycles.

"Further 86,000 metric tons of sand were transported by cars. Similarly, it was shown that 3,85,000 metric tons of sand were transported through auto rickshaws. E-rickshaws transported 26 metric tons of sand," he said. <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/fake-challans-issued-for-motorcycles-cars-e-rickshaws-to-carry-sand-in-bihar-cag-report20221217233726/>

#### **10. How Bihar hooch tragedy spotlights a healthcare crisis ([indiatoday.in](https://www.indiatoday.in)) 19 December 2022**

Politics continues to overshadow Bihar's hooch tragedy in which over 70 villagers, mostly poor Dalits, have died in Saran and Siwan districts of the state which has officially been under prohibition since 2016.

Opposition BJP has mounted pressure on the Mahagathbandhan government to pay cash relief to the families of the dead, saying the prohibition law had a provision for compensation to the kin of hooch tragedy victims, and it was given in Gopalganj in 2006 when 16 deaths were reported soon after the law came into force. BJP MP Sushil Modi said Rs 4 lakh was then given to each victim.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has controversially maintained no compensation will be given, as "those who drink liquor will die", even as his police are yet to find out from where such a huge quantity of poisonous liquor came.

This is despite his ally, the Left parties and the HAM(S), protesting for cash relief to the families of hooch tragedy victims and asking the state government to be more sensitive. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has ordered its on-spot investigation into the matter.

While the compensation argument has its merit, these large numbers of deaths, the highest since Bihar imposed prohibition, have also highlighted the poor state of primary healthcare infrastructure in the hinterland.

It has now become clear that many drinkers of spurious liquor died as hardly any treatment facility was available at the primary health centres. Many died while being taken to the state-run Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH). Sections of experts have said some of these lives could have been saved had there been proper systems in place.

When the new government was installed in Bihar in August, after Nitish again dumped the BJP and went with the RJD, Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav gave officials an ultimatum of 60 days to improve the state's health infrastructure.

But when Tejashwi visited a government-run hospital in West Champaran last month, he faced angry attendants of patients who said they were devoid of even basic facilities. He was also confronted with an awful state of hygiene.

But that's not an isolated case. A few random calls to people in Bihar districts will show that many hospitals don't have doctors, and their pharmacies turn away patients lining up for medicines.

Who can forget the sickening images of the crumbling and stinking Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital flashed during the devastating second wave of the Covid pandemic?

Hospitals in Bihar have for long been the breeding ground for many diseases. Politicians, government officers, and judges don't plan their medical treatment in Bihar. The chief minister visits Delhi's AIIMS for routine checkups (2018) or a simple surgery for cataract (2021).

A government official posted in Saharasa districts was recently diagnosed with hernia at a local health centre but doctors advised him against going to Patna for treatment. However, he had little faith in the diagnosis itself and chose to go to Darjeeling where the actual cause of his suffering was found to be a prostate complication.

Thousands in north Bihar prefer UP's Gorakhpur and Varanasi over Patna for treatment. Another piece of stat: Between Saran and Siwan, where the latest hooch deaths have happened, there is only one ultrasound machine with the latest tech run by a private centre that remains overcrowded all the time.

A report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) tabled in the state legislature earlier this year pointed out massive shortfalls in health facilities. Some district health centres were found to have only about 30 per cent of the required beds for patients. The CAG report said the state health department has failed to increase the bed strength since 2009.

It also pointed out that there was a persistent shortage of MBBS doctors, nurses, paramedical staff and lab technicians from 2014 to 2020.

The Bihar Medical Services and Infrastructure Corporation Ltd (BMSICL) could only spend 29 per cent, Rs 3,103 crore, against the available funds of Rs 10,743 crore. Out of the total 1,097 projects undertaken by it during 2014-20, only 187 could be completed, while 523 were still in progress and 387 still needed to commence, according to reports.

Meanwhile, in Saran district, blank-faced minor children were seen standing in front of the local health centre, with voter and Aadhaar cards in hand, to obtain the death certificates of their fathers. The wails of chest-beating women still shatter the eerie silence in affected areas.

Hooch deaths have happened in Bihar even before prohibition came into force in the state. And people have died of spurious liquor in states such as Punjab where prohibition has not been imposed. But there's no denying that casualties have spiked in Bihar, over 300 since 2016. In the last couple of years, such deaths have stalked the state. Some of those who survive often end up losing their eyesight.

The poor implementation of prohibition means booze parties continue in towns, though a shade subdued. In villages, where costlier liquor cannot be afforded, people manage to risk their lives, in the face of weak enforcement, with what often turns out to be poisonous.

Nitish has argued that domestic violence has reduced and less money wastage in households means more can be spent on the education of children, while data from the National Crime Records Bureau shows crime against women has increased in Bihar since 2016 in the state that's losing thousands of crore of rupees in revenue every year due to the liquor ban.

And deaths, while tragic, are only part of the issue. The Supreme Court and the Patna High Court have flagged the clogging of courtrooms with bail hearings of those accused of prohibition violators and jails are bursting at the seams as thousands wait for release.

Crimes cases, particularly those of rape, are said to have shot up in Bihar as previous cases remain pending, diluting the deterrence factors, and the police remain busy catching or negotiating with prohibition offenders.

The courts have also flagged that the menace of drugs, with teenagers working as peddlers, has increased in the state after the imposition of prohibition. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/bihar-hooch-tragedy-spotlights-healthcare-crisis-2310911-2022-12-19>

**11. कैग की रिपोर्ट में बड़ा खुलासा, बिहार के किसानों को नहीं मिला किसान सम्मान निधि के 3,443 करोड़ का लाभ (news4nation.com) 16 Dec 2022**

कैग की रिपोर्ट से हुए एक खुलासे के अनुसार बिहार के 71 लाख 45 हजार 65 लाभार्थी प्रधानमंत्री किसान सम्मान निधि योजना के 3,443.55 करोड़ रुपए का लाभ लेने से वंचित रह गए. बिहार विधान मंडल के समक्ष भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखापरीक्षक का लेखापरीक्षा प्रतिवेदन (निष्पादन एवं अनुपालन लेखापरीक्षा) 2022 प्रस्तुत किया गया है. इसी रिपोर्ट में यह बात सामने आई है कि 31 मार्च 2021 को समाप्त हुए वर्ष में बिहार के किसान 3,443.55 करोड़ रुपए का लाभ लेने से वंचित रह गए.

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि कृषि विभाग के पास योजना के संभावित लाभार्थियों की कोई मौजूदा सूची नहीं होने से 71,45,065 लाभार्थी ₹3,443.55 करोड़ से वंचित रहे। 164 लाख प्रचलित भूमिधारकों के विरुद्ध पंजीकृत लाभार्थियों की संख्या केवल 82.50 लाख (50 प्रतिशत) थी (अगस्त 2021)। अपर्याप्त आच्छादन के लिए विभाग के पास संभावित लाभार्थियों की कोई मौजूदा सूची नहीं होने, अन्य योजनाओं के मौजूदा डाटाबेस तक पहुंच नहीं होने, ऑफलाइन

आवेदनों के लिए किसी भी विकल्प का प्रावधान नहीं करने आदि को जिम्मेदार ठहराया जा सकता है। इसमें यह भी कहा गया है कि ऑफ लाईन आवेदन का विकल्प नहीं देकर राज्य सरकार ने जैसे किसानों को योजना के लाभ से वंचित कर दिया, जो ऑनलाईन आवेदन नहीं कर सके थे।

कृषि विभाग आयकर भुगतान की स्थिति और योजना के लाभ हेतु पात्रता निर्धारित करने वाली अन्य सूचनाओं के विषय में लाभार्थियों द्वारा की गई स्व घोषणाओं पर निर्भर था। परिणामस्वरूप 82,50,032 पंजीकृत लाभार्थियों में से 48,366 अपात्र लाभार्थी जो आयकर दाता थे जिन्हें ₹ 39.05 करोड़ (नवंबर 2021 ) का योजना का लाभ प्राप्त हुआ। इसी प्रकार 19,485 मामले जिनमें ₹23.62 करोड़ का भुगतान (नवंबर 2021) हुआ था. लाभार्थी के रोजगार, मृत्यु मामलों आदि के आधार पर अपात्र थे।

भारत सरकार द्वारा शत प्रतिशत वित्त पोषित प्रधानमंत्री किसान सम्मान निधि (पी.एम.-किसान) योजना, सभी पात्र किसान परिवारों को उचित फसल स्वास्थ्य एवं उचित पैदावार सुनिश्चित करने के साथ-साथ उनकी घरेलू जरूरतों के लिए वित्तीय आवश्यकता को संबल प्रदान करने हेतु प्रत्येक चार माह में ₹ 2000 की तीन समान किस्तों में ₹6,000 प्रति वर्ष की आय सहायता प्रदान करती है।

रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 10 नमूना जाँचित जिलों में 22,301 अवयस्क लाभार्थियों (कुल पंजीकृत अवयस्क लाभार्थियों का 91 प्रतिशत) को ₹23.59 करोड़ की राशि के अस्वीकार्य लाभ का भुगतान किया गया था क्योंकि पी.एम.- किसान के तहत लाभ के लिए आवेदन में कट-ऑफ तिथि अर्थात् 1 फरवरी 2019 को लाभार्थी की आयु को संज्ञान में नहीं लिया गया था।

विफल और लंबित भुगतानों के कारण राज्य के लाभार्थियों को ₹50:48 करोड़ का हस्तांतरण नहीं किया जा सका जो दर्शाता है कि विभाग द्वारा आवश्यक और विवरण को अद्यतन करना शेष था। इसमें यह भी कहा गया है कि बैंक खाते से संबंधित विसंगतियों के कारण पी. एफ.एम.एस. द्वारा 67.535 लाभार्थियों के आवेदन अस्वीकृत कर दिए गए थे जो इस तथ्य के कारण थीं कि - (i). राज्य के डी.बी.टी. पोर्टल पर बैंक खाता विवरणों की जाँच की सुविधा नहीं थी और (ii). राज्य नोडल अधिकारी ने इस तथ्य को केंद्र सरकार के संज्ञान में नहीं लाया था।

175 लाभार्थियों से संबंधित ₹22.62 लाख के योजना लाभ अन्य व्यक्तियों के बैंक खातों में हस्तांतरित किए गए थे, जो लाभार्थियों के बैंक खाते के विवरण की शुद्धता सुनिश्चित करने के मौजूदा तंत्र में कमजोरी की पुष्टि करते हैं। राशि की वसूली किया जाना अभी तक बाकी (

नवंबर 2021 तक ) था । 10 नमूना- जाँचित जिलों में से छः में, डी.ए.ओ. द्वारा राज्य नोडल कार्यालय को भुगतान रोकने के आग्रह के बावजूद, 138 लाभार्थियों को ₹6.96 लाख का भुगतान किया गया था।

अपात्र 67,851 लाभार्थियों से वसूली योग्य ₹62.67 करोड़ के विरुद्ध लगभग ₹5.00 करोड़ (आठ प्रतिशत) वसूल किया गया (फरवरी 2022 तक) था और इसे अभी तक भारत सरकार को हस्तांतरित किया जाना शेष था क्योंकि समाशोधन प्रक्रिया पूरी नहीं हुई थी। समर्पित पी.एम.यू. की स्थापना न करने के कारण बिहार सरकार 2018-21 की अवधि के लिए भारत सरकार से ₹9.48 करोड़ प्राप्त नहीं कर सकी। पुनः, समर्पित पी.एम.यू. के अभाव ने योजना की प्रभावी निगरानी को प्रभावित किया।

योजना के प्रारम्भ (फरवरी 2019 ) से अगस्त 2021 तक अर्थात् 31 माहों के दौरान केवल 9,408 शिकायतों (23 प्रतिशत) का निवारण किया गया, जबकि सितंबर 2021 से नवंबर 2021 (तीन माह ) के दौरान शेष 30,674 (77 प्रतिशत) शिकायतों का निवारण किया गया। संबंधित अभिलेखों के अभाव में यह सत्यापित नहीं किया जा सका कि लाभार्थियों की 30,674 लंबित शिकायतों, जिन्हें निष्पादित इंगित किया गया था, का निवारण वास्तव में किया गया। साथ ही, विभिन्न अधिकारियों ने शिकायत मामलों का सत्यापन नहीं किया गया था ।

योजना के प्रारम्भ से कम से कम एक किस्त प्राप्त करने वाले लाभार्थियों की संख्या की तुलना में लाभार्थियों की संख्या में कुल 1,30,492 की कमी पाई गई। यद्यपि, कृषि विभाग ने लाभार्थियों की संख्या में कमी के कारणों का विश्लेषण नहीं किया। वहीं आवेदनों के निष्पादन में 124 दिनों (एक तिमाही) से अधिक के विलंब के कारण संभावित लाभार्थियों को 92 लाख रुपए का भुगतान नहीं किया जा सका था। <https://news4nation.com/news/big-disclosure-in-cag-report-farmers-of-bihar-did-not-get-the-benefit-of-3-443-crores-of-kisan-samman-nidhi-876581>

**12. बिहार: कार, बाइक और ई-रिक्शा से ढोए गए लाखों टन रेत! CAG की रिपोर्ट में सामने आया घोटाला ([samacharnama.com](http://samacharnama.com)) 17 December 2022**

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (सीएजी) ने अपनी ताजा रिपोर्ट में बिहार में बड़े पैमाने पर अवैध रेत खनन का पदार्पाश किया है और इसके तौर-तरीकों के बारे में चौंकाने वाले खुलासे किए हैं। इसमें कहा गया है कि रेत माफिया बिहार के विभिन्न जिलों में रेत के परिवहन के लिए मोटरसाइकिल, स्कूटर, एंबुलेंस, ई-रिक्शा, कार, बस, ट्रक के साथ-साथ अर्थ मूवर मशीनों का इस्तेमाल करते हैं। कैग की रिपोर्ट राज्य भूविज्ञान और खनन विभाग द्वारा जारी

किए गए ई-चालान पर आधारित है। इसमें राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (एनआईटी) पटना के छात्रों की भी मदद ली गई है। एनआईटी के छात्रों ने सीएजी को सौंपी अपनी रिपोर्ट में दावा किया है कि बिहार में रेत की निकासी के लिए चिन्हित हर घाट पर अवैध खनन हो रहा है और यह सिलसिला बढ़ता ही जा रहा है।

कैग ने 14 जिलों के ई-चालान का विश्लेषण किया और पाया कि 47 वाहन जो रेत के परिवहन के लिए उपयोग नहीं किए जा सकते थे, उन्हें विभाग की ओर से ई-चालान जारी किए गए थे। विभाग ने उन 47,000 वाहनों के 2.5 लाख ई-चालान जारी किए थे। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, बाइक और स्कूटर के 62,843 ई-चालान जारी किए गए और उन पर 6,44,000 टन रेत का परिवहन किया गया। 3,85,000 टन बालू के परिवहन के लिए ऑटो रिक्शा को 39,000 ई-चालान जारी किए गए। एंबुलेंस को कुल 10 ई-चालान जारी किए गए और उन पर 124 टन रेत का परिवहन किया गया। साथ ही कारों के 9,245 ई-चालान जारी किए गए और उनसे 87,000 टन रेत का परिवहन किया गया। यहां तक कि खनन विभाग ने भी 8 टन बालू परिवहन करने पर फायर ब्रिगेड की गाड़ियों के चालान काटे हैं। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार खनन विभाग ने एक दिन में बालू के परिवहन के लिए एक बाइक के 181 और कारों के 139 ई-चालान जारी किए। साथ ही ट्रकों, बसों, ट्रैक्टरों और अर्थ मूवर मशीनों के भी चालान काटे हैं। <https://samacharname.com/states/bihar-news/Bihar-Millions-of-tonnes-of-sand-carried-by-cars-bikes-and/cid9476476.htm>

**13. CAG रिपोर्ट से नीतीश सरकार की पिट गई भद्द ! इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों में शिक्षक-कर्मियों का घोर अभाव, 19 संस्थानों में 61% सीटें रह गई खाली (news4nation.com) 17 December 2022**

कैग रिपोर्ट से नीतीश सरकार की पूरी पोल ही खुल गई है। महालेखाकार की रिपोर्ट से खुलासा हुआ है कि तकनीकी शिक्षा के विकास को लेकर सरकार गंभीर नहीं है। सरकार सभी जिलों में इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज खोल रही है, लेकिन संसाधन उपलब्ध नहीं करा रही। इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों में शिक्षकों व कर्मियों की घोर कमी है। इस वजह से पचास प्रतिशत से अधिक सीटें खाली रह जा रहीं। यानी सरकार सिर्फ बिल्डिंग बनाने पर फोकस रही, शिक्षकों की बहाली को लेकर प्रयत्नशील नहीं है।

तकनीकी शिक्षा से मजाक, 61 फीसदी सीटें खाली

कैग रिपोर्ट में खुलासा किया गया है कि सूबे के 19 इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों को दूसरे संस्थानों से जोड़कर शुरू कराया गया है। वहां की स्थिति बेहद ही खराब है। इन 19 इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज जो 2019-20 से क्रियाशील किए गए थे, उनमें 4560 सीटों में 2784 सीटें रिक्त रह गईं। यानी 61% सीट पर नामांकन ही नहीं हुआ। जिन 19 इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों में 61% सीटें

खाली रह गई उनमें अररिया, अरवल, औरंगाबाद, भोजपुर, बक्सर, गोपालगंज, जहानाबाद, कैमूर, खगड़िया, किश नगंज, लखीसराय, मधुबनी, मुंगेर, नवादा, समस्तीपुर, शेखपुरा, शिवहर, सिवान तथा पश्चिम चंपारण शामिल हैं. लेखा परीक्षा में पाया गया कि सीटों के खाली रहने के पीछे आवश्यक मानव बल (शिक्षण तथा गैर शिक्षण कर्मचारियों) एवं आधारभूत संरचना के बिना संस्थान की स्थापना किया जाना रहा.

इंजीनियरिंग-पॉलिटेक्निक संस्थानों में संसाधन का घोर अभाव महालेखाकार की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि वही 2016-17 के फेज-6 इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों में 2016-17 से 2019-0 की अवधि के दौरान 13680 सीटों में 3500 ( 26%) सीट को भरा नहीं जा सका. जबकि पॉलिटेक्निक संस्थान की 8640 सीटों में 642 (7%) सीटें खाली रह गईं। अवसर बढ़े आगे पढ़ें के तहत स्थापित संस्थानों के संबंध में 31 इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज में शिक्षक कर्मचारियों में 90% की कमी और गैर शिक्षण कर्मचारियों में 98% की कमी थी. जबकि 15 पॉलिटेक्निक संस्थानों में शिक्षण कर्मचारियों में 80% और गैर शिक्षण कर्मचारियों में 96% की कमी थी. कैग ने यह रिपोर्ट फरवरी 2022 की जांच के आधार पर तैयार किया है। <https://news4nation.com/news/nitish-government-was-badly-beaten-by-the-cag-report-severe-shortage-of-teachers-and-personnel-in-engineering-colleges-713269>

#### 14. Kerala fiscal crisis: FM's statement & sifting the grain from the chaff ([newindianexpress.com](http://newindianexpress.com)) 19 December 2022

Kerala Finance Minister K N Balagopal recently informed the Legislative Assembly that the state is reeling under an unprecedented fiscal crisis and attributed the "distorted" fiscal policies of the Union Government, the havoc caused by Covid-19 and recurring natural disasters as reasons for it.

He chose to add that the reasons contributing to the crisis are beyond the control of the state. However, the Minister failed to mention anything about the role of fiscal policies and fiscal management of the state government on the crisis.

Kerala has been experiencing a perpetual and acute fiscal crisis and the crisis is multi-dimensional. The contributory factors include; the inability to increase the state's own resources, persistent use of borrowed funds for meeting revenue deficit, excessive increase in salary, pension and other items of revenue expenditure, fiscal extravagance in spending on many items, under-reporting of debt, off-budget borrowing for meeting revenue expenditure and so on. The unsound fiscal policies pursued and poor fiscal management by the successive governments in the state are the basic causes for the crisis.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India's (CAG) State Finances Audit Report of Kerala for 2020-21 presents a dismal picture about the state finances for the previous five years from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

The state was not able to achieve the revenue deficit, fiscal deficit, and debt Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) targets stipulated as per Kerala Fiscal Responsibility Act (KFR Act) for the above five years. The only exception is the achievement of fiscal deficit for 2019-20.

The CAG has calculated the overall debt of Kerala including off-budget borrowing as Rs. 3,24,855 crore in 2020-21 (Debt GSDP ratio 39.87 per cent). This is an excessive and unsustainable level of public debt of the state by any fiscal norms.

The CAG's preliminary accounts for the financial year 2021-22 also give an alarming fiscal situation of the state. Accordingly, the total revenue receipts of the state comprising tax revenue, non-tax revenue and grants-in-aid contributions of the Centre was Rs 1,16,546 crore in 2021-22. Of this, Rs 42,982 crore is the share of union taxes and grant-in-aid from the Central Government. It accounts for 37 per cent of the total revenue receipts. The total revenue deficit is Rs 26,582 crore. For meeting this revenue deficit and other items of expenditure, the state borrowed Rs 42,786 crore in 2021-22.

A disturbing development in revenue expenditure during 2021-22 is the huge increase in salary and pension due to its revision once in five years. The salary expenditure increased from Rs 28,763 crore in 2020-21 to 45,585 crore in 2021-22 (58 per cent) and pension expenditure increased from 18,943 crores to 26,898 crore (42 per cent). The net additional financial commitment created for the above two items was Rs 24,777 crore. This is a major factor which pushed the state to the present acute and unprecedented crisis.

It is a fact that natural disasters and the spread of Covid-19 had severely affected the state finances. Natural disasters such as the devastating floods and landslides during 2018 and 2019 have resulted in the unprecedented dislocation of people, destruction of houses, loss of property, damage of public infrastructure such as roads and bridges and loss of livelihood of lakhs of people.

The post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) had estimated the total losses of the floods of 2018 was around Rs 26,720 crore and total recovery needs as Rs 31,000 crore. The state was forced to spend a lot of funds for the rehabilitation, relief, repair of damaged assets, compensation of damaged properties and reconstruction of infrastructural items.

The spread of Covid-19 in the state since March 2020 has also created a health and economic crisis. Even after two and a half years, the state's economy has not returned to the pre-Covid level. The pandemic has resulted in a large fall in the state's own taxes, non-tax revenue and the state share of union taxes. The state was forced to spend a lot of funds on measures related to containing the spread of the pandemic, improving public medical facilities, treatment of Covid patients, testing, running quarantine centres, and community kitchens, purchase of medicines and equipment, distribution of food kits, vaccination etc.

Coming to the issue of "distorted" policies of the Union Government, major items under this head are a reduction of Rs 6716 crore in revenue deficit grant from the Centre compared to the previous year, a reduction in state borrowing limit by Rs. 24,639 crore and loss of at least Rs 9000 crore in the current year due to stoppage of compensations on goods and 3 service tax (GST). The revenue deficit grants are given as per the recommendations of the Union Finance Commission to states to tide over the revenue deficit and improve their fiscal situation. It is a grant and not an item of central resource to be transferred to the state. The 15th Union Finance Commission has recommended a revenue deficit grant of Rs 53,137 crore for four years

between 2020-21 and 2023-24 to Kerala. The state government has received an amount of Rs 39,605 crore till July 2022. The receipt of this amount has considerably helped the state during the Covid-19 period.

The borrowing limit of a state is fixed as per the KFR Act passed by the state and the CAG's audit on the amount borrowed. In the case of borrowing, the CAG has found under-reporting and asked the state to treat certain items of out-of-budget borrowing as regular borrowing. But the state government is not agreeing to this view. As CAG is the constitutional authority in these matters, one has no other option other than accepting the interpretation of CAG. One cannot consider the stoppage of payment of GST compensation to states after the introduction of GST for five years as a "distorted" policy of the Union Government. In fact, there is no evidence to support the view that the Centre's policies contributed to the crisis. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/web-only/2022/dec/18/kerala-fiscal-crisis-fms-statement-sifting-the-grain-from-the-chaff-2529445.html>

**15. Rajasthan: Gehlot defends old pension scheme as a social security measure** ([thehindu.com](http://thehindu.com)) 17 Dec 2022

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday defended his government's move to restore the old pension scheme (OPS) for the government employees, saying it was an important social security measure, which would protect the retired officials in their old age. Mr. Gehlot said the employees with the OPS coverage had contributed immensely to the nation's development.

The Central agencies had started criticising the OPS after the results of the Assembly election in Himachal Pradesh were announced, as the restoration of the OPS was a major issue in the poll campaign, Mr. Gehlot said at a press conference here, on the completion of four years of the Congress government in the State.

While affirming that the State governments were empowered to take a decision on the pensions payable out of the Consolidated Fund of the State, Mr. Gehlot said the Central government and the Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority (PFRDA) had refused to refund the accumulated corpus of Rajasthan, deposited under the National Pension System (NPS) introduced in 2004.

"We will fight it out... The Centre cannot withhold the corpus indefinitely. We will certainly give the OPS benefit to the government employees who joined the service on or after January 1, 2004. In fact, the OPS payment has already been approved for 238 superannuated employees," Mr. Gehlot said.

With the OPS becoming a new political battleground between the non-BJP ruled States and the Centre, Himachal Pradesh is the latest State after Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Punjab, which has decided to replace NPS with the OPS. Mr. Gehlot said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was against the OPS since the beginning and the BJP had rejected the Himachal leadership's plea to allow its implementation before the election.

**Decision on sound legal footing**

Mr. Gehlot said the State government was within its power to take a decision on the pensions as per Entry 42 in the State List, under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. The decision for bringing back the OPS was based on a sound legal footing, as the Legislature of a State had

the exclusive power under Article 246 of the Constitution to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the State List, he added.

The Chief Minister said the standing committee appointed after a debate in the Lok Sabha on the PFRDA, had reported about unrest among the labour and employees' unions against the NPS, as its amount was very low. The CAG report in 2018 had termed the NPS unsuccessful in providing social and economic security, while the PFRDA had stated recently that about ₹1,600 crore invested in the stock market from the employees' contribution were on the verge of being lost, he said.

Mr. Gehlot urged the Prime Minister to formulate a social security policy for the differently-abled persons, senior citizens and destitute women with the provision for a monthly pension of ₹2,000 to ₹3,000. He said there was no anti-incumbency against the Congress government in Rajasthan, as most of the flagship schemes and budgetary plans had extended benefits to the people. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/rajasthan-gehlot-defends-old-pension-scheme-as-a-social-security-measure/article66275416.ece>

**16. BSP: 40 करोड़ का पौधा, बसपा सरकार में हुआ बड़ा घोटाला? 10 साल बाद इलाहाबाद हाईकोर्ट ने जानिए क्या आदेश दिया** ([navbharattimes.indiatimes.com](http://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com)) 18 Dec 2022

बांदा: बुंदेलखंड के 7 जनपदों में तत्कालीन बसपा सरकार (BSP Government) ने मनरेगा के तहत 10 करोड़ रुपये खर्च कर पौधारोपण का दावा किया गया था। इस पर आरटीआई से जानकारी हासिल करके पौधारोपण में घोटाले का आरोप लगाते हुए आरटीआई एक्टिविस्ट आशीष सागर दीक्षित ने इलाहाबाद हाईकोर्ट में जनहित याचिका दायर की थी। इस पर हाईकोर्ट ने वन विभाग से पौधारोपण का सैटेलाइट सर्वे तलब किया है। वर्ष 2011-12 में सीएजी की ऑडिट रिपोर्ट में बुंदेलखंड में 40 करोड़ रूपए खर्च करके 10 करोड़ पौधारोपण कराने में घोटाले की बात कही गई। इसी रिपोर्ट को आधार मानते हुए आरटीआई एक्टिविस्ट ने इलाहाबाद हाईकोर्ट (Allahabad High Court) में जनहित याचिका दायर की थी।

जनहित याचिका पर सुनवाई चल रही है। 13 दिसंबर को सुनवाई के दौरान वन विभाग द्वारा दाखिल की गई रिपोर्ट पर हाई कोर्ट ने आपत्ति जताते हुए पौधारोपण की सैटेलाइट रिपोर्ट दाखिल करने के आदेश दिए हैं। मुख्य न्यायाधीश न्यायमूर्ति राजेश बिंदल और न्यायाधीश जेजे मुनीर ने वन विभाग की दाखिल की गई रिपोर्ट पर भी आपत्ति का जाहिर की है। साथ ही सैटेलाइट सर्वे की रिपोर्ट 24 फरवरी 2023 को पेश करने को कहा है।

### कोर्ट से नहीं बच पाएंगे भ्रष्ट अफसर

इस बारे में आरटीआई एक्टिविस्ट याचिकाकर्ता आशीष सागर दीक्षित का कहना है कि बुंदेलखंड में हरियाली के नाम पर अपनी जेब भरने वाले अधिकारी भले ही जांच से बच निकले हो, लेकिन अदालत से नहीं बच पाएंगे। उन्होंने कहा कि मैंने न्यायालय से बीते एक दशक में कराए गए

पौधारोपण की सीबीआई से जांच कराने की मांग की है। यह भी कहा कि सीएजी ऑडिट रिपोर्ट में बसपा सरकार में मनरेगा से विशेष अभियान में कराए गए 10 करोड़ पौधारोपण और 40 करोड़ के खर्च यानी घोटाले की जांच होना चाहिए। <https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/state/uttar-pradesh/banda/bsp-mayawati-government-40-crore-rupees-plantation-allahabad-high-court-order-satellite-survey-bundelkhand/articleshow/96316520.cms>

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

**17. Gross direct tax mop-up grows 26 pc to Rs 13.63 lakh cr; net collections near 80 pc of Budget target for FY23** ([financialexpress.com](https://www.financialexpress.com)) December 18, 2022

The gross direct tax collections have grown 26 per cent to over Rs 13.63 lakh crore so far this fiscal, aided by TDS deductions and healthy corporate advance tax mop-up, as per an official statement.

After adjusting for refunds, the net direct tax collection so far this fiscal stands at Rs 11.35 lakh crore, which is about 80 per cent of the full-year gross Budget target.

The Budget had estimated gross direct tax collection of Rs 14.20 lakh crore this financial year. Tax on corporate and individual income makes up for direct taxes.

Refunds worth about Rs 2.28 lakh crore have been issued till December 17, 2022, a growth of 68 per cent over the year-ago period.

The gross collection of Rs 13,63,649 crore includes Corporation Tax (CIT) at Rs 7.25 lakh crore and Personal Income Tax (PIT) including Securities Transaction Tax (STT) at Rs 6.35 lakh crore, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement.

The robust tax mop-up shows the economy rebounded from pandemic lows with rise in earnings of both companies and individuals.

The mop-up includes advance tax collection of Rs 5.21 lakh crore, Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) of Rs 6.44 lakh crore, and self-assessment tax of Rs 1.40 lakh crore.

The advance tax collection for the first, second and third quarters of the current fiscal at Rs 5.21 lakh crore showed a growth of 12.83 per cent. This includes CIT at Rs 3.97 lakh crore and PIT at Rs 1.23 lakh crore.

As per the CBDT statement, so far this fiscal, the net collections from income and corporate taxes are at Rs 11.35 lakh crore, 19.81 per cent higher than the Rs 9,47,959 crore collected in the corresponding period of the preceding financial year (2021-22).

This includes Rs 6.06 lakh crore and Rs 5.26 lakh crore of CIT and PIT collections, respectively.

The CBDT further said there has been a remarkable increase in the speed of processing of income tax returns filed during the current fiscal, with almost 96.5 per cent of the duly verified ITRs having been processed till December 17.

“This has resulted in faster issue of refunds with almost a 109 per cent increase in the number of refunds issued in the current financial year,” it said. <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/gross-direct-tax-mop-up-grows-26-pc-to-rs-13-63-lakh-cr-net-collections-near-80-pc-of-budget-target-for-fy23/2918599/>

## **18. Cyber attacks on healthcare sector rising ([thehindubusinessline.com](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com)) December 19, 2022**

The cyber attack on the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) should set alarm-bells ringing, and loudly. Possibly for the first time, people witnessed the trouble that could be caused if someone, located in another country, for example, hacked the server of one of India’s premier institutions.

It’s like the opening scene in a Hitchcock film, where the audience gets a hint of trouble that could unravel later. Only, this is real life and it deals with real people — their lives, their data, finances, and so on. And, the trouble-maker could be a state-sponsored or non-state actor, not playing by the rules as we know it.

In 2020, two leading domestic drugmakers faced cyber attacks, barely weeks apart. According to media reports, healthcare in India faced about 1.9 million cyber attacks this year, till late November. That’s just India, and reported cases in healthcare.

Shifting geographies, this month, the American Hospital Association raised the issue of cyber security and support required from their government when faced with cyber attacks from hostile countries, that could hold patient data to ransom etc. This is not just a public health concern but a national security threat, they explain. In August, the UK witnessed a cyber attack on the NHS software that handled ambulances, patient appointments, emergency prescriptions, according to reports.

Drug regulators caution medical device makers and users on the pitfalls of online connectivity and outline measures to protect from cyber threats.

But there’s no putting the digital genie back in the bottle, as institutions in India and abroad push ahead with digital plans. However, there is a need to pause and consider multiple layers of security or even hybrid systems (involving standalone or manual systems) to protect patient data or financial details — for instance, from troublemakers equipped with the skills to pull the plug and harm an institution and country, in the process. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/cyber-attacks-on-healthcare-sector-rising/article66278678.ece>