

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/AUDIT REPORTS (24.11.2022)

1. CAG audit on BMC's Covid expenditure set to continue till December (indianexpress.com) November 24, 2022

A DAY after a team from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India met senior BMC officials in connection to a probe into the Rs 12,000 crore the civic body had spent during the Covid-19 pandemic, civic officials said on Tuesday that the audit will continue till the end of December.

The officials added that the audit had started last week and on Tuesday, the CAG team held an introductory meeting with BMC officials. On Monday, the team had met senior civic officials, including BMC chief and administrator Iqbal Singh Chahal.

“Monday’s meeting was like an ‘entry’ conference. Whenever there is a CAG audit, the auditors meet with the respective department heads along with commissioners and ward officers. The auditors have given their inputs and whatever details they are looking into and we have assured them our cooperation,” said a civic official.

The official added, “The auditors have told us about their schedule... the audit will continue till end of December. It will take place only on weekdays.”

The official maintained that the civic administration may reach out to certain officials who have been transferred or have retired. “The CAG team is carrying out an audit, so it is possible that a file or proposal that was cleared by a respective official two years ago might have been transferred to a different department today or the official may have retired... the new officer in charge would not know about the details. Therefore, to avoid ambiguity and to fast-track the process, we are reaching out to retired and transferred officials.”

The visit comes three weeks after the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis government, on October 31, ordered a CAG audit into expenditures worth Rs 12,000 crore made by BMC during the pandemic.

Some of the expenses that would be audited include the money spent on procurement of medicines, medical equipment in three hospitals and for setting up Covid-19 care facilities. The BJP had alleged that the contract for running the Covid-19 care facilities were awarded in a non-transparent manner. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/cag-audit-on-bmcs-covid-expenditure-set-to-continue-till-december-8286091/>

2. CAG audit of BMC to go on till end of December (timesofindia.indiatimes.com) November 24, 2022

Mumbai: A day after officials from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) met civic officials including civic chief Iqbal Singh Chahal at BMC headquarters, senior officials in know of the matter said the audit will continue till end of December.

The official also maintained that BMC may also reach out to certain officials who have been transferred now or have retired in a bid to cooperate with the CAG team.

“It will be crucial to get statements of anyone whose department is being audited. In case of the person not in that office anymore, we shall call and ask them to cooperate,” said an official. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/cag-audit-of-bmc-to-go-on-till-end-of-dec/articleshow/95727759.cms?from=mdr>

3. Mumbai: Audit report of BMC's Rs 12,000 cr contract awarded during peak COVID expected by December ([freepressjournal.in](https://www.freepressjournal.in)) November 24, 2022

The 25-member team—from the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)—will complete its audit of the BMC's Rs 12,000 crore contract, awarded during the peak of Covid, by December end. Transactions of at least 10 departments are expected to be probed.

On Nov 22, The Free Press Journal had reported the meeting between the CAG team and civic chief IS Chahal. The joint discussion is considered a crucial step in the audit procedure as both the sides present their point of views.

Talking to The FPJ, BMC Additional Commissioner (Project) P Velrasu said, “There are five teams, with five members each, of the CAG working on the audit procedure. The audit started 4-5 days ago. (But) as per procedure, an opening conference needs to be held before the CAG audit. (However), we completed this procedure on Tuesday.”

Alike Tuesday when Mr Chahal told that he had asked civic officials to cooperate with the CAG team, Mr Velrasu also reiterated the pledge. “We have told officers who were transferred to different departments to explain details to the CAG teams even though they are currently working in the different departments. We will give as much information required to the audit team,” he underscored.

The CAG audit comes after the Chief Minister's announcement of probing transactions between November 28, 2020, and February 28, 2022; the time period when Maha Vikas Aghadi was in power. Some of the cases under the scanner include doling out contracts to a medical firm owned by the father of a civic officer and hiring a blacklisted company to set up oxygen plants. <https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/bmcs-rs12k-cr-contract-audit-report-by-december>

4. Ranchi: AG Office raises awareness about CAG during Audit Week (lagatar24.com) November 23, 2022

The Office of the Principal Accountant General organised a gathering on Wednesday to increase awareness about the institution of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and for sharing knowledge and information with the stakeholders.

Dr Rameshwar Oraon, Finance Minister, Govt. of Jharkhand; and Saryu Roy, Chairman, COPU, Jharkhand Assembly were present on the occasion as guests of honour.

MLA Saryu Rai said that the role of CAG as a constitutional body is clearly defined. But it will be meaningful only when other constitutional institutions work with responsibility. The public money that the government spends should have accounting maintenance and auditing.

“It comes to the fore during accounting maintenance, whether the responsible institutions are using that amount properly or not. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) examines all these works. Saryu said that the officers from the secretary down should be aware of the expenses. But today there is a proper lack of it,” he added.

MLA Rai further said that earlier the Finance Department used to conduct internal audit regarding income and expenditure. For this, there are posts of financial officers in all the departments.

He further added, “Those who were not officers of the department. Rather there were its experts. This made it easier for the CAG to prepare its report. But he is not now. This shows the laxity of the government.”

Furthermore, the MLA also gave advice to the officials present on the occasion. He said, “Rules should be made from the assembly that the government should tell the house what happened on the assurance it had given between the two sessions. This will increase the responsibility on the officers. Due to this, the officials will take seriously the report of the CAG and the action of the assembly committees.”

He further stated, “Even the officials do not know anything about the works of the corporate world. Departments should create a separate cell for this.”

Finance Minister Dr Rameshwar Oraon talked about in 20 years that the CAG has a very important role in maintaining good governance in the department. He admitted that the officers do not take the CAG reports seriously.

However, while being the Finance Minister, he said he has started the work of redressing the objections raised in the CAG reports. The departments were not audited in the last 20 years. When he got the work started on this, it was found that in the last 20 years, irregularities of Rs 9737.57 crores (about 10,000 crores) took place. This audit was done by the State Audit Association, he commented.

Regarding the suggestion given by Saryu Rai, Dr Oraon said that the Directorate has been formed by the Finance Department, in which auditors of all the departments have been included. With this, all the departments will now be audited. Due to this, the irregularities will end.

The Accountant General (Audit), Anup Francis Dungdung and the guests threw light on the functioning of the institution of the C&AG of India and on the achievements of the Office of the Accountant General.

Officers and staff of the Office(s) of Accountant General (Audit), Jharkhand, Ranchi, Principal Accountant General (A&E), Jharkhand, Ranchi, Director General of Audit (Steel), Ranchi, Director General of Audit (Coal), Kolkata, Ranchi Branch and Director General of Audit (Central), Lucknow, Ranchi Branch, were present during the event.

Notably, earlier in the month, the Office celebrated the Audit Diwas on November 16 to commemorate the historical origin of the institution of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and to give an impetus to years of transparency and accountability and contribution to good governance by the institution.

This marked the beginning of Audit Week, which is being celebrated across India during November 18-24, 2022. <https://lagatar24.com/ranchi-ag-office-raises-awareness-about-cag-during-audit-week/133237/>

5. लोगों में जागरूकता बढ़ाने को लेकर Audit Week का आयोजन, वित्त मंत्री डॉ रामेश्वर उरांव ने की शिरकत (prabhatkhabar.com) November 23, 2022

Jharkhand News: देश के नियंत्रक महालेखापरीक्षक (Comptroller and Auditor General-CAG) संस्थान के ऐतिहासिक उदगम और सुशासन में इसके योगदान तथा वर्षों से पारदर्शिता तथा जवाबदेही को बढ़ावा देने के उद्देश्य से ऑडिट दिवस (Audit Week) मनाया जा रहा है. पूरे देश में आगामी 24 नवंबर तक आयोजित ऑडिट दिवस के माध्यम से लोगों के CAG के बारे में जागरूकता बढ़ाने और स्टे कहोल्डर के बीच पारस्परिक क्रिया कलाप पर जोर दिया गया.

वित्त मंत्री डॉ रामेश्वर उरांव और विधायक सरयू राय हुए शामिल

रांची के डोरंडा स्थित पलाश सभागार में आयोजित ऑडिट सप्ताह में वित्त मंत्री डॉ रामेश्वर उरांव और लोक उपक्रम समिति के सभापति सरयू राय उपस्थित थे. इस मौके पर झारखंड राज्य के गठन के बाद महालेखाकार झारखंड ऑफिस की उपलब्धियों को बताया गया. कहा गया कि महालेखाकार कार्यालय को AG ऑफिस के नाम से जाना जाता है. इस ऑडिट सप्ताह में महालेखाकार (लेखा परीक्षा) अनूप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग तथा उपस्थित गणमान्य अतिथियों द्वारा देश के नियंत्रक महालेखा परीक्षक संस्थान के कार्यकलाप एवं महालेखाकार (लेखा परीक्षा) कार्यालय की उपलब्धियों के संबंध में अपने विचार व्यक्त किये गये.

महालेखाकार झारखंड ऑफिस का ऑडिट रिपोर्ट

राज्य के वित्त (Finance), प्राप्ति लेखापरीक्षा (Receipt Audit), वाणिज्यिक लेखापरीक्षा (Commercial Audit) और सिविल लेखापरीक्षा (Civil Audit) पर राज्य का लेखापरीक्षा रिपोर्ट भारत के नियंत्रक और महालेखापरीक्षक द्वारा तैयार किया जाता है. राज्य स्वायत्त निकायों (State Autonomous Bodies-SAB) की अलग लेखापरीक्षा रिपोर्ट (Separate Audit Report-SAR) भी तैयार की जाती है. केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं (Centrally Sponsored Schemes-CSS) के लिए भारत के नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक की केंद्रीय लेखापरीक्षा रिपोर्ट के लिए सामग्री झारखंड से संबंधित प्रदान की जाती है.

8800 करोड़ के राजस्व की हानि

राजस्व क्षेत्र पर भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक की रिपोर्ट (झारखंड सरकार की रिपोर्ट संख्या 4 वर्ष 2016) 31 मार्च, 2016 के मध्यम से यह बतलाया गया कि सरकारी भूमि का सही प्रबंधन नहीं होने से 1971-72 से 2014-15 की अवधि में 8800 करोड़ के राजस्व से सरकार को वंचित रहना पड़ा है. इनमें मुख्य मुद्दा सलामी लगा न, उपकर का वसूली नहीं किया जाना, स्टील लिमिटेड, जमशेदपुर द्वारा लीज राइट दूसरे कंपनी को स्थानांतरित करना, पट्टे का नवीनीकरण नहीं कराया जाना, भूमि पर अतिक्रमण, भूमि/प्लैट को अवैध तरीके से बिक्री करना मुख्य है. <https://www.prabhatkhabar.com/state/jharkhand/ranchi/audit-week->

6. Jharkhand

News: महालेखाकार की रिपोर्ट को गंभीरता से नहीं लेते अफसर, विधायक सरयू राय का आरोप (jagran.com) 23 Nov 2022

सार्वजनिक उपक्रम की समिति के चेयरमैन सरयू राय ने कहा कि सरकार को महालेखाकार की आडिट रिपोर्ट पर गंभीर होना पड़ेगा। ताकि उनकी आपत्ति पर संबंधित विभाग के अधिकारियों पर जिम्मेदारी तय की जा सके। उन्होंने कहा कि जब महालेखाकार की रिपोर्ट के बाद उक्त समिति संबंधित विभाग के सचिवों को बुलाती है, तो वे ऐसे अधिकारी को भजे देते हैं, जिन्हें संबंधित आपत्ति के बारे में पूरी जानकारी नहीं होती है। नियमानुसार समिति के बुलावे पर संबंधित विभाग के सचिव को ही उपस्थित होना है, लेकिन कनीय अधिकारी को इसके लिए अधिकृत कर दिया जाता है। अगर सचिव नहीं आते हैं तो कम से कम ऐसे अधिकारी को समिति के समक्ष भेजे जिन्हें विभाग की ओर से जवाब देने का अधिकार और आपत्ति के बारे में पूरी जानकारी हो। ताकि जिम्मेदारी तय हो सके।

संवैधानिक दायित्वों का निर्वहन नहीं कर पा रही समिति

सरयू राय प्रधान महालेखाकार कार्यालय की ओर से आडिट दिवस पर आयोजित कार्यक्रम में लोगों को संबोधित कर रहे थे। उन्होंने कहा ऐसा नहीं होने के वजह से समिति अपने संवैधानिक दायित्वों का निर्वहन नहीं कर पाती है। उन्होंने सरकार को सुझाव देते हुए कहा कि दो विधानसभा सत्र के बीच में सीएजी की आपत्ति पर संबंधित विभाग के अधिकारी निराकरण करते हुए एक्शन टेकेन रिपोर्ट तैयार कर लें। जिस पर विधानसभा सत्र के दौरान चर्चा की जा सके। कहा कि संवैधानिक संस्था कैग की भूमिका स्पष्ट है। लेकिन यह अभी सार्थक होगा। जब संवैधानिक संस्थाएं जिम्मेदारी के साथ काम करें। सरकार जो पैसा खर्च करती है, उसका लेखा संधारण (एकाउंटिंग मैनेटेंनेंस) और लेखा परीक्षक (आडिट) होना चाहिए। इससे पता चलेगा कि राशि का सही उपयोग हो रहा या नहीं। सचिव से लेकर नीचे तक के अधिकारियों को खर्चों की जानकारी होनी चाहिए।

इंटरनल आडिट टीम बनाने का हो रहा प्रयास : रामेश्वर उरांव

इस दौरान राज्य के वित्त मंत्री रामेश्वर उरांव ने कहा कि सीएजी एक संवैधानिक संस्था है। सुशासन बनाए रखने के लिए कैग का अहम भूमिका है। उन्होंने माना कि अधिकारी सीएजी रिपोर्ट को गंभीरता से नहीं लेते हैं। उन्होंने सीएजी रिपोर्ट की आपत्तियों पर निराकरण का काम शुरू किया है। 20 सालों में विभागों का आडिट नहीं हुआ। जब उन्होंने इस पर काम शुरू कराया, तो पता चला कि 20 सालों में 9737.57 करोड़ रुपये की अनियमितता हुई। उनकी आपत्ति का समय से निराकरण नहीं किया जाता है। इसलिए सरकार की ओर से एक इंटरनल आडिट टीम बनाने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है। जिसमें सभी विभागों के विशेषज्ञों को रखा जाएगा। ताकि आडिट को और मजबूती प्रदान की जा सके। यह टीम दो-तीन साल पर सभी विभागों की आडिट रिपोर्ट तैयार करेगी। जिसकी वजह से सीएजी टीम को आडिट करने में परेशानी का सामना नहीं करना पड़ेगा। इस दौरान महालेखाकार अनूप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने कहा कि समय के साथ सीएजी की भूमिका अहम हो गई है। वित्तीय वर्ष 2018-19 से लेकर 2021-22 तक सीएजी ने 851 ईकाइयों और 135 सरकारी योजनाओं का आडिट किया है। सहित महालेखाकार कार्यालय के अधिकारी एवं कर्मचारी उपस्थित थे। <https://www.jagran.com/jharkhand/ranchi-jharkhand-mla->

7. ऑडिट वीक: सीएजी के संगठन के बारे में जागरूकता पर कार्यक्रम का वित्त मंत्री रामेश्वर उरांव और सरयू राय ने किया उद्घाटन (kashishnews.com)

November 23, 2022

रांची: पूरे देश में 18 नवंबर से 24 नवंबर तक लेखापरीक्षा सप्ताह के रूप में मनाया जा रहा है। आजपलाश सभागार डोरंडा में सीएजी के संगठन के बारे में जागरूकता बढ़ाने और प्रमुख हितधारकों के बीच ज्ञान साझा करने हेतु हितधारकों के साथ पारस्परिक क्रिया कलाप का आयोजन किया गया। वित्त मंत्री रामेश्वर उरांव और सभापति लोक उपक्रम समिति सरयू राय ने दीप जलाकर कार्यक्रम का उद्घाटन किया।

महालेखाकार ऑडिट अनूप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने सभी अतिथियों का स्वागत पुष्प देकर किया। महालेखाकार ऑडिट अनूप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने संस्थान के कार्यकलाप एवं प्रधान महालेखाकार कार्यालय की उपलब्धियों के संबंध में अपने विचार रखे।

वहीं विधायक सभापति लोक उपक्रम समिति सरयू राय ने अपने विचार रखते हुए कहा कि लोक धन से जो आय होती है उसका लेखा संधारण होना चाहिए। <https://kashishnews.com/news/audit-week-959119>

8. वित्त मंत्री ने माना - कैग रिपोर्ट को सीरियसली नहीं लेते अधिकारी (lagatar.in) November 23, 2022

Ranchi: नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) के ऑडिट सप्ताह दिवस कार्यक्रम में पहुंचे जमशेदपुर के निर्दलीय विधायक सरयू राय ने कहा कि विधानसभा समितियों की बैठक में विभागीय सचिव आना ही पंसद नहीं करते। वे अपने अधिकृत अधिकारियों को बैठकों में भेजते हैं। इससे उन्हें कोई ऐतराज नहीं। लेकिन जरूरी है कि नीचे के अधिकारियों को सचिव के बराबर विषयों की जानकारी हो। इससे विधानसभा की सार्थकता पर सवाल उठता है। इसी तरह विधानसभा समितियों के क्षेत्र भ्रमण में पता चलता है कि जिला के अधिकारियों को भी ऑडिट रिपोर्ट की जानकारी नहीं होती। कार्यक्रम में पहुंचे वित्त मंत्री डॉ रामेश्वर उरांव ने कहा कि पिछले 20 वर्षों में सरकार के विभागों में करीब 9737.57 करोड़ रुपए से संबंधित अनियमितता पायी गयी है। वित्त विभाग प्रयासरत है कि भविष्य में ऐसी अनियमितता दोबारा नहीं हो। कार्यक्रम में सरयू राय ने वित्त मंत्री को कई सुझाव दिए। इस पर वित्त विभाग द्वारा किए जा रहे कार्यों की जानकारी डॉ उरांव ने सरयू राय को दी। कार्यक्रम में कैग के महालेखाकार अनूप फ्रांसीसी डुंगडुंग, उपमहालेखाकार अजय कुमार सहित कैग के सभी अधिकारी और कर्मचारी उपस्थित थे।

अन्य संस्थाएं भी जिम्मेदारी के साथ काम करें- सरयू

सरयू राय ने कहा कि संवैधानिक संस्था के रूप में कैग की भूमिका स्पष्ट रूप से परिभाषित है। लेकिन यह तभी सार्थक होगा, जब अन्य संवैधानिक संस्थाएं जिम्मेदारी के साथ काम करें। पब्लिक का जो पैसा सरकार खर्च करती है, उसका लेखा संधारण (एकाउंटिंग मैनेटेंनेस) और लेखा परीक्षक (ऑडिटिंग) होना चाहिए। एकाउंटिंग मैनेटेंनेस के दौरान यह बात सामने आती है, जिम्मेदार संस्थाएं उस राशि का सही उपयोग कर रही है या नहीं। इन्हीं सब कामों की जांच नियंत्रक महालेखापरीक्षक (कैग) करता है। सरयू ने कहा कि सचि

व से लेकर नीचे तक के अधिकारियों को खर्चों की जानकारी होनी चाहिए. लेकिन आज इसका समुचित अभाव है.

आज विभागों में फाइनेंशियल ऑफिसर का पद ही नहीं

सरयू ने कहा कि आय-

व्यय को लेकर वित्त विभाग पहले आंतरिक अंकेक्षण कराता था. इसके लिए सभी विभागों में फाइनेंशियल ऑफिसर के पद होते हैं. जो विभाग के अधिकारी नहीं होते थे. बल्कि इसके विशेषज्ञ होते थे. इससे कैग को अपनी रिपोर्ट बनाने में आसानी होती थी. लेकिन वह अब नहीं है. इससे सरकार की शिथिलता का पता चलता है.

सरयू राय के सुझाव

विधानसभा से नियम बने कि सरकार सदन को बताए कि दो सत्र के बीच उसने जो आश्वासन दिया था, उस पर क्या हुआ. इससे अधिकारियों पर जिम्मेवारी बढ़ेगी. इससे कैग की रिपोर्ट और विधानसभा समितियों की कार्रवाई को अधिकारी गंभीरता से लेंगे.

कॉर्पोरेट जगत (कॉर्पोरेशन) के कामों का भी अधिकारियों को भी कुछ पता नहीं होता. विभागों को इसके लिए एक अलग कोषांग बनाना चाहिए.

20 सालों में विभागों का ऑडिट नहीं हुआ: डॉ उरांव

वित्त मंत्री डॉ रामेश्वर उरांव ने कहा कि सुशासन बनाए रखने के लिए कैग का अहम रोल है. उन्होंने माना कि अधिकारी कैग रिपोर्ट को सीरियसली नहीं लेते हैं. हालांकि वित्त मंत्री रहते हुए उन्होंने कैग रिपोर्ट की आपत्तियों पर निराकरण का काम शुरू किया है. बीते 20 सालों में विभागों का ऑडिट नहीं हुआ. जब उन्होंने इस पर काम शुरू करवाया, तो पता चला कि बीते 20 सालों में 9737.57 करोड़ (करीब 10,000 करोड़) रुपए की अनियमितता हुई. यह ऑडिट स्टेट ऑडिट एसोसिएशन के द्वारा की गयी.

विभागों के ऑडिट के लिए निदेशालय का गठन

सरयू राय के दिए सुझाव पर डॉ उरांव ने बताया कि वित्त विभाग द्वारा डॉयरेक्टोरेट (निदेशालय) का गठन किया गया है, जिसमें सभी विभाग के ऑडिटर शामिल किए गए हैं. इससे अब सभी विभागों का ऑडिट हो गा. अनियमितता खत्म होगी.

135 सरकारी योजनाओं का किया गया ऑडिट: महालेखाकार

कैग महालेखाकार अनूप फ्रांसीसी डुंगडुंग ने कहा कि समय के साथ कैग की भूमिका काफी बढ़ गयी है. आज कैग रिपोर्ट बनाने में उन्हें जगह दी जा रही है, जो नए-

नए इनोवेशन को बढ़ावा देते हैं. पिछले तीन वित्तीय वर्ष 2018-19 से लेकर 2021-

22 तक कैग द्वारा 851 ईकाइयों और 135 सरकारी योजनाओं का ऑडिट किया गया है. ऑडिट सप्ताह को लेकर उन्होंने कहा कि इस दौरान कई तरह के कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए गए. इसमें पेंटिंग प्रतियोगिता, वाद-विवाद प्रतियोगिता आदि शामिल हैं. <https://lagatar.in/finance-minister-agreed-officers-do-not-take-cag-report-seriously/>

9. छत्तीसगढ़ महालेखाकार के अधिकारियों ने प्रकरणों के निराकरण के लिए दिया मार्गदर्शन (hindi.oneindia.com) 23 Nov 2022

छत्तीसगढ़ शासन के सेवा निवृत्त होने वाले अधिकारियों-

कर्मचारियों के जी.पी.एफ. अंतिम भुगतान की कार्यवाही को त्वरित गति से निपटाने के लिए तथा कोषालयों और महालेखाकार कार्यालय के बीच बेहतर समन्वय और तालमेल बनाने को लेकर आज राजधानी रायपुर स्थित महालेखाकार कार्यालय में समस्त कोषालय अधिकारियों की कार्यशाला आयोजित की गई।

कार्यशाला में संचालक कोष लेखा एवं पेंशन, प्रधान महालेखाकार तथा राज्य के कोषालय अधिकारी शामिल हुए। कार्यशाला में राज्य शासन के सेवा निवृत्त होने वाले अधिकारियों-

कर्मचारियों के जी.पी.एफ. अंतिम भुगतान को त्वरित करने हेतु निर्देश दिए गए। संचालक कोष लेखा एवं पेंशन द्वारा सेवानिवृत्त होने वाले अधिकारी-

कर्मचारियों के जी.पी.एफ. प्रकरण अनिवार्य रूप से तीन माह पूर्व महालेखाकार कार्यालय को प्रेषित किया जाना सुनिश्चित करने के निर्देश दिए गए। कार्यशाला में प्रधान महालेखाकार कार्यालय एवं कोषालयों के बीच होने वाले समन्वयवहारों में आ रही कठिनाईयों एवं उसके निराकरण के संबंध में विस्तृत चर्चा की गई। कार्यशाला में प्रधान महालेखाकार (लेखा एवं हकदारी) श्री पी.सी. मांझी, प्रधान महालेखाकार (लेखा परीक्षा) श्री यशवंत कुमार, संचालक कोष, लेखा एवं पेंशन नीलकंठ टेकाम सहित अन्य अधिकारी मौजूद थे। यह भी जानना जरूरी है कि प्रधान महालेखाकार (लेखा एवं हकदारी) कार्यालय एवं प्रधान महालेखाकार (लेखा परीक्षा) कार्यालय द्वारा संयुक्त रूप से 21 नवम्बर से 25 नवम्बर 2022 तक ऑडिट सप्ताह आयोजित किया जा रहा है। <https://hindi.oneindia.com/news/chhattisgarh/the-officers-of-the-accountant-general-of-chhattisgarh-gave-guidance-for-the-disposal-of-cases-729595.html?story=2>

10. CAG HARYANA OFFICE CELEBRATES WEEKLONG AUDIT DIWAS. SPEAKER ATTENDS CELEBRATIONS (face2news.com) November 23, 2022

As part of the celebration, Accountant General (Audit), Haryana organised a discussion on increasing audit effectiveness on 22nd November 2022. Honourable Speaker, Haryana Vidhan Sabha, Shri Gian Chand Gupta, was the chief guest for the occasion, wherein Chairmen and members of Public Accounts Committee and Committee on Public Undertakings of Haryana Vidhan Sabha participated.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Gian Chand Gupta, said that CAG with its history of more than 160 years has been an important pillar of democracy ensuring accountability of departments to the legislature. He said that audit should study availability of manpower with various departments against actual requirement for the functions performed by respective departments.

Shri Aseem Goel, Chairman, Committee on Public Undertakings, said that audit should take up audit of corporations, which has substantial investment by Government but are running into losses. In case the corporations are not able to make a turnaround, audit should recommend their closure after careful study.

Shri Varun Chaudhary, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, said that there should be a mechanism to invite suggestions from People's representatives. There is a need to quicky

implement Audit Para Monitoring System to create efficiency in discussion of CAG's report. He also said that audit should create a structured mechanism to crowd source ideas and suggestions from the citizens during conduct of its audits.

Shri VS Ventanathan, Accountant General (Audit), Haryana, said that Public Accounts Committee and Committee on Public Undertakings of Haryana Vidhan Sabha are some of the most active committees across India. He said that office of AG would provide all the support in strengthening the accountability chain and would try in all earnest to implement the suggestions made during the discussion. <http://www.face2news.com/news/84192-cag-haryana-office-celebrates-weeklong-audit-diwas-speaker-attends-celebrations-.aspx>

11. Mangaluru blast case raises concerns over how Aadhaar is vulnerable to impersonation for terror activities ([news9live.com](https://www.news9live.com)) November 23, 2022

Bengaluru: An Aadhaar card found with the prime suspect of a low-intensity blast in Mangaluru sent the police on a wild goose chase to Karnataka's Hubballi and Tumakuru. Things took an interesting turn when the police found out that the owner of the Aadhaar card had lost it earlier and had no connection with the incident in Mangaluru.

The story

On Saturday, November 19, a low-intensity blast took place near Mangaluru's Nagori in the Kankanady Police Station limits. The blast, which was later termed an "act of terror" by the police, occurred in an autorickshaw that left the driver and the passenger injured.

Both were admitted to a hospital in Kankanady. They are currently undergoing treatment.

The police found a pressure cooker, batteries, a wired circuit and a probable detonator. Along with this, the police also found an Aadhaar card, which bore the name of one Premraj Hutagi.

Since the passenger had suffered nearly 40 per cent burn injuries, the Aadhaar card was an important clue to establishing the identity of the accused for investigating police officials.

What happened next?

Immediately, the police began to trace more details of Hutagi. The Aadhaar card mentioned Hutagi's residential address in Hubballi.

Soon, the Hubballi police reached his residence. When his parents were quizzed, the police found that Hutagi was in Tumakuru working as a Grade IV Track Maintainer for the South Western Railway (SWR) Bengaluru division.

Hutagi, who incidentally was celebrating his birthday on the day of the blast, was in for a shock when he received the phone call from the police officials.

"I wasn't expecting to receive a call from the police. When they inquired I told them that I had lost my Aadhaar card twice. The first time I lost it was nearly two years ago. I do not remember where and when exactly I lost it. It must have been when I was travelling on a bus. The second time I lost the Aadhaar card was nearly six months ago," Hutagi, 29, told News9.

He did not inform the police or file a First Information Report (FIR) as he could download a PDF version of the card from the Aadhaar (UIDAI) website.

The police later confirmed that Hutagi had nothing to do with the blast in Mangaluru. A day after the blast, i.e. on Sunday, the police identified the suspect as Mohammed Shariq, a native of Shivamogga's Thirthahalli.

While the Aadhaar card carried the name, address and other details of Hutagi, it had the photo of Shariq.

Shariq, 24, was a radicalised youth "influenced and inspired" by a terrorist organisation with a global network, Karnataka Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) (Law and Order) Alok Kumar said.

"On September 20, the accused rented a room in Mysuru's Lokanayaka Nagar. When we investigated, we found an Aadhaar card in the name of Premraj Hutagi – a resident of Hubli-Dharwad. But when we verified, we found that Premraj had vacated his residence and was working with the Railway Department in Tumakuru," the ADGP added.

"I spoke to Premraj, he confirmed that he was in no way connected to all this. I advised him to go to the local police station, identify himself and inform them that he has got nothing to do with the Mangaluru blast," ADGP Kumar said.

The senior police officer said another Aadhaar card with the name of one Arun Kumar Gawli from Sandur in Ballari district was recovered from Shariq. Kumar was also found to be innocent by the police.

Why the Aadhaar connection is worrying

While the suspected connection of the accused with terrorist outfits and people linked with those outfits are being probed, it raises concerns about identity theft and the safety of Aadhaar cards.

An important thing to note here is the fact that an identity card, which was lost nearly 300 kilometres away from the place where the low-intensity blast took place, wound up with a person who, even remotely, had no connection with the owner of the card.

The incident also brings the focus back to the criticisms of Aadhaar and the fact that a missing Aadhaar card could be easily used by people linked with terror outfits.

What makes Aadhaar vulnerable?

Critics have time and again pointed to several shortcomings of Aadhaar over concerns of privacy and the possibility of state surveillance, among others.

In 2019, Mardav Jain, an International Policy Institute Cybersecurity Fellow, wrote in the Jackson School Journal of International Studies that "Aadhaar was a perfect example of a well-intentioned government scheme gone awry".

The crux of his argument centred around the fact that Aadhaar suffered from several issues related to security and its system had proven to be vulnerable to "internal leaks and external abuse of the data".

"Aadhaar's security vulnerabilities were on full public display when RS Sharma, chairman of India's telecom regulator (TRAI) and the first director general of the UIDAI, tweeted his Aadhaar number out to the general public, as a test of his confidence in the system. Not only were people able to find out his personal information via his Aadhaar number, one individual even managed to create a fake Aadhaar card which was accepted as genuine by Amazon and Facebook ad services and was used to initiate services under Sharma's name.

"The problem is exacerbated because of the fact that most private and public entities now ask for photocopies of Aadhaar as valid identity proofs which are then stored on unprotected networks, worsening the potential for abuse of this information," Jain wrote.

In 2018, a major data breach was reported by The Tribune, which claimed that an anonymous group on WhatsApp was selling Aadhaar data available with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for just Rs 500.

The claims were however denied by UIDAI, which called the investigation a case of "misreporting".

On April 6 this year, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) released a report, which noted that the Aadhaar authority had to cancel over 4.75 lakh numbers due to duplication.

The report also highlighted the faults with biometric data like iris and fingerprints and said that there were instances where Aadhaar numbers with the same biometric data were issued to different residents.

Kritika Bhardwaj, who works as a programme officer with the Centre for Communication Governance at the National Law University Delhi, in an article for Scroll wrote that "in the case of Aadhaar, its design and application are likely to make identity theft easier".

"Aadhaar's design is based on a centralised database called the Central Identities Data Repository that stores every individual's demographic and biometric information. The aggregation of personal information in one centralised database makes it vulnerable to exploitation, making it a valuable target for hackers, states and identity thieves.

"Additionally, research suggests that in addition to external threats, centralised databases are also vulnerable to errors and misuse by custodians of the database themselves. Besides structural vulnerabilities, the use of the Aadhaar number as a ubiquitous, universal identifier further heightens the risk of identity theft," she argued.

Vinay Kumar, a Bengaluru-based activist for Aadhaar reforms, underscored the need for a better public understanding of the importance of privacy and how Aadhaar undermines it.

"Since its inception, we have seen several cases of identity theft and fraud through Aadhaar being reported, yet UIDAI maintains on their website that 'till date, no Aadhaar holder has suffered any financial loss on account of such misuse'. A simple search on the internet will throw up many cases of people who have lost money by misuse of their Aadhaar. It is well known that the design & implementation of Aadhaar is flawed and to make matters worse we do not have an adequate legal framework to prevent its misuse," Kumar told News9.

Regarding the possibility of missing Aadhaar cards winding up with terror suspects, he said: "Impersonation for terror activities is a serious issue although they have not happened as frequently as the other Aadhaar-related fraud that we see every day. If only we did not ignore the common misuse of the Aadhaar that happens around us, we wouldn't have allowed such a weak system to exist. The government has made people vulnerable by forcing a single identification and authentication mechanism without adequate data protection and privacy protection measures."

What's the government's defence?

For the better part, the Central government has argued that Aadhaar data is safe.

In a response to a question raised in the Lok Sabha in 2019, the then Minister of State (MoS) for Electronics and IT, SS Ahluwalia, said that Aadhaar data including biometrics "is encrypted by 2048 bit encryption key".

He contested that "no incidents of a breach in security or theft of data were reported in respect of Aadhaar data from UIDAI CIDR" at the time.

"Various policies and procedures have been defined, which are regularly reviewed and updated thereby appropriately controlling and monitoring any movement of people, material and data in and out of secured and well-guarded UIDAI premises, particularly the Data Centres," Ahluwalia said.

"UIDAI constantly strengthens and reviews its infrastructure and ecosystems in line with the best international security practices and technological standards. UIDAI has multi-layered security and privacy considerations built into the core strategy of Aadhaar with three basic doctrines of minimal data, optimal ignorance and federated database which give a higher level of security."

Is there a failsafe?

While the UIDAI claims the data is "safe and encrypted", a fair share of responsibility also lies with the end-user.

After the incident in Mangaluru, Karnataka ADGP (Law and Order) Kumar urged the people to immediately inform the place when they lose an important document like the Aadhaar.

"When someone misses an Aadhaar card, it should not be taken very lightly. It is important to intimate the police. Otherwise, the person who has lost the Aadhaar card will be in trouble when anti-national elements use it," he said.

"In this case, we had the suspect. Otherwise, the first thing we would've done is to go and question the person whose name is on the Aadhaar card. Hence, it is our request to the public not to take it lightly if an Aadhaar card goes missing."

The ADGP also advised the public to use the "lock and unlock facility on the UIDAI website" to prevent misuse and verify the backgrounds of tenants before renting a place.

Identity theft is also punishable under the law.

As per Section 66C in The Information Technology Act, 2000, a person engaging in identity theft "shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to Rs 1 lakh."

As per the Aadhaar Act, 2016, impersonation by providing false demographic and biometric information is an offence punishable by imprisonment of up to three years or a fine of Rs 10,000 or both.

Similar punishment is carried for appropriating the identity of "an Aadhaar number holder by changing or attempting to change the demographic and biometric information of an Aadhaar number holder".

Recently, UIDAI also shared some measures to prevent the misuse of Aadhaar details. Some of them are locking the biometrics and using a masked ID card. <https://www.news9live.com/state/karnataka/mangaluru-blast-case-raises-concerns-over-how-aadhaar-is-vulnerable-to-impersonation-for-terror-activities-209632>

12. Under Opposition fire, Punjab govt asks CAG to tweak fiscal accounts format ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) November 24, 2022

The Punjab government, which drew flak from the opposition parties over its financial performance in the first half of 2022-23, has asked the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) to modify its format for financial accounts of the state, citing the likelihood of its "misinterpretation" in the current format.

The state's finance department is learnt to have conveyed its reservations to the office of Principal Accountant General (Accounts and Entitlements), Punjab, about their way of presenting the financial accounts of the state, especially comparative data.

"The present format for preparing accounts and fiscal parameters does not give the complete picture. We have requested them to simplify the report so that it is self-explanatory and the possibility of its misreading by anyone is minimised," said two officers privy to the matter, who did not want to be named.

A senior officer in the PAG office said the finance department of the state government took up the report on fiscal indicators and suggested changes for proper comparison of fiscal performance with that of the previous period. "Their suggestions are under consideration. We are contemplating making some modifications but will need approval from the office of CAG as the same format is used across the country," he said on the condition of anonymity.

The state authorities took up the matter with the office of PAG, which is responsible for compiling accounts of state governments, three weeks ago after unaudited provisional unaudited figures for the first six-month period (April-September) of the new Bhagwant Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government were released. The government came under fire from the opposition parties, particularly the Congress, for, what they termed, the "shrinking" revenue collections besides other parameters.

A finance department official said that comparative data related to the percentage of actual to budget estimates was misread by some sections, creating a skewed impression, as targets in the

current year were high than the previous fiscal. “In the first half of 2022-23, for instance, against the full-year target of ₹60,345 crore, tax revenues stood at ₹25,584 crore and were significantly higher than the figure of ₹21,057 crore in the corresponding period of last year. However, the percentage of actual to budget estimates, which were 42% for both periods, created an erroneous impression in the absence of budget estimates and actual collection for the first half of 2021-22,” the officer said, explaining the rationale behind seeking the change.

The state of finances is a politically sensitive subject in debt-ridden Punjab, where successive governments have presented white papers after taking over the reins of the state and blamed their predecessors for the dismal fiscal health. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/under-opposition-fire-punjab-govt-asks-cag-to-tweak-fiscal-accounts-format-101669232533282.html>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

13. Centre asks ministries, depts to identify new assets for monetisation ([business-standard.com](https://www.business-standard.com)) November 24, 2022

The report said the govt has been able to garner only Rs 33,443 crore in revenue from assets sale in the first 7 months

Falling short of the budget target for asset monetisation for this fiscal year, the Centre has asked its ministries and departments to identify new assets that could be monetised quickly to meet the shortfall, The Economic Times reported.

The report said the government has been able to garner only Rs 33,443 crore in revenue from sale of assets in the first 7 months, when the target under the National Monetisation Pipeline for the fiscal year ending March was Rs 1.6 trillion.

It said at best the government is likely to get Rs 1.24 trillion from assets sale, way short of the budget estimate.

"There are a number of ministries that have not been able to achieve the target... They have been asked to identify additional or alternative assets to speed up the (monetization) process," a person familiar with the matter told ET.

It's also likely to push ministries to meet targets. The government may link their budgetary allocations to their performance in monetising their assets, the person added.

Some ministries – such as telecom, railways and petroleum – have reportedly decided to delay the asset monetisation process until the next financial year.

For the telecom ministry, assets identified for monetisation include BSNL's towers. This monetisation bid is expected to be launched this fiscal but the revenue will only come during the next financial year.

The railway ministry plan to monetise stations has also hit a roadblock. Its other options for monetisation include goods sheds, hill rail and stadia.

"Stations, the largest asset class, have been dropped and now those that were earlier proposed on PPP mode are being taken up under the EPC mode," an official said. https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-asks-ministries-depts-to-identify-new-assets-for-monetisation-122112400288_1.html

14. Tax collection to exceed Budget estimate by nearly Rs 4 lakh crore: Revenue Secy ([financialexpress.com](https://www.financialexpress.com)) November 23, 2022

India's tax collection will exceed the budget estimate by nearly Rs 4 lakh crore in the current fiscal on the back of buoyant income tax, customs duty and GST mop-up, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said on Wednesday.

In an interview to PTI, he said the growth in tax revenues will continue to be higher than the GDP growth, helped by formalisation of the economy and better compliance.

For this financial year ending March 2023, the tax collection target set in the Union Budget is around Rs 27.50 lakh crore.

Bajaj said the direct tax collection comprising personal and corporate taxes would be close to Rs 17.50 lakh crore in the current fiscal. Mop up from indirect taxes (customs, excise and GST) would be close to Rs 14 lakh crore.

The total tax collection is expected to be about Rs 31.50 lakh crore in 2022-23, he said.

The Budget had pegged direct and indirect tax mop up at Rs 14.20 lakh crore and Rs 13.30 lakh crore for current fiscal, taking the total figure to Rs 27.50 lakh crore.

"We are using a lot of data. We have data from income tax and GST departments, and MCA (Ministry of Corporate Affairs). We are also getting data regarding high value expenditure. Formalisation of economy and technology has helped improved compliance," Bajaj said.

Last fiscal, the direct tax collection grew nearly 50 per cent to Rs 14.10 lakh crore compared to 2020-21.

"The trend of higher tax collection than GDP growth will continue," Bajaj said.

He also said that even though there was a reduction in customs and excise duties during this fiscal, the government will be very close to the target set in the Budget.

The Budget has set a target of collecting Rs 2.13 lakh crore and Rs 3.35 lakh crore from customs and excise duties, respectively. <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/tax-collection-to-exceed-budget-estimate-by-nearly-rs-4-lakh-crore-revenue-secy/2888917/>

15. Goldman Sachs sees India's GDP growth falling to 5.9% in 2023 ([financialexpress.com](https://www.financialexpress.com)) November 24, 2022

India's economic growth rate may fall to below 6% in calendar year 2023 but inflationary pressures could ease marginally, according to a new report by Goldman Sachs. The agency has

pegged India’s GDP growth rate in 2023 at 5.9% from an estimated 6.9% in 2022, as the boost from the reopening fades and monetary tightening weighs down domestic demand.

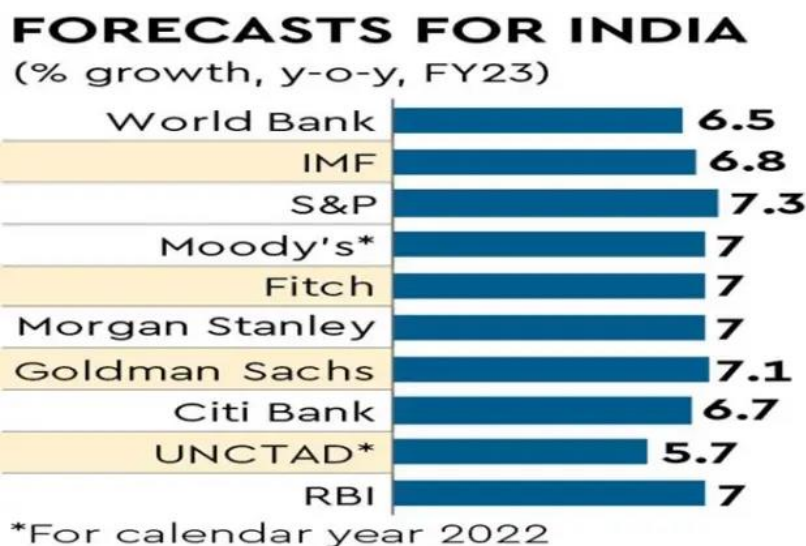
For the fiscal year 2022-23, the investment bank hasn’t cut the GDP growth estimate for India, unlike many other agencies — the country’s economic expansion in the year has been pegged at 7.1%, marginally higher than 7% forecast earlier. The GDP expansion, however, would be significantly lower at 6% in 2023-24.

Consumer price index-based inflation, on the other hand, will moderate from an average of 7% in 2022-23 to 5.6% in 2023-24.

“We expect growth to be a tale of two halves in (calendar) 2023, with a slowdown in the first half as the reopening boost fades and monetary tightening weighs on domestic demand,” Goldman Sachs economists said in the India 2023 Outlook. It, however, expects growth to re-accelerate in the second half as global growth recovers, the net exports drag declines and the investment the cycle picks up.

It also estimates that the government will continue its focus on capital spending, and sees signs of the nascent investment recovery continuing. “We forecast around 7% year-on-year growth in both consumption and investment with the risks to investment growth tilted to the upside, if manufacturing in India picks up, as ‘Make in India’ efforts come to fruition,” it said.

The agency has also highlighted conducive conditions for an investment cycle recovery. De-leveraging by manufacturing companies, recovery in capacity utilisation, the government’s focus on capital expenditure and a well-capitalised banking system are four key factors that are expected to help in a cyclical revival in the corporate capex cycle.



The Reserve Bank of India has pegged real GDP growth at 7% in 2022-23. In the Monetary Policy Report for September 2022, it has projected CPI inflation to average 6.7% in 2022-23 and at 5.2% in 2023-24. Goldman Sachs expects headline CPI inflation to ease but remain above the RBI’s tolerance limit of 6% in 2023.

“We forecast headline CPI inflation to decrease to 6.1% year-on-year (average) in 2023 from an estimated 6.8% in 2022, as we expect food prices to remain contained on the back of active

intervention by the government through subsidies and other measures,” it said. It has forecast the current account deficit at \$ 124 billion (3.5% of GDP) in 2023, due to slower global growth, a relatively resilient domestic demand recovery and elevated oil prices.

Further, it expects the RBI to hike the repo rate by 50 basis points in the December 2022 policy meeting and by another 35 basis points in February, due to upside risks to core services inflation as confirmed in the most recent inflation data, and India running negative real rates. It has forecast only 35 basis point of rate hikes in 2023, which would take the repo rate to 6.75% by February 2023.

However, if inflation pans out as per its forecasts, and reaches 5.3% y-o-y (average) by the fourth quarter, it has forecast the RBI to cut the policy repo rate by 25 basis point in the fourth quarter of 2023. The Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI will hold its next meeting on December 7. <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/goldman-sachs-sees-indias-gdp-growth-falling-to-5-9-in-2023/2889132/>

16. A burdened judiciary needs help (thehindubusinessline.com) November 23, 2022

Judiciary is the most trusted institution of democracy. But higher the trust, greater is the onus to maintain it. One of the important aspects of institutional independence is the duty of the state to see that judges are not overburdened with case loads. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Law and Justice regarding the pendency of cases (unstarred question in the Rajya Sabha, no 595, July 21, 2022), the number of cases pending in the Supreme Court is 72,062, in the High Courts it is 59,45,709 and in the District Courts it is 4,19,79,353 — which is alarming.

A very heavy docket sometimes puts the judge under pressure to dispose of more cases than is desirable; this results in the judge not considering the real issues involved. It is well known that “justice hurried is justice buried”. If the judge does not give a proper hearing or conduct a trial in a proper manner, the litigants will lose faith in the system. Further, such hasty disposals only increase the burden of the appellate courts.

If there is a delay in disposal of the cases, the public is entitled to know the reasons. However, the enormous burden imposed upon the judiciary by the increased inflow of cases caused by the newly enacted laws is not readily visible to the general public. As the judiciary is blamed for backlogs and delay in adjudication, ‘judicial impact assessment’ is the only viable solution.

Judicial impact assessment

Judicial impact assessment, simply speaking, is an exercise to assess and analyse the additional resources the judiciary might need to handle litigation generated by the newly enacted laws. The key element here is the ‘methodology’ for estimating judicial workload resulting from new legislation and determining the additional costs involved in judge-time and support services.

The concept was mooted for the first time by Justice Warren Burger, former Chief Justice of US (1969-86). In India, the Supreme Court in the Salem Advocates Bar Association case (2005), for the first time, considered the need for “judicial impact assessment” in our country.

It was suggested that the financial memorandum attached to each Bill must estimate not only the budgetary requirement of staff but also the expenses arising out of the additional cases, when the Bill is passed by the legislature.

The budget in this regard must mention the number of civil and criminal cases likely to be generated by the new Act, the number of courts that are necessary, and the number of judges and staff required and the necessary infrastructure.

More than a decade has passed since the Salem Advocates Bar Association case, but not much has changed in this regard. The judiciary at all levels is reeling under the pressure of mounting arrears of cases.

From an analysis of the data given on National Judicial Data Grid, it is clear that the annual filing is in excess of the annual disposal, so the pendency is bound to increase year after year unless the number of courts are not correspondingly increased at all levels. The entire burden of establishing district courts must not only be on the State government; they should be a concurrent obligation on the Central Government as well to meet the expenditures of the district courts.

Generally, the plan for the budgets of the district courts in India are made by the Registry of the high courts. These are manned by judicial officers who do not have much expertise in the matters of the preparation of budgets and accounts.

The services of experienced members of the account services can be availed. They can work under the supervision of the High Courts. At present, there is no systematic planning for the budgetary requirements of the district courts in India.

‘Judicial Impact Assessment Offices’ must be established in all high courts with its headquarters in the Supreme Court, which must be entrusted with advisory and support services and must focus solely on planning and budgeting.

In the district courts, the court managers must be assigned this responsibility. These offices must regularly monitor the filing under every enactment and analyse the rate of filing under various enactments, which shall help in estimating the budgetary requirements for the future. Such offices must be staffed with an interdisciplinary team drawn from law, judiciary, economics, statistics, computer science, sociology and management. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/a-burdened-judiciary-needs-help/article66175313.ece>

17. Rafale-M for Indian Navy? French Defence Minister to Board INS Vikrant on 27 November, Report Says ([swarajyamag.com](https://www.swarajyamag.com)) Nov 24, 2022

French Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu, who will be in India later this month, is set to go onboard aircraft carrier INS Vikrant off the coast of Mumbai on 27 November, the Hindustan Times has reported.

The Indian Navy is currently evaluating French aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation's Rafale-M and US-based Boeing's F/A-18 Super Hornet to augment its dwindling fleet of fighters currently made up of the troubled Russian-origin MiG-29Ks.

Both Rafale-Ms and Super Hornets have demonstrated their ability to take off from a ski-jump platform of the kind that Indian aircraft carriers have. Ski-jump tests were carried out earlier this year at the shore-based facility at INS Hansa in Goa. Rafale-Ms and Super Hornets are in

service with the French Navy and the US Navy, respectively. The two navies operate these from their nuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

Unlike India's two carriers, which use ski-jump (short take-off but arrested recovery or STOBAR) to help aircraft take off from their decks, the US and French carriers use catapult-assisted take-off (catapult assisted take-off but arrested recovery or CATOBAR) to operate aircraft.

In the STOBAR system, aircraft are launched from a carrier using their own power with a ski-jump ramp on the bow of the carrier assisting take off. However, in the CATOBAR system, mechanical assistance is provided to the aircraft for take-off using a catapult, which is built into the carrier's flight deck. In both these systems, arrestor wires, which rapidly but smoothly decelerate an aircraft as it lands on deck, are used for recovery.

With the induction of the first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant on 15 August this year, the Indian Navy will have two aircraft carriers but not enough fighters to keep both warships operational.

In 2017, the Navy had projected a requirement of 57 new fighters. But it has since downsized the requirement to 26 fighters as an indigenous fighter for aircraft carriers — the Twin-Engine Deck-Based Fighter — is being developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency.

Dassault's Rafale-M has an edge over Boeing's F/A-18 as the Indian Air Force has already inducted two squadrons of the fighter, has set up maintenance facilities in the country and may contract for more Rafale.

India's rapidly expanding defence partnership with France, which also has interests in the Indian Ocean, will also be considered when New Delhi decides on the procurement of fighters. <https://swarajyamag.com/news-brief/rafale-m-for-indian-navy-french-defence-minister-to-board-ins-vikrant-on-27-november-report-says>

18. Recession unlikely in APAC region in 2023: Moody's ([financialexpress.com](https://www.financialexpress.com)) Updated: November 24, 2022

A recession is unlikely in the APAC region in the coming year, although the area will face headwinds from higher interest rates and slower global trade growth, Moody's Analytics said on Thursday. In its analysis titled 'APAC Outlook: A Coming Downshift', Moody's said India is headed for slower growth next year more in line with its long-term potential.

On the upside, inward investment and productivity gains in technology as well as in agriculture could accelerate growth. But, if high inflation persists, the Reserve Bank of India would likely take its repo rate well above 6 per cent, causing GDP growth to falter. In August, Moody's had projected India's growth to slow to 8 per cent in 2022 and further to 5 per cent in 2023, from 8.5 per cent in 2021.

It said the economy of the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region is slowing and this trade-dependent region is feeling the effects of slower global trade. Global industrial production has remained "fairly level" since it peaked in February just prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "China is not the only weak link in the global economy. The other giant of Asia, India, also suffered a year-to-year decline in the value exports in October. At least India relies less on exports as an

engine of growth than does China,” Moody’s Analytics Chief APAC Economist Steve Cochrane said.

On the regional outlook, Moody’s said even though India, as well as other major economies of APAC region are expanding due to their own delayed reopening from pandemic-related shutdowns, the expected slowdowns in Europe and North America, along with China’s sluggish economy, will cause 2023 to be a slower year than 2022 for economic growth.

“That said, a recession is not expected in the APAC region in the coming year, although the area will face headwinds from higher interest rates and slower global trade growth,” Cochrane added.

In its World Economic Outlook released last month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had forecast global growth to slow from 6 per cent in 2021 to 3.2 per cent in 2022 and 2.7 per cent in 2023. India has emerged as “a bright light” at a time when the world is facing imminent prospects of a recession, IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas had said. <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/recession-unlikely-in-apac-region-in-2023-moodys/2889867/>

19. Gamut of options in green policy (thehindubusinessline.com) November 23, 2022

India has recently updated its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), a set of long-term goals to cut carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement.

According to the updated NDCs, India is committed to bringing down the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45 per cent by 2030 and achieving 50 per cent electricity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

These commitments aside, the country’s growing economy will continue to demand higher levels of fossil fuels, resulting in a corresponding rise in GHG emissions.

According to published data, India’s energy and industry-related carbon emissions are projected to double by 2050. Therefore, there is a need to have stringent policies and a regulatory framework that has a fair mix of carrot-and-stick approaches that incentivise green investments or a switch to clean energy and penalises defaulters.

Parallely, India could consider cutting down subsidies for the fossil fuel industry. Fossil fuel subsidies were nine times higher than renewable energy subsidies in FY20-21. In addition, newer avenues, such as carbon trading, if adapted to suit India’s unique framework, can be a valuable tool in the arsenal to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Governments globally are deploying a range of “carrot and stick” strategies — from green taxes on harmful environmental activities to tax rebates for meeting the new environmental standards. Denmark, for instance, has approved a new corporate carbon tax, which is reportedly the highest in Europe. On the other hand, China has incentivised the three major bus operators to transition to electric vehicles through an annual subsidy of US\$75,500 for each vehicle.

India’s journey

The Centre and State governments have been offering incentives to EV manufacturers and tax exemptions to EV buyers. The Centre has issued a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme

that sanctions \$3.5 billion for manufacturing EVs and components. This supply-side initiative is over and above the PLI scheme of \$2.6 billion that was already approved for advanced chemistry cell battery manufacturing.

Adding these to the FAME-II customer incentives on EVs, the Centre is offering substantial benefits across the market. States such as Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu also offer subsidies across the EV supply chain.

In addition, some States have implemented strategies that are more punitive in nature. For instance, the Goa government has been levying a ‘Green Cess’ on products and substances causing pollution since 2013. Similarly, the Uttarakhand government had initiated an ‘Eco Tax’ system on vehicles entering the hill station of Mussoorie.

State governments will have more options once the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 is passed. The Bill empowers States to change building by-laws so that real estate development takes steps to be more energy efficient and sustainable. While various measures are being taken in different sectors, to achieve deep impact, there is a need to build a comprehensive regulatory framework that includes a balanced approach to corporate participation in meeting the country’s climate targets.

For example, the EU taxonomy classifies economically viable environmental practices. Such a classification provides clarity to businesses as well as policymakers on which economic activities are considered environmentally sustainable and which are not. Having clarity has two direct advantages.

One, it allows investors and businesses to adopt appropriate and genuine sustainability strategies. Two, it synchronises policymakers and businesses, thus avoiding regulatory friction, greenwashing, market fragmentation and misdirected capital investments.

Policy measures

The climate change challenge can be addressed through two policy alternatives — market-based instruments and regulatory measures. While the regulatory measures focus on setting limits or standards for emissions, the market-based instruments include subsidies, penalties, and taxes.

The market-based instruments will nudge businesses to align investments with climate goals while encouraging innovation to develop newer technologies that help reduce emissions cost-effectively. Taxes can also raise additional revenues that can be utilised toward environmental protection objectives. Learning from international experience, it is time to consider bringing in carbon taxes that impose a burden based on polluters’ carbon emissions. Implemented in an appropriate manner, the carbon tax would complement the existing fiscal and non-fiscal measures. It would also help Indian exporters, who may be subject to the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), explore obtaining credits in EU to remain competitive.

On the support side, the government should extend a concessional tax rate to companies investing in green technologies and allow full deduction toward purchasing green assets. China, for instance, provides free land, concessional power and low-interest funding to companies developing solar energy. Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam have become solar manufacturing hubs on government incentives.

Secondly, the regulators must consider lowering the GST rate on goods and services in the renewable sector to align them with the country's ambitious green energy goals. For instance, while the GST on EVs and EV chargers is 5 per cent, the levy of 18 per cent on EV charging services is a dampener to the mass adoption of EVs. There is also ambiguity about the Services Accounting Code (SAC) classification in GST that needs to be clarified by the GST Council.

In addition to developing a comprehensive as well as balanced green tax framework, steps should be taken to develop a carbon trading market in India. The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, is a step in this direction as it proposes creating a domestic carbon credit trading market and issuance of Carbon Trade Certificates.

The window is closing rapidly against climate change. Market-based instruments alone will not solve the problem. The government can take a big step by developing a green tax framework. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/gamut-of-options-in-green-policy/article66175415.ece>

20. BSNL-BBNL merger close to finalisation, Deloitte to submit report on Friday ([business-standard.com](https://www.business-standard.com)) November 24, 2022

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) and Bharat Broadband Network's (BBNL) merger to set up the country's largest optic fibre cable (OFC) network is reportedly close to finalisation. According to a report in Hindu BusinessLine (BL), Deloitte has been tasked working out the modalities and creating a company that would help in expanding the government's digital reach under BharatNet.

"The valuation report to determine the swap ratio and valuation of assets and liabilities is underway and will be submitted by November 25 to BSNL, and the draft scheme of merger along with the Board report by December 18. This has to be undertaken by Deloitte," the source told BL.

On July 27, the government approved a Department of Telecommunications (DoT) proposal for the "Revival of BSNL and merger of BBNL with BSNL". BSNL was reportedly made responsible for fibre services in all villages.

Since August, BBNL has terminated the deputation of 36 Indian Telecom Service officers. They have joined BSNL. It has been decided that BSNL, BBNL and DoT officials would meet every Wednesday.

"BBNL relieved 35 ITS officers on September 30 from its strength; all 35 ITS officers joined BSNL on October 1. Also, to expedite the process of the merger in time bound manner a Committee has been constituted and to closely watch and monitor the progress and to supplement the Transaction Adviser's (Deloitte) efforts, it was decided that the committee shall have meetings on every Wednesday," another source told BL.

In 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that under the BharatNet project, all the villages in the country would be connected through optical fibre within 1,000 days. https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/bsnl-bbnl-merger-close-to-finalisation-deloitte-to-submit-report-on-friday-122112400333_1.html