

## **NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS (18.04.2023)**

### **1. 20 per cent funds for state Capex remain unspent in FY23 ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) April 18, 2023**

**Nearly 20% of the amount allocated for special assistance to states for capital expenditure remained unspent in FY23, finance ministry documents show.**

Nearly 20% of the amount allocated for special assistance to states for capital expenditure remained unspent in FY23, finance ministry documents show. According to the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, the states availed of Rs 81,195 crore in 50-year interest-free loans for infrastructure spending.

Out of the Rs 81,000 crore, Rs 15,383.85 crore was given to the states as an incentive for meeting reforms prescribed by the Central government for availing the interest-free loan. The central government implemented the 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' in 2022-23 with an outlay of Rs 1 lakh crore. Out of the total allocation, Rs 80,000 crore were meant to be allocated to states in proportion to their share of tax devolution.

The rest of the amount was available to states based on meeting certain reform criteria. These reforms like digitization, laying optical fibre cables, urban reforms, scrapping of old vehicles, disinvestment of state PSUs, etc. The Centre has allocated Rs 1.3 lakh crore for the scheme in 2023-24. The states have lagged behind in FY23 when it comes to their spending on infrastructure and other asset creation.

According to an India Ratings report, the provisional data for 26 states from the Comptroller and Auditor General showed 26 states in aggregate have achieved 52% of the FY23 budgeted capex during April-January FY23.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2023/apr/18/20-per-centfunds-for-state-capex-remain-unspent-in-fy23-2566998.html>

### **2. What can be done to reduce train derailments in India ([scroll.in](https://scroll.in)) April 17, 2023**

**According to experts, over a span of four years, derailments accounted for 70% of railway accidents.**

Seven in 10 railway accidents over a four-year period were derailments, owing to multiple factors including track defects, maintenance issues and operating errors, according to an analysis of 1,129 inquiry reports by the Comptroller and Auditor General. A decline in fund availability and non-utilisation of available funds for track renewals led to 26% of these derailments. Decrease in passenger and freight earnings have constrained Indian Railways's capacity to spend on safety, data show.

Railways have been the "lifeline" of the country with more than 22 million passengers travelling in trains every day, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General report. The network also transports 3.3 million tonnes of freight daily (as of 2022) and earns more than Rs 1 lakh crore annually. However the modal share of railways, that is the preference for railways, is still only 14% for passenger traffic and 26% for freight movement, as per a 2015 study and the Economic Survey 2021-'22.

The Comptroller and Auditor General audit report shows that derailments are the major cause of accidents, resulting in loss of property and life. The economic cost of derailments (measured as a sum of loss of rolling stock and tracks) between 2000 and 2016 is estimated to be Rs 86,486 crore, which translates to a loss of Rs 5,087 crore per year, as per a 2018 study by the Indira Gandhi Open University.

### Accidents have declined

In four years to 2020-'21, the Railways recorded 2,017 accidents, and derailments accounted for 69% (1,392). Overall, accidents fell from 719 in 2018-19 to 348 in 2020-'21.

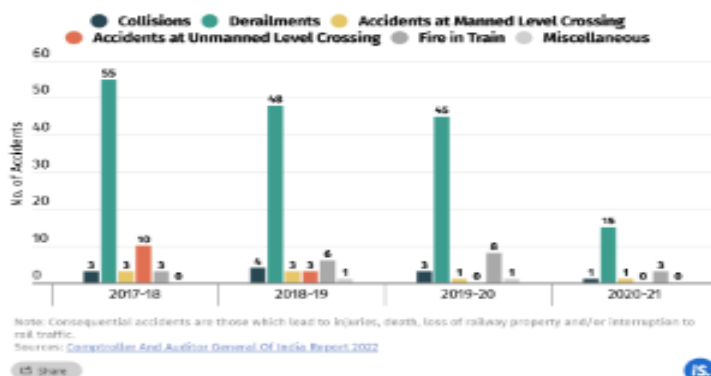
Train accidents are categorised as “consequential” accidents (which lead to injuries, death, loss of railway property and/or interruption to rail traffic), other accidents, and yard accidents. Yard accidents account for three in five derailments. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India report emphasises the need for continued efforts to improve train safety and reduce the number of accidents, particularly those caused by derailments.

### Train Derailments, 2018-21



In four years to 2020-'21, there were 217 “consequential” accidents, and derailments accounted for three in four of these. Overall, consequential train accidents fell 73% over four years.

### Consequential Train Accidents, 2018-21



Between 2017 and 2021, derailments caused 293 deaths and 56 injuries, according to data from National Crime Records Bureau reports.

“Between 2014 and 2017, there were many severe railway derailments that had occurred,” said Alok Kumar Verma, a former officer of the Indian Railway Service of Engineers, who retired as Chief Engineer, Indian Railways, terming 2017 a “turning point” in terms of concern about accidents. “The severity of instances matter more than just yearly numbers. Has there been any solid effort after that towards enhancing the capacity of tracks?”

“Safety performance is only a symptom; the disease is a lack of adequate infrastructure,” he added.

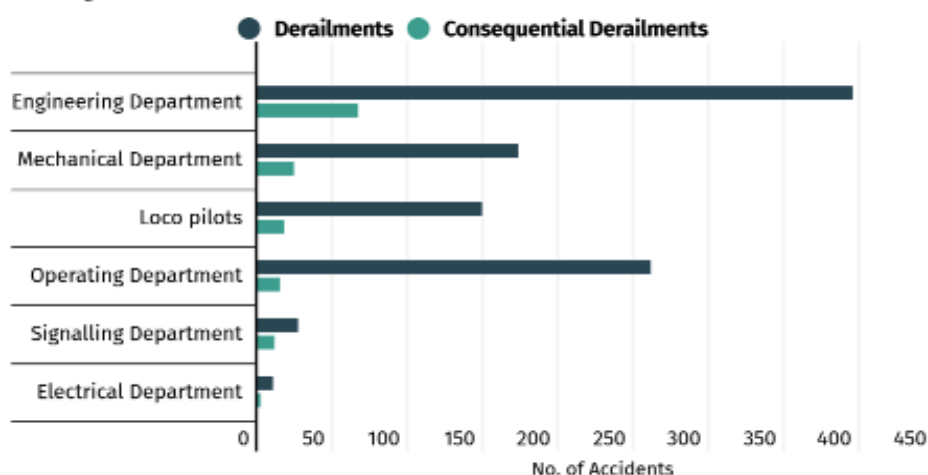
### Causes for derailments

Accident inquiries help identify the cause and formulate steps to prevent their recurrence. The inquiry process involves ascertaining whether any inherent defects exist in the system of working or in physical appliances, such as tracks, rolling stock and other working apparatus.

“One particular incident cannot cause a derailment. It has to be a combination of three, four or five different mistakes before a derailment happens,” said Swapnil Garg, professor of Strategy Management at the Indian Institute of Management, Indore. Garg had worked with the Railways earlier, as an officer of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers. “When there is a signalling failure, mechanical failures and civil engineering failures, we find that these collectively result in a derailment,” he added.

Multiple factors were collectively responsible for each accident, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India report said, highlighting the need for all-out efforts at every level of staff and proper coordination among all departments to prevent derailments. The factors were categorised into those of the various departments – civil engineering, mechanical, operating, signal and telecommunication, electrical departments and loco pilots.

## Factors Involved In Derailments, By Department



Sources: [Comptroller And Auditor General Of India Report 2022](#)

Share



Civil engineering issues were highest of any department. Issues included deviation of track parameters, improper loading, water-logging, etc. This was followed by the operating department issues – incorrect setting of points and other mistakes in shunting, and poor working or failure of station master. Mechanical issues include wheel diameter variation and defects in coaches/wagons, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India report.

Further, “overall density of population along the tracks is increasing and this can result in an increase in railway accidents if the crossings remain unmanned. There has been a concerted activity from the Railways to man as many of the unmanned level crossings and this will help in bringing down chances of accidents,” said Dominic.

### **Human error**

“Human error” was the major factor responsible for derailments attributable to the Loco Pilots, identified in 13% of cases. Speaking about loco pilots’ errors, Biju Dominic, chairman, FinalMile Consulting, said, “Our observations show that accidents happen in places where the visibility of the train is very good, not where the visibility of the train is poor. That’s something we can tell you comprehensively.” Dominic was extensively involved in assessing multiple railway accidents as a consultant and assisted the Railways in creating solutions for preventing accidents on unmanned level crossings.

“When it comes to loco pilots’ fatigue, one might argue there are not enough facilities for them to rest, but my question is whether the ones in place, are they being utilised properly by them to rest,” he added.

### **Track overuse**

Experts also point to inadequate capacity and maintenance of tracks as a factor. “The most critical thing to understand is that there is over utilisation of the tracks; the tracks are being abused,” said Verma, the former chief engineer. “The trunk lines between the four major stations in the country – Delhi, Howrah, Mumbai and Chennai – have not seen any addition or doubling of track for years”.

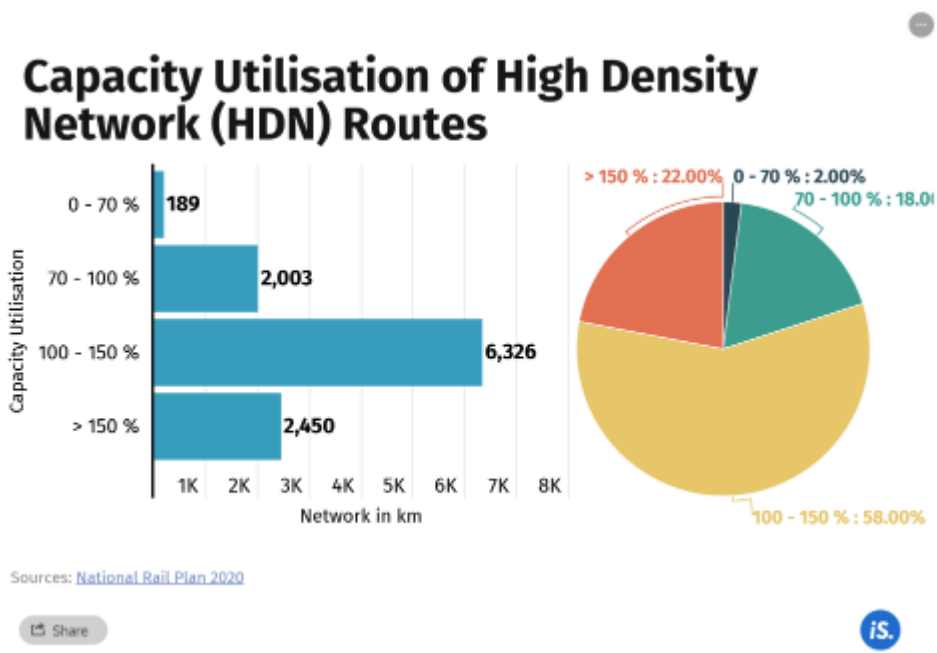
Doubling of track means there are tracks running in both directions between two places and trains would no longer have to depend on a single line. One in four derailments (289 of 1,129) were linked to track renewal, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India report said, pointing to a declining trend in funding for renewal along with under-utilisation of available funds.

The progress in track renewals has been slowing down, leading to an accumulation of arrears. The target set for track renewals is not commensurate with the actual requirement on the ground, which is resulting in reduced reliability of assets and disproportionately high maintenance effort, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India report said, citing various other reports.

“The capacity of the existing tracks is more than 160% indicating over-utilisation of lines on trunk routes, but there’s not much time devoted to maintenance of the same.”

Data from the Indian Railways’ National Rail Plan 2020 show that 80% of tracks on high density networks were overburdened – that is, they are running at over 100% capacity. The high density networks routes connect five major centres – Chennai, Kolkata (Howrah),

Mumbai, Delhi and Guwahati. They comprise 16% of the total railway network and transport 41% of the total traffic.



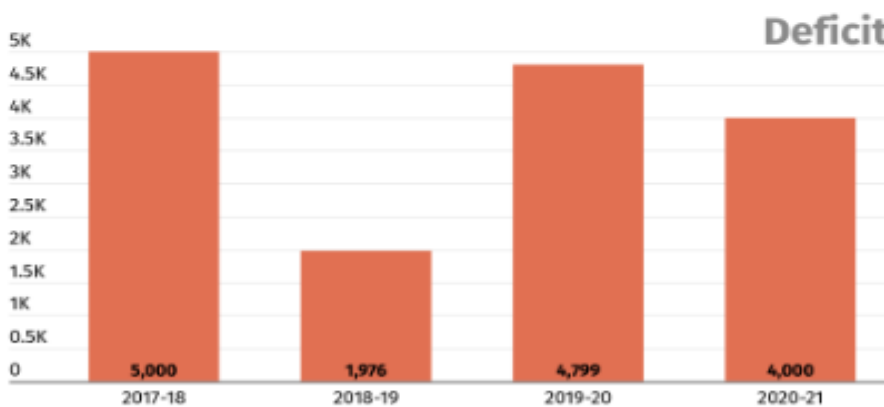
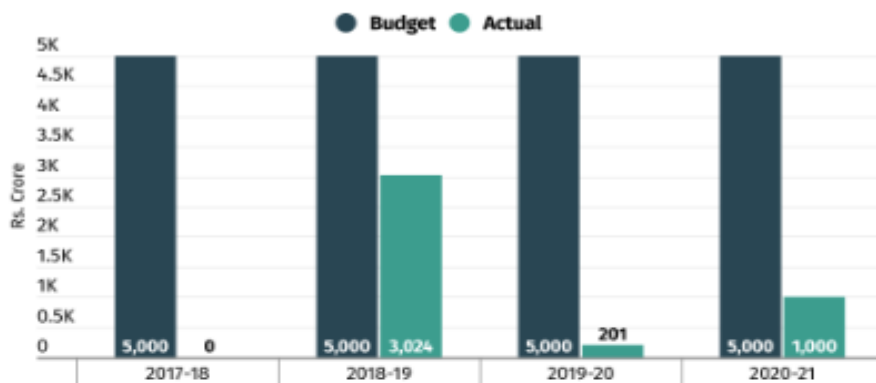
Experts suggested that the Railways would need to prioritise building more lines and increasing speed, thus enhancing the capacity of the network. This would greatly reduce the congestion of trains.

“Going forward, Indian Railways will have to define its break-even points and bring down utilisation of capacity to 60%-70%, to ensure the system works more optimally, to bring down derailments even more,” added Garg.

### Fund crunch

The Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh was created in 2017-'18 with a corpus of Rs 1 lakh crore to finance critical safety-related works of renewal, replacement, and augmentation of assets in the Indian Railways. However, the generation of internal resources of Railways for the remaining funding of Rs 5,000 crore per year to Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh had been falling short of target, leading to a shortage of Rs 15,775 crore in the actual deployment of funds by Railways to Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh.

## Railways' Own Contribution to Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK)



Sources: [Comptroller And Auditor General Of India Report 2022](#)

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Earlier, safety-related works on Indian Railways were mainly funded through the Railway Safety Fund. This was financed out of the Depreciation Reserve Fund including track renewals, rebuilding of bridges, etc.

Analysis of the utilisation of Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh funds revealed that the expenditure on Priority-I works, which include major civil engineering works and level crossing infrastructure, from Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh declined from 82% in 2017-'18 to 74% in 2019-'20.

Decline in passenger traffic and rate of freight (per Net Tonne Kilometres) has impacted Railways' earnings with the organisation incurring a loss of Rs 15,024 crore in 2021-'22. Data from Indian Railways' Yearbook 2021 showed that passenger traffic, measured in passenger kilometres fell from 1,177,669 in 2017 to 590,617 in 2021. While freight traffic increased between 2017 and 2021, the rate of freight (per Net Tonne Kilometres) has come down from 163.80 paise to 160 paise, for the same period.

“Railways are losing. Money is being spent on launching new trains but not enough is being spent on safety and upgrading infrastructure. As a result, maintenance of tracks to prevent derailments and other priorities like capacity and doubling gets little attention,” said Verma.

“It is pertinent to note that there has been a reduction in passenger traffic due to faster options by road and air. This affects earnings and as a consequence, Railways’ ability to spend on upgrading safety infrastructure has come down,” Verma added, speaking on the insignificant contribution of Railways to Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh.

“The Government of India must make serious efforts to spend more on railways as the cost of railway infrastructure is too high for the Indian Railways alone to bear,” he added.

IndiaSpend has reached out to Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman and chief executive officer of the Railway Board, for comment on the utilisation of Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh and additional concerns about rail safety and lack of adequate maintenance of tracks. We will update the story when we receive a response. <https://scroll.in/article/1047461/what-can-be-done-to-reduce-train-derailments-in-india>

### **STATES NEWS ITEMS**

#### **3. 16.07 crores in treasury wasted by Kerala Chicken; loss mentioned in CAG report ([keralakaumudi.com](http://keralakaumudi.com)) 17 April, 2023**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Kerala Chicken project, which was launched to provide good quality broiler chicken to consumers at a low price an entrepreneurship to unemployed women, caused a loss of 16.07 crores to the government treasury. The failure of the Kudumbashree communit pointed out in the preliminary report submitted by the Comptroller and Auditor General to the state government. The Kudumbashree Broiler Far Producer Company Limited (KBFPCL) formed for this purpose is also sinking into losses since the objectives set by the project could not be achieved.

The project was implemented in Thiruvananthapuram, Palakkad, and Kozhikode districts. 6 crores in 2019 and 10.07 crore in 2020 were allotted f breeder farms and meat processing plants in all three districts. However, neither Kudumbashree nor KBFPCL has found land suitable for constru anywhere so far. KEPCO reported that the land found for the breeder farm in Thiruvananthapuram was not suitable. The second-year allotment o crores should have been avoided by the government when no land was available in the first year itself. This amount has been allocated from the Kerala Initiative, a World Bank aid for New Kerala construction.

It was planned to set up a meat processing plant on 4.5 acres at Kadinamkulam in Thiruvananthapuram, but the construction was stalled due to t of the Covid pandemic.

KBFPCL is a purely private enterprise formed by a consortium of Kudumbashree Community Development Societies. The CAG pointed out that the appointment of the Kudumbashree Executive Director as its Chairman and Project Officer of the Animal Welfare Department as its Chief Executiv illegal. The company started operations on May 17, 2019.

KBFPCL? It is a company formed under section 2(68) of the Companies Act by a consortium of 10 CDS members each in three districts from whom shares w The total share capital was 10 lakhs. The objective is commercial broiler production, meat processing, and marketing.



## 6 crores as initial finance

2 crores each for 3 districts

Out of this 1.50 crore for breeder farm and 50 lacks for meat processing unit

(The second sanctioned transaction of 10.07 crores is not specified in the CAG report).

### Flaws

- The company was formed without carrying out a feasibility study
- Started operations without a market entry strategy
- Dependence on the external market to meet basic needs
- Breeder farms, hatcheries, feed distribution units, etc

**Loss of ₹28.88 per chicken** Poultry units increased from 36 in 2019 to 260 in 2021, but the loss of the company increased from Rs 2.24 crore in 2019 to Rs 9.24 crore in 2021 Department of Animal Husbandry commissioned KEPCO and KSIDC for a technical feasibility study, it was found that the company was losing ₹28 chicken due to high production costs. <https://keralakaumudi.com/en/news/news.php?id=1050241&u=16.07-crores-in-treasury-wasted-by-kerala-chicken-loss-mentioned-in-cag-report>

## 4. भूखंड खरीद में 900 करोड़ का घोटाला, मिलीभगत के आरोप ([mpcoverage.in](http://mpcoverage.in)) 17Apr, 2023

मुंबई। दहिसर में भूखंड खरीदने के लिए कई गुना ज्यादा रेट देने के बीएमसी के फैसले पर कैग ने सवाल उठाए थे। अब बीजेपी नेता किरीट सोमैया ने जमीन खरीदी मामले में 900 करोड़ रुपये के घोटाले का आरोप लगाया है। उन्होंने इस मामले की जांच के लिए पुलिस स्टेशन में शिकायत दर्ज कराई है। सोमैया ने बिल्डर और बीएमसी अधिकारियों पर मिलीभगत का आरोप लगाते हुए 900 करोड़ रुपये की लूट की बात कही है। उन्होंने कहा कि जिस जमीन को बीएमसी ने दस साल पहले लेने से इनकार कर दिया था, उस भूखंड को तत्कालीन उद्भव ठाकरे सरकार के दबाव में बीएमसी ने कई गुना ज्यादा दाम पर खरीदा। इसके लिए बीएमसी 350 करोड़ रुपये बिल्डर को दे चुकी है, जबकि बिल्डर ने और 550 करोड़ रुपये की मांग की है। करीब 10 साल पहले इस जमीन की कीमत 15 करोड़ रुपये भी नहीं थी। बीजेपी नेता सोमैया ने आरोप लगाया कि इस जमीन का बीएमसी के लिए कोई उपयोग नहीं है, क्योंकि इस पर अवैध रूप से अतिक्रमण हुआ है और बड़े पैमाने पर झोपड़े बने हैं। कैग की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि यह जमीन बीएमसी ने ज्यादा रेट पर खरीदी है। सोमैया ने इसमें घोटाले का आरोप लगाते हुए एमएचबी पुलिस स्टेशन बोरीवली में इसकी जांच के लिए शिकायत दर्ज कराई है। <http://mpcoverage.in/news.php?id=900-crore-scam-in-plot-purchase-allegations-of-collusion-422478>

## 5. हरियाणा के अस्पतालों में दवा सप्लाई में करोड़ों की धांधली की ई.डी. से जांच की मांग ([punjabkesari.in](http://punjabkesari.in)) April 17, 2023

हरियाणा के स्वास्थ्य विभाग में दवा और उपकरणों की खरीद में करोड़ों रुपए के घोटाले की जांच प्रवर्तन निदेशालय (ई.डी.) से कराने की एक मांग को लेकर दाखिल हुई एक याचिका पर सोमवार को सुनवाई हुई। हरियाणा सरकार की ओर से जवाब दाखिल किया जाना था लेकिन हरियाणा सरकार ने इस मामले में जवाब दायर करने को कुछ समय देने की मांग की। सरकार के आग्रह को स्वीकार करते हुए कोर्ट ने सरकार को 21 सितम्बर तक जवाब दायर करने का आदेश दिया है। जगविंदर सिंह नामक आर.टी.आई.



कार्यकर्ता की ओर से दाखिल याचिका पर हाईकोर्ट प्रवर्तन निदेशालय व हरियाणा विजीलेंस ब्यूरो को नोटिस जारी कर चुका है।

उप मुख्यमंत्री बनने के बाद मामले को भूल गए उप मुख्यमंत्री याचिकाकर्ता के मुताबिक वर्ष 2018 में सरकारी अस्पतालों में हुए दवा खरीद घोटाले के मामले में उस वक्त के सांसद और अब उपमुख्यमंत्री दुष्यंत चौटाला ने सी.बी.आई. जांच और कैग से ऑडिट कराने की मांग उठाई थी। आर.बी.आई. के जरिये मिली जानकारी में सामने आया कि गुजरे तीन वर्ष की अवधि में राज्य के सरकारी अस्पतालों में कई करोड़ रुपए की दवाएं और मैडीकल उपकरण बेहद महंगे दामों में खरीदे गए थे। याचिकाकर्ता के अनुसार दुष्यंत चौटाला प्रदेश के उप मुख्यमंत्री बनने के बाद मामले को भूल गए हैं और कार्रवाई की कोई मांग नहीं कर रहे। दुष्यंत ने जब यह मामला उठाया था, तब भी और अब भी स्वास्थ्य मंत्री अनिल विज ही हैं।

जिस पत्ते पर टेंडर लिया वहां बैठा है धोबी, सप्लायर जेल में था, हस्ताक्षर भी फर्जी याचिकाकर्ता ने हाईकोर्ट को बताया है कि हिसार की जो दवा कम्पनी सप्लाय कर रही है उसका जो पता सरकारी रिकॉर्ड में है, वहां एक धोबी बैठा हुआ है। हिसार और फतेहाबाद के सामान्य अस्पतालों में चिकित्सा उपकरणों की सप्लाय करने वाली फर्म का मालिक टेंडर के वक्त करंसी के नकली सिक्के बनाने के आरोप में तिहाड़ जेल में था। उसने न केवल जेल से ही टेंडर प्रक्रिया में भाग लिया, बल्कि स्वास्थ्य विभाग के कर्मियों ने उसके फर्जी हस्ताक्षर भी किए थे। याचिकाकर्ता ने हाईकोर्ट को बताया है कि दवा और उपकरण सप्लाय करने वाली बहुत सी कंपनियों के पास लाइसेंस ही नहीं था। जिलों के सिविल सर्जनों ने मिलीभगत कर न केवल दवाएं और स्वास्थ्य उपकरण महंगे दामों में खरीदे, बल्कि ऐसी कंपनियों से दवाओं की खरीद कर ली, जोकि असल में करियाने और घी का कारोबार करती हैं। याचिकाकर्ता ने इस पूरे मामले की जांच ई.डी. से कराने की मांग की है। <https://www.punjabkesari.in/chandigarh/news/government-sought-time-to-file-reply-1805747>

## 6. मप्र में 5 साल में 154 करोड़ खर्च, फिर भी ASI-पुरातत्व विभाग नहीं बचा पा रहे खंडहर होती धरोहरें, विभाग में 82% टेक्नीकल पद खाली (thesootr.com) 18 April 2023

BHOPAL. आज अंतरराष्ट्रीय धरोहर दिवस है। और भारत का दिल कहे जाने वाला मध्य प्रदेश एक ऐसी जगह है जहां पर ऐतिहासिक महत्व वाली ऐसी कई सारी धरोहरें मौजूद हैं, जिन्होंने न्हों राज्य की सभ्यता और संस्कृति को हज़ारों सालों से संरक्षित करके रखा है। लेकिन अब इन्हीं धरोहरों के अस्तित्व पर संकट मंडरा रहा है। दरअसल, जिन ऐतिहासिक विरासतों के बात हम कर रहे हैं, इनमें से कई जगहें ऐसी है जो कागजों पर तो राज्य सरकार द्वारा संरक्षित हैं, परन्तु असलियत में वो अतिक्रमण, आपदा प्रबंधन की कुव्यवस्था और मेटे में नेंस की कमी के कारण खस्ता हाल होकर खंडहर में तब्दील होती जा रही हैं। राज्य की विरासतों की कमजोर हो रही बुनियाद के जिम्मेदार भी ASI भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण) और मध्य प्रदेश पुरातत्व विभाग (संचालनालय पुरातत्व, अभिलेखागार एवं संग्रहालय) और राज्य प्रशासन ही हैं....जिनकी अनदेखी के चलते ऐसा हो रहा है। वो भी तब जब पिछले 5 सालों में स्मारकों के संरक्षण के नाम पर करीब 154.69 करोड़ रुपए खर्च कर दिए गए। विश्व धरोहर दिवस के अवसर पर देखिये भोपाल के नज़दीक जगदीशपुर में स्थित गोंडगों किला, चंदेरी के रामनगर महल, मंदसौर के नज़दीक हिंगलाजगढ़ का किला और ग्वालियर के ऐतिहासिक गूजरी महल से द सूत्र की ग्राउंड रिपोर्ट. 11वीं सदी का गोंडगों महल विभागीय रस्साकस्सी के बीच फंसा, चारों तरफ अतिक्रमण, गन्दगी और टूटफूट का नज़ार

जिम्मेदार: राज्य पुरातत्व विभाग

जगदीशपुर, जो इस्लाम नगर के नाम से भी जाना जाता है, में मौजूद है 11वीं सदी पुराना गोंडगों महल। इस महल के की खासियत हैं कि अनेक जगहों पर किले, महल पहाड़ियों पर बने हुए पाए जाते हैं, लेकिन यह महल किला समतल भूमि पर बना हुआ है। कभी गोंडगों राजवंशों की बुलंदी को बताता गोंडगों महल, अब बेकदरी की मार झेल रहा है। द सूत्र की टीम जब गोंडगों महल पहुंची तो पाया कि पूरे महल में बेतरतीब घासफूस उगी हुई है और चमगादड़ उड़ रहे हैं। रखरखाव के अभाव में महल की दीवारे दरक गई हैं और खिड़की दरवाज़े या तो गायब हैं या फिर टूटे पड़े हैं। महल में असामाजिक तत्व कितनी आसानी से आ-जा रहे हैं, इसका अंदाजा इस बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि पहले से ही जर्जर महल की दीवारों पर जहाँ-तहाँ दिलनुमा चित्र बनाए हुए हैं और नाम उकेरे हुए हैं। यहां तक की असामाजिक तत्वों ने इस महल का मुख्य मार्ग पर लगा सूचना बोर्ड तक गिरा दिया है।

गोंडगों महल,

जगदीशपुर यहीं नहीं इस महल की एक और खासियत - इसका जल सुरक्षा घेरा यानी कि महल/किले के चारों तरफ से नदी और नहरों के द्वारा किए गए सुरक्षा के इंतजाम - भी अब बेतरतीब प्रबंधन और देखरेख की कमी की बलि चढ़ गया है। पानी के इस घेरे में या तो अब जंगल उग आया है या फिर ये सूखा पड़ा है। पहले से ही वजूद का संकट झेल रहे गोंडगों महल के आसपास की जमीन पर अतिक्रमण भी हो गया है। जबकि नियम साफ़ कहते हैं कि संरक्षित इमारत के 100 मीटर के दायरे में किसी भी तरह का कंस्ट्रक्शन गलत है।

हाल ही में जनवरी-फरवरी के दौरान सरकार ने इस्लाम नगर का नाम बदलकर जगदीशपुर कर दिया। कारण ये रहा कि जगदीशपुर 11वीं सदी के दौरान परमारों के अधीन था। इसके बाद यह क्षेत्र गोंडगों राजा संग्राम शाह के बावन गढ़ों में से एक रहा। गोंडगों शासकों के बाद इस गढ़ और किले पर देवड़ा राजपूतों का शासन हुआ। कहा जाता है कि राजपूत नरसिंह देवड़ा के शासन के दौरान 1718 में मुगल शासक औरंगजेब के सैनिक दोस्त मोहम्मद खान ने जगदीशपुर पर शासन कर लिया और उसने इसका नाम बदलकर इस्लाम नगर कर दिया। इसलिए ये कहते हुए कि इसका असली नाम जगदीशपुर है, जगह का नाम परिवर्तन कर दिया गया। अब जगहों के नाम तो बदल दिए गए, पर नाम बदलने के इन सभी सियासी दांवपेंचों के बीच गोंडगों महल उपेक्षित ही रह गया।

गोंडगों महल की इस हालत के पीछे एक कारण विभागीय खींचखीं तान भी कही जाती है। पुरातत्व विभाग ने रानी और चमन महल के साथ ही गोंडगों महल को भी संरक्षित किया था। विभाग ने रानी और चमन महल में तो समय-समय पर मरम्मत कार्य कराया, लेकिन गोंडगों महल पर ज्यादा ध्यान नहीं गया। इस वजह से इसकी रौनक चली गई और यह एक खंडहर में तब्दील होता चला गया। या महल मध्य प्रदेश शासन के अंतर्गत संचालनालय द्वारा संरक्षित है। और पुरातत्व विभाग की माने तो गोंडगों महल को पर्यटन विकास निगम को सौंपा जाना है, तो अब वही इसको उपयोग के अनुसार विकसित करेगा। पर अभी तक ऐसा कुछ होता नज़र नहीं आ रहा।

आपको बता दें कि ASI मध्य प्रदेश के 290 स्मारकों को संरक्षित करता है, जबकि मध्य प्रदेश शासन के अंतर्गत संचालनालय 526 अन्य स्मारकों को संरक्षित करता है। संचालनालय के अतिरिक्त कुछ अन्य सरकारी संस्थाएँ स्मारकों की सुरक्षा के लिए प्राथमिक रूप से उत्तरदायी नहीं होने के बाद भी ऐतिहासिक महत्व के प्राचीन स्मारकों से संबंधित कार्य करती हैं जैसे- शहरी विकास और आवास विभाग, मध्य प्रदेश के अंतर्गत सात स्मार्ट सिटी कॉर्पोरेशन अपने-अपने अधिकार क्षेत्र में कुछ विरासत भवनों के नवीनीकरण और जीर्णोद्धार का कार्य करते हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त, मध्य प्रदेश राज्य पर्यटन विकास निगम (MPSTDC)

ने स्मारकों को विरासत होटलों में परिवर्तित करने के लिए हस्तांतरण की प्रक्रिया भी शुरू की हैं - जिसके तहत निगम ने पिछले दस वर्षों की अवधि में संचालनालय से सात स्मारकों का अधिग्रहण भी किया है। लेकिन अब गोंडगों महल की ये प्रक्रिया कब पूरी होगी और कब उसका उद्धार होगा ये तो भगवान ही जाने... फिलहाल, इसके चारों तरफ दीवार उठाकर इसके मुख्य द्वार पर ताला डा लकर बंद कर दिया है।

5 बार पत्र लिखने की बावजूद नहीं हुआ चन्देरी के रामनगर महल का जीर्णोद्धार

### **जिम्मेदार: ASI**

गोंडगों महल के बाद द सूत्र की टीम पहुंची, चंदेरी से 3 किलोमीटर की दूरी पर स्थित 1698 ईस्वी में निर्मित रामनगर महल। ऐतिहासिक एवं पर्यटन नगर चंदेरी में वर्ष भर देशी विदेशी पर्यटकों को आना-जाना जारी रहता है। जब भी कोई पर्यटक नगर में आता है वह चंदेरी निकटवर्ती स्थित ऐतिहासिक रामनगर महल आदि देखने जरूर जाता है। रामनगर महल प्राचीन तालाब की पार पर स्थित होने के कारण सैलानियों के लिए विशेष रूप से आकर्षण का केंद्र बिंदु भी है। पर आज ये अमूल्य धरोहर रामनगर महल बेहद ही दयनीय एवं जर्जर अवस्था से गुजर रहा है। महल की दीवार में दिखाई देती दरार, दरवाजों के टूटते पत्थर चीख चीख कर कह रहे हैं कि जल्दी ही अगर इनकी ओर ध्यान नहीं दिया गया, तो चंदेरी की इस विरासत को अपूर्णनीय क्षति होने से कोई रोक नहीं सकता। बता दें कि ग्वालियर रियासत के तत्कालीन महाराजा माधौरा धौ व सिंधिया द्वारा 1925 ईस्वी में रामनगर महल का जीर्णोद्धार कराया गया था। पर आज इस महल को जीर्णोद्धार की दोबारा दरकार है। यदि रामनगर महल हर हाल में आगामी पीढ़ी हेतु सुरक्षित रखना है, तो ये जरूरी है कि महल की दीवारों-रों दरवाजों को मजबूत किया जाए, महल का रसायनिक संरक्षण हो, परिसर स्थित उद्यान को जीवित रखा जाए।

ऐसा भी नहीं है कि पुरातत्व विभाग का इस ओर ध्यान आकर्षित न किया गया हो। 1 या 2 बार नहीं बल्कि 4 से 5 बार रामनगर महल की खराब हालत के बारे में शासन को लिखा गया लेकिन आज दिनांक तक कोई नतीजा सामने नहीं आ सका है। पहला पत्र जून, 2013 में इस संबंध में पुरातत्व अभिलेखागार एवं संग्रहालय भोपाल को और जिलाधीश अशोक नगर को लिखा गया था। आवेदन पत्र पर जिलाधीश अशोकनगर ने संज्ञान लेते हुए अगस्त, 2013 को अभिलेखागार एवं संग्रहालय भोपाल को आवश्यक कार्रवाई करने के लिए लिखा। इसके बाद एक आवेदन पत्र नवंबर-2019 को अभिलेखागार एवं संग्रहालय भोपाल/जिलाधीश अशोकनगर/ अनुविभागीय अधिकारी (राजस्व), चन्देरी/ उपसंचालक पुरातत्व अभिलेखागार एवं संग्रहालय ग्वालियर को भी लिखा गया। यही नहीं रामनगर महल की चन्देरी पर्यटन में उपयोगिता इत्यादि तथ्यों का उल्लेख करते हुए एक और आवेदन पत्र फरवरी, 2022 में म.प्र. पर्यटन बोर्ड भोपाल को लिखकर रामनगर महल की सुध लेने का निवेदन किया था। पर इतनी सारी कोशिशें, शिकायतें और पत्राचार के बावजूद रामनगर महल की खराब हालत को लेकर आज तक कुछ हुआ नहीं।

अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पटल पर भारत को वाहवाही दिला चुके हिंगलाजगढ़ के किले की नहीं पूछपरख जिम्मेदार: राज्य पुरातत्व विभाग

### **हिंगलाजगढ़ का किला, मंदसौर**

गोंडगों महल और रामनगर महल के बाद चलते हैं मंदसौर। मध्य प्रदेश-राजस्थान की सीमा से लगे भानपुरा तहसील के नावली गांव की गहरी खाईयों के बीच पहाड़ियों पर बसा हुआ है हिंगलाजगढ़ का किला। हिंगलाजगढ़ का किला भी परमारकालीन है। यह किला 800 वर्ष तक मूर्ति शिल्प कला का केंद्र रहा है। किले में गुप्त और परमार काल की मूर्ति शिल्प और कला कृतियाँ आज भी मौजूद हैं। किले में मिली सबसे पुरानी मूर्ति करीब 1600 साल पुरानी है जो चौथी-पांचवी शताब्दी की मानी जाती है। इतिहासकार बताते हैं कि चंद्रावत शासन का ल के दौरा न धीरे-धीरे यह किला खण्डरो में तब्दील हो गया

था। साल 1773 में महारानी अहिल्याबाई होल्कर ने लक्ष्मण सिंह चंद्रावत को पराजित किया और इस किले पर आधिपत्य जमा लिया और इसका नवीनीकरण किया गया। पर अब फिर से हिंगलाजगढ़ किला जर्जर हालत में है। किले में मौजूद सूरजकुंड की बात करें, तो वह बहुत ही खस्ताहाल है। जानने लायक बात है कि इस किले और यहां मौजूद कलाकृतियों की महत्वता इतनी है कि इसकी प्रतिमाओं को फ्रांस और वाशिंगटन में हुए इंडिया फेस्टिवल में भेजा गया था। भारत को काफी वाहवाही भी मिली। पर इसके बावजूद किले की देखरेख के जिम्मेदार राज्य पुरातत्व विभाग के कानों पर जून नहीं रेंग रही।

ग्वालियर का 15वीं सदी का गूजरी महल जीर्णशीर्ण, पर्यटकों के लिए सुविधाओं का नितांत अभाव

जिम्मेदार: राज्य पुरातत्व विभाग

ग्वालियर के ऐतिहासिक किले पर स्थित पन्द्रहवीं सदी का गूजरी महल ग्वालियर पहुंचने वाले पर्यटकों के सबसे बड़े आकर्षण का केंद्र है। यह एक राजा और जंगल में रहने वाली एक युवती निन्नी जिसे मृगनयनी भी कहा जाता है के प्रेम की अद्भुत कहानी है। राजा मान सिंह तोमर ने अपनी रानी की इच्छा के अनुसार किले पर एक खास महल बनवाया। इसी महल को गूजरी महल कहा जाता है। लेकिन भारतीय इतिहास की यह प्रमुख धरोहर पर्याप्त संरक्षण के अभाव में खराब होती जा रही है। हालांकि पुरातत्व विभाग इसके संरक्षण के लिए काफी प्रयास करने का दावा कर रही है। मृगनयनी की चीजों को संरक्षण के लिए यहां एक गैलरी भी बना रही है। लेकिन यह महल लापरवाही के चलते जर्जर हो रहा है और वहां रखी कीमती ऐतिहासिक वस्तुएं भी जीर्णशीर्ण हो रही हैं। इसके अलावा यहां आने वाले पर्यटकों के लिए सुविधाओं का नितांत अभाव है। पुरा तत्व विभाग में स्टाफ की भारी कमी, टेक्निकल डिपार्टमेंट के 82% पद खाली

मानव संसाधन किसी भी विभाग के सभी गतिविधियों को सीधे-सीधे प्रभावित करता है। अगर स्टाफ होता है तो विभाग संरक्षण के कार्य तो वक़्त पर पूरे कर ही पाता है...साथ ही उसके सिस्टम में मौजूदा कमियों को खोजने में भी उसको मदद मिलती है, जिससे वो भविष्य के लिए ऐतिहासिक धरोहरों के प्रबंधन की बेहतर योजना बना सकता है। पर मध्य प्रदेश के पुरातत्व विभाग में स्टाफ की कमी की हालत ये है कि उसके पास अपने कर्मचारियों को वेतन देने के लिए जो राशि आवंटित होती है...उस आवंटित धनराशि में से काफी अमाउंट प्रति वर्ष सरेंडर कर दिया जा रहा है। स्टाफ की ये कमी वैसे तो सभी कैडर में हैं, पर टेक्निकल डिपार्टमेंट में का बेहद कम होने से विभाग के परफॉरमेंस और आउटपुट पर असर साफ़ नज़र आ रहा है। CAG रिपोर्ट अनुसार सितंबर 2021 तक विभाग में 61 स्वीकृत पदों (22 तकनीकी और 39 गैर-तकनीकी) के विरुद्ध केवल 25 पद (4 तकनीकी एवं 21 गैर तकनीकी) पर अधिकारी/ कर्मचारी ही भरे हुए थे। तो वहीं अप्रैल 2022 तक तकनीकी पदों के कुल 82% पद खाली ही पड़े हुए थे। स्टाफ की इस कमी के वजह से विभाग कई महत्वपूर्ण और ऐतिहासिक स्थलों का उचित रख-रखाव सुनिश्चित करने की स्थिति में नहीं है।

असंरक्षित स्मारकों पर खर्च कर दिए 38.26 लाख

पुरा तत्व विभाग के अस्तव्यस्त काम का आलम तो ये है कि जो धरोहरें कागजों में संरक्षित हैं, उन्हें तो विभाग जर्जरता से बचा नहीं पा रहा...लेकिन ताज महल के पास प्राचीन दरवाजा और दाखिल दरवाजा, सिकंदरी दरवाजा, जुमेराती दरवाजा और नवीन नगर ऐशबाग स्थित प्राचीन बावड़ी के संरक्षण पर कुल मिलाकर 38.26 लाख खर्च करने पर भी आपत्ति जताई गई है। जबकि ये सभी स्मारक असंरक्षित केटेगरी के हैं।

क्या कहते हैं एक्सपर्ट्स

पुरा तत्व विभाग का हेरिटेज संरक्षण को लेकर एप्रोच गलत: मीरा ईश्वर दास, संयोजक, INTACH - भोपाल चैप्टर

द सूत्र ने मध्य प्रदेश के महत्वपूर्ण समराखों की बुरी हालत को लेकर बात की इंडियन नेशनल ट्रस्ट फॉर आर्ट एंड कल्चरल हेरिटेज - भोपाल चैप्टर की संयोजक मीरा ईश्वर दास से। दास ने कहा कि राज्य को और समुदाय को ऐतिहासिक धरोहरों के संरक्षण में अभी काफी काम करने की जरूरत है। उन्होंने न्हों कहा, "किसी भी जगह के ऐतिहासिक इमारतें और हेरिटेज वहां की और वहां के लोगों की पहचान होती हैं। हेरिटेज हमारी जड़ें हैं, जिन्हे सुरक्षित रखना बड़ी जिम्मेदारी का काम है। इन्हें समय रहते बचाना जरूरी है। शासन और पुरातत्व विभाग का हेरिटेज संरक्षण को लेकर जो एप्रोच है वो मेनस्ट्री म है। यानी संरक्षित जगहों में से सिर्फ बड़े और ज्या दा फेमस जगहों का ही संरक्षण करना। बाकी जगहों के कंज़र्वेशन पर पैसा खर्च करने से विभा ग बचता रहा है, जबकि वो भी संरक्षित केटेगरी में है। पर ये काफी गलत तरीका है। हमें सभी संरक्षित धरोहरों के संरक्षण पर बराबर ध्यान देना होगा। साथ ही मध्य प्रदेश में टूरिज्म पर काफी जो र तो दिया जा रहा है, पर ये समझने की जरूरत है कि टूरिस्ट आपके यहाँ तभी आएगा जब या तो आपके यहाँ बहुतायत में नेचुरल ब्यूटी हो या फिर आपके पास एक रिच कल्चर यानी वेल-मेंटें में उ ऐतिहासिक स्मारक या जगहें हों।हों ASI या पुरातत्व विभाग में स्टाफ की कमी को दूर किये जाने की जरूरत है। साथ ही लोकल स्मारकों और हेरिटेज के संरक्षण के लिए हमें एक थर्ड लेयर ऑफ़ प्रोटेक्शन के भी जरूरत है, जिसको की संवैधानिक मंजूरी मिली हों।हों "

मध्य प्रदेश में पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए राज्य सरकार तमाम प्रयास कर रही है। अलग-अलग माध्यमों से टूरिस्ट स्थलों का प्रचार-प्रसार करने की कवायद की जा रही है। साल 2019- 20 से 2022-23 तक करीब 692 करोड़ रुपए टूरिज्म पर खर्च किये गए हैं। लेकिन दूसरी ओर कभी राजाओं-ओं महाराजाओं से आबाद रहने वाले किले और कई और ऐतिहासिक धरोहरों की नीवनीं कमजोर होती जा रही है। वे अपना अस्तित्व खोने की कगार पर है। जरूरत है इन सभी धरोहरों को जल्द-से-जल्द संरक्षित करने की।

### **जानिये विश्व धरोहर दिवस का इतिहास**

-विश्व धरोहर दिवस पहली बार 1983 में संयुक्त राष्ट्र शैक्षिक, वैज्ञानिक और सांस्कृतिक संगठन (यूनेस्को) द्वारा मनाया गया था। यूनेस्को के 22वें आम सम्मेलन के दौरान इसे विश्व आयोजन के रूप में मान्यता मिली थी।

-विश्व धरोहर दिवस को मनाने का उद्देश्य ग्रह पर सांस्कृतिक विरासत और विविधता के बारे में लोगों के बीच जागरूकता फैलाना है। <https://thesootr.com/madhya-pradesh/protected-heritage-sites-in-state-of-uttar-neglect-in-madhya-pradesh/36301>

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

#### **7. Navigating a crisis ([financialexpress.com](https://www.financialexpress.com)) April 17, 2023**

If the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had to forewarn about another bout of financial instability, nearly 15 years after Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy, and make a fervent call that geo-economic fragmentation of the world must be avoided "at all costs," what it reveals as much as the depth and intractability of the world economic crisis is the limitations of institutionalised multilateral counsel in a crisis-ridden world. The world body sounds ominous, if not helpless, when it almost acknowledges that a systemic financial crisis looms large, and asks the regulators and governments to ensure that the recent financial tremors "do not morph into a full-blown financial crisis."

In the latest edition of the World Economic Outlook, the IMF merely states the obvious as it says that, "over the medium term, the prospects for growth now seem dimmer than in decades," and that, "the road back to price stability could be long." While revising its baseline forecast

for the global growth in 2023 to 2.8%, a full 1 percentage points lower than predicted in January, 2022, it also says that the “advanced economies” would grow at just 1.3% in 2023, less than half the rate in 2022. Prospects for the “emerging market and developed economies” are on an average stronger, but even their combined growth is now seen to be just 3.9% this year, significantly lower than 4.7% forecast in January, 2022.

All this is definitely bad news for the Indian economy. India’s status, as “one of the bright spots” of the increasingly sullen world economy, is principally due to its strong macro-economic fundamentals, rather than its aggressive preparedness to take the lead in the world economic stage. That said, the conductors of the country’s monetary and fiscal policies have done a commendable job, despite counsels to play to the gallery. There is indeed a case for resource redistribution in the economy, to lift the poor and let the large informal sector win their spurs during the policy-induced, potentially wholesome transition to a largely organised economy, but that doesn’t justify fiscal extravagance.

The Indian economy has presumably slipped into a somewhat long period of lower growth. Its potential growth has fallen. The pace of structural changes is steady, but rather slow and inadequate to recapture the lost growth potential in the medium term. In fact, the slowness of the structural rejig itself is partly due to the policy focus on inclusiveness, which by itself is no less desirable an objective, than a few basis points of additional growth that rapid, ruthless reforms could produce. The IMF’s latest India growth outlook—down 20 bps and 50 bps, respectively, for the current fiscal year and the next from a quarter ago—perhaps shows that it’s now better understood the country’s economic dynamics, and ground realities.

But the agency has a history of going wide off the mark, in its India-related forecasts, tending to err on the side of optimism. India’s statistical gaps and a certain degree of data opacity could be the reasons for this, apart from the Fund’s own proclivity to see oases in the largely arid global economic landscape. The IMF’s advices are not only well-taken, but only reinforce the direction India has been taking in its own volition. India’s policymakers must take note of the IMF’s caution that further tightening of global financial conditions could lead to a surprise increase in the country’s sovereign spread. <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/navigating-a-crisis/3049463/>

#### **8. PM Gatishkati to help avoid Rs 3,000 crore losses a year due to uncoordinated digging work ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) 18 APRIL 2023**

The government has developed a mobile application -- Call Before U Dig mobile application – on the PM Gatishakti National Master Plan platform that allows owners of assets like optical fibre, gas pipelines, water & electricity lines, etc to inform agencies involved in digging and excavation work so that damage to their assets can be minimised.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) claims that the mobile application can avoid Rs 3,000 crore losses every year due to damage to underground assets due to uncoordinated digging and excavation.

“Many utilities can be saved from unwanted digging and wasteful costs towards restoration, thus saving thousands of crore rupees for businesses and associated expenditures of the Government,” says Sumita Dawra, special secretary, DPIIT.



Dawra was explaining the use cases of the PM Gatishakti, a GIS-based platform that integrates planning and coordination of infrastructure projects from across several central ministries as well as infra projects of state government.

She said that using the PM GatiShakti NMP, asset owner agencies are mapping their underlying assets with GIS coordinates onto the NMP platform. Using this app, alerts are sent to concerned agencies prior to the commencement of digging works. This facilitates coordinated & synchronized excavation without loss/ damage of utilities.

Explaining more uses, Sumita Dawra said that telecom players can use this platform to identify suitable locations for installing 5G cells and planning the 5G rollout.

Street furniture data layers like electric poles, traffic light poles, bus shelters, bus terminals, and Govt buildings have been mapped onto the NMP platform. Access to data layers of different ministries/departments and data on other parameters like population density has helped identify suitable locations for installing 5G cells and planning the 5G rollout.

“The availability of various street furniture and existing telecom infrastructure across States/ UTs among other data layers has helped in expeditious planning of the 5G network. This will enable faster rollout of the network and early availability of 5G services to the nation,” says Dawra.

She also said that the PM Gattishakti platform has been used to saturate 30,000 villages with 4G services. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2023/apr/18/pm-gatishakti-to-help-avoid-rs-3000-crore-losses-a-year-due-to-uncoordinated-digging-work-2567078.html>

**9. PM Gati Shakti: 76 Key Infrastructure Projects worth Rs 5.14 Lakh Crore Evaluated in One Year, NMP Adoption Grows among Ministries** (*swarajyamag.com*) 18 APRIL 2023

The PM Gati Shakti initiative has evaluated 76 infrastructure projects from various ministries worth around Rs 5.14 lakh crore in the last year.

Special secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Sumita Dawra, stated that the usage of the PM Gati Shakti — National Master Plan (NMP) has been increased by the central ministries and states also.

She added, "76 key infrastructure projects relating to railways, roads, shipping, industrial corridors, housing and urban affairs etc, worth Rs 5.14 lakh crore have been evaluated," as per an Economic Times report.

These projects include — Gurdaspur-Jammu-Srinagar natural gas pipeline worth Rs 6,931 crore; the Chennai-Trichy-Tuticorin Exp project worth Rs 30,502 crore, and Indo-Nepal Border-Haldia Corridor worth Rs 30,233 crore.

The projects have been recommended by the Network Planning Group (NPG) constituted under the PM Gati Shakti initiative launched in October 2021.

The NPG is accountable for overseeing all the logistics and connectivity initiatives that involve investments of more than Rs 500 crore.



The group consists of heads of the network planning wing of respective infrastructure ministries and will assist the Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGOS), which is headed by the cabinet secretary.

NPG is approached by all departments for approval before creating a detailed project report (DPR) in the planning stage.

Once cleared by the group, projects follow the usual process of approval by the Finance Ministry and Cabinet, depending on the project.

The National Master Plan also has a digital component in the form of a GIS platform, which integrates the geospatial data related to the infrastructure in the country and planning portals of various ministries and departments.

According to Sumita Dawra, over 1,450 layers of data, including those related to land, ports, forest and highways are available on the portal.

She added that the portal's usage is growing among various ministries for project planning, including social sector departments and states. <https://swarajyamag.com/infrastructure/pm-gati-shakti-76-key-infrastructure-projects-worth-rs-514-lakh-crore-evaluated-in-one-year-nmp-adoption-grows-among-ministries>

#### **10. Parliamentary standing panel questions new attendance and payment systems for MGNREGS workers ([economictimes.indiatimes.com](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com)) 18 APRIL 2023**

As MGNREGS beneficiaries protest against non-payment and delayed payment of wages across states and at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, the standing committee on rural development started examining the initiatives introduced earlier this year. At its first meeting on the issue on Monday, the committee members sought an explanation from the ministry on the reasons for making NMMS app mandatory for marking attendance.

As per sources, the standing committee members pointed out that there were several complaints of legitimate users unable to upload photographs.

The Centre's new initiatives of National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) for marking attendance and Aadhaar-based payment system for beneficiaries of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) have come under the scanner of a parliamentary committee.

As MGNREGS beneficiaries protest against non-payment and delayed payment of wages across states and at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, the standing committee on rural development started examining the initiatives introduced earlier this year.

At its first meeting on the issue on Monday, the committee members sought an explanation from the ministry on the reasons for making NMMS app mandatory for marking attendance. Starting January 1, the ministry had made it mandatory for every MGNREGS worker to mark his attendance by uploading a photograph twice a day on the NMMS app. Workers in several states complained of non-payment of wages as they could not upload photographs and mark attendance due to poor internet connectivity and lack of technological know-how.

As per sources, the standing committee members pointed out that there were several complaints of legitimate users unable to upload photographs.

A member pointed out this amounted to "working for free for the government and bonded labour".

The rural development ministry, however, assured the committee that it was looking into complaints.

The government had asked states to route all payments to MGNREGS workers through the Aadhaar Based Payment System (ABPS) starting February 1. So far, there were two payment modes - account-based and ABPS. Members pointed out to the ministry that for ABPS to work for a MGNREGS worker, his job card and bank account needed to be Aadhaar seeded.

"It is difficult that the name of a person is same in all three. They don't get payments because of this. Sometimes the payments have come in their Aadhaar-linked Jan Dhan account and they are not aware of how to access it," pointed out a member. The committee has sought a report from the ministry on how it is finding solutions to the problems faced by MGNREGS beneficiaries.

The members pointed out the non-release of MGNREGS funds to West Bengal, which has become a politically potent issue. According to sources, the ministry has been asked to give a detailed state-wise report on how much money has been released in different tranches. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/parliamentary-standing-panel-questions-new-attendance-and-payment-systems-for-mgnregs-workers/articleshow/99567112.cms>

**11. Railways earns record revenue of Rs 2.40 lakh crore in 2022-23 ([indiatvnews.com](https://www.indiatvnews.com))**  
17 APRIL 2023

Indian Railways has registered a record revenue of Rs 2.40 lakh crore in the 2022-23 financial year, up by nearly Rs 49,000 crore from the previous year, according to a ministry statement on Monday. In 2022-23, the freight revenue rose to Rs 1.62 lakh crore, a growth of nearly 15 percent from the previous year.

Indian Railways' passenger revenue has registered an all-time high growth of 61 percent to reach Rs 63,300 crore. "After three years, Indian Railways is able to fully meet the pension expenditures. Buoyancy in revenues and tight expenditure management have helped in achieving an operating ratio of 98.14 percent, well within the RE target. After meeting all revenue expenditure, railways generated Rs 3,200 crore for capital investment from its internal resources," it said.

The railways have over the years approached the Finance Ministry to bear parts of its pension burden. The statement further stated that in terms of traffic revenue, the railways earned Rs 63,300 crore in 2022-23 as compared to Rs 39,214 crore in 2021-22. The railways earned Rs 5,951 crore as other coaching revenue in 2022-23 as compared to Rs 4,899 crore during 2021-22. Sundries revenue stood at Rs 8,440 crore during FY 2022-23 as compared to Rs 6,067 crore in 2021-22.

During 2022-23, the gross revenue stood at Rs 2,39,803 crore as compared to Rs 1,91,278 crore in 2021-22. Also, gross traffic receipts stood at Rs 2,39,750 crore as compared to Rs 1,91,206

crore in 2021-22. The total railway receipts in 2022-23 were Rs 2,39,892 crore as compared to Rs 1,91,367 crore the previous year.

According to the statement, the total railway expenditure in 2022-23 was Rs 2,37,375 crore as compared to Rs 2,06,391 crore in 2021-22. The operating ratio in 2022-23 was 98.14 per cent. In terms of capital expenditure, the capital invested was Rs 1,09,004 crore during 2022-23 as compared to Rs 81,664 crore in 2021-22. Under the railway safety fund, Rs 30,001 crore was spent during 2022-23 as compared to Rs 11,105 crore during 2021-22. <https://www.indiatvnews.com/business/news/indian-railways-earns-record-revenue-of-rs-2-40-lakh-crore-in-2022-23-2023-04-17-864428>

## **12. Fresh signs of power distribution companies turning a corner (*livemint.com*) 18 APRIL 2023**

India's power distribution sector has been beset with multiple structural problems. Most distribution utilities (discoms) have suffered from increasing aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses, widening financial losses and growing debt burdens. Tariff revisions in many states have lagged increases in power costs, contributing to widening gaps between the cost of supply and revenue realized. This perilous state of discom finances results in multiple challenges, such as their inability to make timely payments to generation and transmission companies, and lagging investments in long-term infrastructure.

In the Union ministry of power's 10th Integrated Ratings and Ranking report on discoms, released last August, companies were evaluated for the first time on a cash basis rather than on an accrual basis. This revealed the true financial stress in the sector, partly accentuated by covid. While there were bright spots in performance, such as public discoms in Gujarat and Haryana and several private discoms, financial indicators deteriorated for the majority.

The just-released 11th Integrated Ratings report indicates that the sector might be turning a corner. The gap between expenditure and income on a cash-adjusted basis (ACS-ARR Gap in industry parlance) reduced substantially to ₹53,000 crore in 2021-22 compared to ₹97,000 crore in 2019-20, despite an 8% increase in total gross input energy. Most of this improvement was contributed by utilities from five states: Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. The sector wide cash-adjusted ACS-ARR gap per unit has improved to 40 paise, down from 79 paise in 2019-20 and 89 paise in 2020-21.

Another key metric, AT&C losses, reduced to 16.5% in 2021-22, lower than 19.5% in 2019-20 and 21.5% in 2020-21. Bill collection efficiency increased by over 3% to reach 96% in 2021-22. While the sector continues to be highly indebted, the rate of its increase appears to be slowing. Overall, the power distribution sector increased debt by ₹34,000 crore in 2021-22, compared to ₹60,000 crore in 2020-21. Average debt service coverage ratio for the sector also turned positive.

Early signs of a turnaround?: What led to this improved trajectory and is it sustainable? The improvement is the result of Central government reforms, state government efforts to provide financial assistance and disburse subsidy amounts, and discom efforts to improve their internal processes.

The power ministry's Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) is a reform- and result-based approach with an outlay of ₹3 trillion. The RDSS incorporates pre-qualifying criteria for

disbursal of funds, including trajectories for reducing the ACS-ARR gap and AT&C losses, timely publication of tariffs and liquidation of past state-arrears. Additional prudential norms for lenders include similar provisions. Power Finance Corporation and REC, the principal lenders in the sector, have linked their interest rates to the annual ratings exercise in a bid to catalyse discipline and performance improvement.

Several state governments have taken proactive actions. They have provided close to ₹56,000 crore of equity, often via capital grants for loan takeovers, in the past three years. Significantly, state governments disbursed 100% of the tariff subsidy amount booked in 2021-22 and cleared some arrears. Six states showed most improvement in subsidy disbursal: Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. In the past, states would fall short in disbursing tariff subsidies, widening financial gaps in discom balance sheets.

Discoms have also taken significant steps by replacing physical bill generation and payment with digital billing and online payments to ease collections, leveraging specialized software for customer tracking, monitoring defaults, and identifying thefts. The majority have shifted to Ind-AS accounting standards.

The green shoots in the 11th Integrated Rating report indicate that concerted action across Central and state governments, discom managements and regulators could set the sector on the right path. Reforms such as Late Payment Surcharge Rules 2022, and mandatory energy accounting and auditing can prove pivotal in liquidating payables to generation/transmission companies and addressing AT&C losses. The RDSS has set ambitious targets for installation of pre-paid smart-meters and communicable feeder meters, which can deliver significant improvements in metering and billing processes. Discoms must adopt improved accounting practices (adopt Ind-AS, prepare quarterly accounts), and conduct energy audits. They also need enhanced data analytics capabilities to leverage smart infrastructure and identify opportunities to reduce AT&C losses. Further, it is important to expedite capital projects for a wider smart-meter rollout, and to strengthen the system utilizing RDSS funds. State governments need to observe stronger fiscal discipline. They must disburse full tariff subsidy amounts and clear past arrears in a timely manner. Various schemes which have linked state disbursements with lending terms can provide the right impetus for that. Finally, regulators must ensure timely issuance of cost- reflective tariff orders.

A full power-sector turnaround could be a multi-year process, as problems have built up over decades. However, recent results provide cause for optimism after years of sliding performance in this important sector. <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/indias-power-distribution-sector-shows-signs-of-improvement-11th-integrated-ratings-report-indicates-reduction-in-acs-arr-gap-and-at-c-losses-increase-in-bill-collection-efficiency-and-slowng-debt-burden-central-and-state-government-reforms-and-discom-efforts-cited-as-key-factors-11681750221117.html>

### **13. MASSIVE CORRUPTION IN ODISHA IS SIGNALLED BY THE INDIAN BUREAU OF MINES (*interviewtimes.net*) 18 APRIL 2023**

The unlawful movement of manganese ore is causing enormous revenue losses in Odisha, according to the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM). The IBM notified the Ministry of Steel and Mines that the owners of mining leases in Odisha were shipping low-grade manganese ore from their mines to dealers based in West Bengal, who then marketed it as high-grade without further processing. The Siljora Kalimati iron and manganese ore mines were a topic that the

bureau looked at. The Ministry has informed the Odisha Government about the underreporting of chromite and manganese ore grades in November 2022. It had advised the State Government to create a Standard Operating Procedure to avoid revenue loss caused by the classification of higher-quality ores as lower grade.

In a letter dated April 6 to the State Government, the Ministry stated that “under-reporting of mineral grades is a serious issue and causes loss to State exchequer by way of lower collection of various payments such as auction premium, royalty, district mineral foundation funds, and national mineral foundation trust.” The Ministry stated, “State Governments are entitled to create laws for combating unlawful mining, transportation, and storage of minerals under Section 23C of the MMDR Act. The State Governments are in charge of determining the right grade of mineral being sent and adjusting auction premium, royalty, and other payments based on that grade.

96.12% of the nation’s chrome ore, 51.15 percent of India’s bauxite reserves, 33.61% of hematite iron ore, and 43.64% of manganese are all found in the mineral-rich state of Odisha. The Naveen Patnaik administration had previously faced criticism from the opposition, which claimed that there had been serious irregularities in the mineral sector that had resulted in enormous losses and that officials in positions of authority and politicians had accepted corrupt payments from the mining industry. The M. B. Shah Commission, which looked into the matter, produced a report in which it estimated that there were 59,000 crore worth of irregularities.

The investigation conducted by the IBM clearly shows that there is a loss of thousands of crore to the State exchequer by purposefully downgrading the quality of ore being produced in many of the auctioned mines, Bhubaneswar Member of Parliament Aparajita Sarangi said during a press conference here. Without the assistance of the State Government and its apparatus, this is impossible.

“The low-grade manganese ore for the Siljora Kalimati Iron and Manganese Ore Mines varied from a low of 4.86% to a maximum of 40% before auction. However, during the past two years, this has increased to 98% and 96%, respectively. The State exchequer has suffered a significant loss as a result of the ore’s reduction in grade, Ms. Sarangi noted.

The State Government appears to have turned a blind eye to the widespread corruption in iron ore, chrome ore, and manganese mining, according to the BJP MP, despite repeated efforts on the part of the Ministry of Mines. The downgrading of the ore has not resulted in the development of any standard operating procedures to stop future theft of this nature. The State Government has provided the mine owners a window of opportunity by raising a demand and enabling them to get a stay order from the High Court or the Mines Tribunal rather than taking action to terminate the lease. <https://interviewtimes.net/massive-corruption-in-odisha-is-signaled-by-the-indian-bureau-of-mines/>

**14. Miners under-reporting manganese ore grade: Odisha BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi**  
([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) 18 APRIL 2023

**BHUBANESWAR:** In a fresh tirade against the Odisha government, BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi on Monday accused it of allowing merchant miners to loot the state despite repeated reminders by the Ministry of Mines on under-reporting of high-grade ore.

Sarangi told mediapersons that the Ministry of Mines had taken strong exception to the inaction of state government against miners who have been indulging in the illicit trade of under-reporting of manganese ore.

Sharing a letter issued by the ministry to the state government on April 6, 2023, Sarangi said the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) had informed the Centre on September 27, 2022 about under-reporting of grades in auctioned manganese ore mines in Odisha.

“It was observed that in four out of the seven auctioned mines which were analysed, the share of low-grade manganese ore had increased from 0 per cent in FY 2019-2020 to 65 per cent to 100 per cent in financial year 2021-2022. Therefore, other auctioned manganese mines where such drastic change in grade of manganese ore has been reported, such as Kanther-Koira, Katasahi, Kolmong and Mahulsukha mines, may also be examined by the state government,” the IBM said. The ministry had written twice to the state government last year expressing concern over under-reporting of iron ore, chromite ore and manganese ore. It had requested the state government to develop a standard operating procedure for preventing loss of revenue due to declaration of higher grade ores as low grades.

“Under-reporting of grades of minerals is a serious issue and causes loss to state exchequer by way of lower collection of various payments such as auction premium, royalty, DMF, and NMET. This is especially true for auctioned mines wherein a major portion of revenue accrues by way of auction premium,” said the letter from the ministry.

The BJP lawmaker who blew the lid of the mining scam in September, 2022 said the ministry had cited the example of Siljora Kalimati iron ore and manganese mine in which over 2.75 lakh tonne high grade manganese ore was shown as low grade ore (below 25 per cent grade) in the last three financial years. The ore were sold at higher price to five traders.

The average loss of revenue to the state per tonne of manganese will be Rs 4,997 in case of ore of over 25 per cent and below 35 per cent grade. If the ore is of 35 per cent and below 44 per cent grade the loss per tonne to the state exchequer will be Rs 8,648. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bhubaneswar/2023/apr/18/miners-under-reporting-manganese-ore-grade-odishabjp-mp-aparajita-sarangi-2567057.html>

**15. Rs 500 crore mining scam in connivance of Odisha govt: Aparajita Sarangi**  
([odishatv.in](http://odishatv.in)) 17 APRIL 2023

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi on Monday alleged that the Odisha government is hand in glove with the mining mafia responsible for a scam to the tune of Rs 500 crore.

Sarangi alleged this at a press conference in Bhubaneswar. She said, “Before the auction, the low-grade manganese ore ranged from 4.86% to a maximum of 40%. However, this range has been raised to 98% and 96% in the last two years. However, this lowering of grade of ore has led to a huge loss to the state exchequer.”

“No standard operating procedure (SOP) has been developed to prevent the recurrence of such theft through downgrading the ore. Instead of initiating steps for cancellation of the lease, the state government has given a window of opportunity to the mine owners by raising a demand



and allowing them to get a stay order from the High Court or the Mines Tribunal,” Sarangi said.

“There is loss of thousands of crores to the State exchequer by deliberately downgrading the quality of ore being produced in many of the auctioned mines. This cannot happen without the connivance of the State Govt and its machinery,” she alleged.

She cited the Shah Commission report while cornering the Odisha government. She said, “Shah Commission had been set up by the Central Government to enquire into the illegal mining/the mining scam in Odisha. In November 2010, the Shah Commission gave a report regarding various irregularities including the Odisha govt turning a blind eye to illegal mining in various mines of Odisha. The report stated that the extent of irregularities in the mining sector in Odisha was to the tune of Rs 59,000- crore.”

“It was expected that after Shah Commission Report about illegal mining in Odisha, the state govt would make sincere attempts to check the irregularities. But the corruption and irregularities have found new ways under the BJD govt,” Sarangi said.

No comments have been received from the concerned authorities.  
<https://odishatv.in/news/odisha/rs-500-crore-mining-scam-in-connivance-of-odisha-govt-aparajita-sarangi-201984>

**16. Left with just 11 inhabitants, a village caught between climate change and sea**  
([indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com)) Updated: April 18, 2023

Odisha villages caught between climate change and deep blue seaL Nawaye repairs his net close to his damaged house in Odisha’s Ramayapatna village. (Express photo by Sujit Bisoyi)

Staring at the mighty Bay of Bengal outside her one-storey house, Chandragiri Paindi remembers how Podampeta village was bustling with life until 2007.

“We used to celebrate all our festivals together. Once the children got back from school, they would play, fight and laugh... there was never a dull moment.”

That started changing since 2007, when the marauding sea started making swift advances to reclaim land. Over 500 families deserted the village, condemning the once-thriving hamlet to a deserted shadow of its former self. Once home to over 1,500 fisherfolk, it is currently inhabited by just 11 persons belonging to the two remaining families, one of them Paindi’s.

Podampeta lies quiescent on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, near the mouth of Rushikulya river. Around 10 km from National Highway 16, the closest town is Huma in Ganjam district. A haunting emptiness hits home as one walks through Podampeta’s deserted sandy paths. Though most houses are under lock and key, these serve little or no purpose since determined waves have successfully torn down walls and foundations of many houses. Overrun by trees and shrubs, colours fading from the dilapidated walls as they await their inevitable end, the houses spend their final days in service of their new inhabitants — stray dogs, abandoned cattle and pigeons.

In a written reply in the state Assembly last month, Odisha Forest and Environment Minister Pradip Kumar Amat had said that families from erosion-hit Podampeta village and



Ramayapatna in Ganjam district have already been shifted to safer places. He added that rising sea levels and coastal erosion due to climate change had already submerged 16 villages in Kendrapara district.

Paindi, 40, a mother of five, told The Indian Express, “We will not leave the village till the sea enters our home. We poured all our savings to build this house. Government officers are pressuring us to shift to the rehabilitation colony. We are emotionally attached to this house. We will not abandon it.”

Paindi and the other residents claim the village came up nearly 40 years ago, after fisherfolk from a nearby village shifted to Podampeta. Its location meant it was ideal for fisherfolk to venture into the sea, with ample space to dock boats, and to store their nets and other equipment.

Paindi, a homemaker, recalls, “When my family shifted here, the sea was around 1 km away from the village. Now, it lies a few metres away. Since erosion started in 2007, the sea has gobbled up over 100 homes.”

‘How will we all fit in?’

Keeping in mind the impact of this surge in sea levels, the state government has since 2015 shifted most inhabitants of the village to a colony around 5 km away. The 300 sq ft house provided to the residents, rehabilitated under the Odisha Disaster Recovery Project (ODRP), has a drawing-cum-bedroom, a kitchen and a toilet.

Chandragiri Potodu, Paindi’s husband, complains, “The government is giving us a one-room unit in the resettlement colony. My family has seven members, including four girls. How will we all fit in a one-room house? And if we want to expand the house, we will have to buy land and invest in construction. We don’t have the resources to do that now.”

Besides their family, the only other family in the village is that of 68-year-old Jami Nacheya, his wife and their two daughters.

“Two of my sons got a house each in the ODRP colony. They live there with their families. I go to their homes at times. But staying here in Podampeta makes it easier for me to venture into the sea early in the morning,” said Nacheya.

Five km away, a huge crowd has gathered at the ODRP Colony’s common service centre (CSC), with people seeking help with their Aadhaar cards, caste certificates, vehicle insurance and gas connections, among other requests.

Among those waiting at the CSC for help to process his daughter’s documents is B Eriga. “I shifted to this colony in 2016 with my wife and daughter. Though the colony has all facilities, we don’t get enough work. At the age of 71, it is not easy for me to wake up at 3 am to step into the sea and fish,” said the wizened Eriga.

Back in Podampeta’s makeshift fish landing centre, which is close to the sea, 39-year-old B Mohana said he was not ready to abandon the house built by his father. He was among the last residents to leave for the ODRP colony four months ago.

“There was no other way out. We had to leave the village. The sea would enter the house during high tide in peak monsoon. The primary school too was no longer operational in Podampeta. All of that made it impossible for us to stay there,” says Mohana.

Ganjam tahsildar Arun Kumar Nayak said the state government had sanctioned a Rs 73-lakh plan to develop a sea wall using geotextile tube to check coastal erosion. Geotextile tubes, which are used to form sea walls, generally absorb the impact of waves when they hit the shore. This helps minimize erosion. “We will start work soon,” Nayak said.

A similar story at Ramayapatna village

Even as Podampeta fades into quiet oblivion, another seaside village in Ganjam district, located about 60 km away, is also at the receiving end of the wrath of the Bay of Bengal.

In Chikiti block’s Ramayapatna, the majority of residents are fisherfolk. They claimed that over 30 houses and over 30 acres of agricultural land had been swallowed by the sea over the past few years. Of the 300 families that lived in this village, 40-50 have already left.

Repairing his net on Ramayapatna’s coastline on a sunny morning, 70-year-old L Nawaye says, “My three sons got three houses in the nearest ODRP colony and shifted there. Fisherfolk always look for houses close to the sea. If we shift to that colony, who will look after our boats and nets?”

In Ramayapatna too, the state government has sanctioned a plan of Rs 23 crore to develop a geosynthetic sea wall of around 1,200 metres to protect the village from sea erosion.

Nawaye hopes the sea wall will come up before it was too late.

Nawaye’s neighbour R Trinath is upset that he is yet to get a house in the ODRP colony. “I have already lost two of my five rooms to coastal erosion. I approached several people but I am yet to get a house in the resettlement colony. In protest against the administration’s apathy, I did not go to the cyclone shelters when the government shifted all the villagers there during the recent cyclones,” claimed Trinath.

Speaking in the state Assembly last month, minister Amat had said there was high possibility of coastal erosion in areas from Satabhaya to Pentha in Kendrapara district; Talasahi, Udayapur and the northern side of the Budhabalanga river mouth in Balasore district; Paradip port area in Jagatsinghpur district; the banks of the Jamuna and the beach area of Puri and northern part of Gopalpur port and Ramayapatna in the north part of the Bahuda river mouth.

According to Odisha’s climate change action plan, made by its Forest and Environment Department, of the coast length of 480 km, nearly 187 km is exposed to erosion and considered stable; 39.3 km falls in the high-erosion zone; while 51.96 km has been designated as falling in the medium-erosion zone.

The action plan emphasized Odisha’s particular vulnerability to the impact of climate change in the form of rise in sea levels and increased intensity of storms. Loss of land to sea has become a more recurrent and frequent phenomenon.

According to a study on ‘Shoreline Change Along Odisha Coast’, published in the Journal of Earth System Science in 2021, coastal structures such as sea walls, breakwaters and jetties result in modification of the shoreline and beach morphology. Construction of hard structures along the coast, either for development of ports and harbours significantly modifies the shoreline. Besides, natural hazards such as tsunami and cyclone storms along the Indian coast have resulted in significant changes in the shoreline. It said that along the east coast of India, Odisha is most prone to cyclones. Cyclones along the Odisha coast cause severe damage to coastal life and coastal structures.

Odisha has faced 10 cyclones in the last 12 years, said official sources.

Prabin Kumar Kar, the first author of the study and project scientist at Berhampur University, said unlike the Arabian sea, most of the rivers are inclined towards Bay of Bengal. “The river flow acts as a barrier to ocean current at the river mouth area and causes erosion in areas located in the northern part of the river channel. Both Podampeta and Ramayapatna are located in northern sides of rivers Rushikulya and Bahuda respectively,” Kar told The Indian Express. Kar said sea level rise because of global warming has also another major role for changing in shoreline.

The action plan underlined that ocean dynamics and coastal processes have a strong link to climate change. They also have strong links to various disasters that are likely to confront the state frequently.

J Sukanti, who left Podampeta village nearly six months ago, said she kept waiting for the authorities to take steps to protect the village from sea erosion but in vain. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/odisha-villages-caught-between-climate-change-and-deep-blue-sea-8561918/>