

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS

1. "AI is empowering auditors in informed decision making and creating value for nation," says CAG GC Murmu (*aninews.in*) Updated: Mar 20, 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu at the MoU signing ceremony between CAG institution and IIT Delhi said on Wednesday that whether it is detecting fraudulent activities, or optimizing compliance processes, AI driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

The CAG said, "Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI catalyses positive change, empowers auditors (/topic/auditors), and organisations to unlock new insights, drives informed decision-making, and creates value for the nation."

The MoU was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG and Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT (/topic/iit) Delhi (/topic/delhi) in the presence of the CAG of India. Murmu said that AI (/topic/ai)-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors (/topic/auditors) to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.

Stating that the Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI (/topic/ai) for governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu added, "AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy."

The CAG said, "As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency."

GC Murmu said, "As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognises the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities."

Through this MoU, the two institutions will partner in four key areas for the use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing. Bajaj said that through this partnership we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. "The AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis a vis the

performance of the government," he added further. <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/ai-is-empowering-auditors-in-informed-decision-making-and-creating-value-for-nation-says-cag-gc-murmu20240320174338/>

2. AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to ever-changing environment: CAG Murmu (*ptinews.com*) 21 March 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu on Wednesday said AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

Speaking at an MoU signing ceremony between CAG institution and IIT, Delhi here, Murmu said AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.

“Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors, and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation,” he said.

The MoU was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG and Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi in the presence of the CAG of India.

Murmu further said Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for governance and is on track to become the global hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024.

“By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy,” he added.

Through the MoU, the two institutions would collaborate in four key areas for use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Bajaj said the AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance the efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis-a-vis the performance of the government. <https://www.ptinews.com/story/business/ai-driven-solutions-empower-auditors-to-adapt-to-ever-changing-environment-cag-murmu/1371213>

3. CAG GC Murmu expresses concern at inadequacies in climate finance (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) 20 March 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General G C Murmu on Tuesday expressed concern at inadequacies in climate financing, which, he said, will exacerbate further rise in temperatures and intensify socio-economic consequences.

Speaking at a seminar on climate finance here, attended by representatives from the finance ministry, RBI and several state govts, the CAG said climate change is expected to cause around 2.5 lakh additional human deaths (estimated by WHO) globally per annum between 2030 and 2050, and this warrants a targeted climate finance which is estimated to go beyond \$10 trillion annually (by 2050).

“The scarcity of finance requires development of a green finance ecosystem, including innovative financial instruments, green budgeting, targeted interventions, incentives and monitoring,” the auditor said. He emphasized on bringing transparency and accountability while creating such an ecosystem for its optimal utilization.

Murmu said this brings in the important role played by the federal auditor. As stewards of public finance, the auditors have the responsibility and the opportunity to ensure that financial resources allocated to address climate change are used transparently, efficiently and effectively, he said.

“Auditors need to evaluate the efficiency of financial mechanisms and scrutinize overall governance and decision-making processes involved in the broad spectrum of public sector climate financing, to ensure that these are accountable, participatory, and responsive to the needs of affected communities,” the CAG said. The audits should bring out recommendations to ensure that investments deliver the intended environmental and social outcomes, and benefits reach the communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts, he added.

The CAG in the past few years has conducted several audit reviews of climate related subjects such as compensatory afforestation in India; renewable energy sector, environmental clearance and post clearance monitoring; ground water management and regulation and conservation of coastal ecosystems, etc.

Murmu said audit institutions are facing challenges as they need tailored methodologies and risk assessment tools to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of climate finance initiatives. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/cag-gc-murmu-expresses-concern-at-inadequacies-in-climate-financing/articleshow/108649513.cms>

4. We have opportunity to shape future with AI serving as catalyst for positive change: CAG (*aninews.in*) 20 March, 2024

Girish Chandra Murmu, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, emphasized the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in revolutionizing audit practices and driving informed decision-making at the MoU signing ceremony between the CAG institution and the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT Delhi), held today in New Delhi.

Addressing the gathering, Murmu highlighted how AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to dynamic environments, detect fraudulent activities, optimize compliance processes, and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

He emphasized the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, unlocking new insights and creating value for the nation.

Murmu said, “Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors, and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation.”

The MoU, signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG, and Professor Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi, in the presence of Murmu, signifies a collaborative effort between the two institutions to leverage AI in audit practices.

Murmu emphasized that AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, allowing auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities.

Murmu said, “AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.”

He underscored the significant strides made by the Government of India in adopting AI for governance, positioning the country as a global hub for AI innovation.

Stating that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for Governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, “AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight.”

He added, “By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.”

Furthermore, Murmu highlighted the pivotal role of AI in enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and insight in the field of audit. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, uncovering patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.

The CAG said, “As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.”

The CAG emphasized that as the landscape of audit undergoes a profound transformation with the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.

Murmu reiterated the importance of the MoU in contributing to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit.

Through this collaborative endeavor, both institutions aim to harness the transformative potential of AI and enhance audit processes.

Murmu said, “As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognizes the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities.”

The partnership between the CAG institution and IIT Delhi will focus on four key areas, including the use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

Anand Bajaj said, “Through this partnership we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. The AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis a vis the performance of the government.” <https://www.latestly.com/agency-news/business-news-we-have-opportunity-to-shape-future-with-ai-serving-as-catalyst-for-positive-change-cag-5834571.html> <https://aninews.in/news/business/we-have-opportunity-to-shape-future-with-ai-serving-as-catalyst-for-positive-change-cag20240320212421/>

5. CAG, IIT-Delhi ink pact for use of tech in audit (*tribuneindia.com*) Mar 21, 2024

AI-driven solutions empower auditors to deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making, said the Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu at an MoU signing ceremony between CAG and IIT-Delhi.

Through this MoU, the two institutions would partner in key areas for use of AI in audit, capacity building and knowledge sharing, a statement of the CAG said. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/delhi/cag-iit-delhi-ink-pact-for-use-of-tech-in-audit-602855>

6. We Have Opportunity To Shape Future With AI Serving As Catalyst For Positive Change: CAG (*businessworld.in*) 21 March 2024

He emphasises the opportunity to shape a future where AI catalyses positive change, unlocking new insights and creating value for the nation

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Addressing the gathering, Murmu highlighted how AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to dynamic environments, detect fraudulent activities, optimise

compliance processes, and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

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He added, "By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy."

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The CAG said, "As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the audit landscape is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency."

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Murmu reiterated the importance of the MoU in contributing to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers

of AI research, education and application in the audit domain. <https://www.businessworld.in/article/We-Have-Opportunity-To-Shape-Future-With-AI-Serving-As-Catalyst-For-Positive-Change-CAG/21-03-2024-514217/>

7. AI empowering auditors to adapt to changing environment: CAG (uniindia.com) 20 March 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, said on Wednesday that whether detecting fraudulent activities or optimizing compliance processes, AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an everchanging environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

“Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation,” Murmu said during the signing of the MoU between CAG institutions and IIT, Delhi.

The MoU was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG, and Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi, in the presence of the CAG of India.

Murmu said that AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.

Stating that the government has made huge strides in adopting AI for governance and is on track to become the global hub for AI innovation as the chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, “AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.”

The CAG said, “As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.’

Murmu said, “As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavor that recognizes the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities.’

Through this MoU, the two institutions would partner in four key areas: use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building, and knowledge sharing. Meanwhile, Bajaj said, “Through this partnership, we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. The AI-equipped audit processes will not only enhance

our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis-à-vis the performance of the government.” <https://www.uniindia.com/~ai-empowering-auditors-to-adapt-to-changing-environment-cag/India/news/3164863.html>

8. CAG brings IIT Delhi on board for AI-driven audits (*lokmatimes.com*) March 20, 2024

CAG institution and IIT Delhi signed an MoU on Wednesday for a partnership in four key areas for use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

The MoU between the two institutions was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer & Additional Deputy CAG and Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi in the presence of the CAG of India Girish Chandra Murmu.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Murmu said, “Whether it be detecting fraudulent activities, or optimising compliance processes, AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.”

“By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy,” he explained.

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Stating that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for Governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, “AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight.”

Murmu also said, “As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit.” <https://www.lokmatimes.com/national/cag-brings-iit-delhi-on-board-for-ai-driven-audits/>

9. "AI is empowering auditors in informed decision making and creating value for nation," says CAG GC Murmu (*businessworld.in*) Updated: Mar 20, 2024

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10. We have opportunity to shape future with AI serving as catalyst for positive change: CAG (*theprint.in*) 20 March, 2024

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Addressing the gathering, Murmu highlighted how AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to dynamic environments, detect fraudulent activities, optimize compliance processes, and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

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The MoU, signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG, and Professor Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi, in the presence of Murmu, signifies a collaborative effort between the two institutions to leverage AI in audit practices.

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He added, “By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.”

Furthermore, Murmu highlighted the pivotal role of AI in enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and insight in the field of audit. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, uncovering patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.

The CAG said, “As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.”

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traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.

Murmu reiterated the importance of the MoU in contributing to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit.

Through this collaborative endeavor, both institutions aim to harness the transformative potential of AI and enhance audit processes.

Murmu said, “As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognizes the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities.”

The partnership between the CAG institution and IIT Delhi will focus on four key areas, including the use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

Anand Bajaj said, “Through this partnership we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. The AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis a vis the performance of the government.” <https://theprint.in/economy/we-have-opportunity-to-shape-future-with-ai-serving-as-catalyst-for-positive-change-cag/2008945/>

11. CAG signs MoU with IIT Delhi on Artificial Intelligence (*thehindu.com*) March 21, 2024

On the occasion, CAG Girish Chandra Murmu terms the MoU as a significant milestone in the journey towards leveraging AI and other emerging technologies for advancement of audit practices

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on March 20 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi on Artificial Intelligence.

The MoU was signed and exchanged between Additional Deputy CAG A. M. Bajaj and IIT Delhi Director, Prof. Rangan Banerjee, in the presence of CAG Girish Chandra Murmu.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Murmu said the MoU marked a significant milestone in the journey towards leveraging AI and other emerging technologies for the advancement of audit practices, and beyond.

“It is noteworthy to mention that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation

as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024,” said Mr. Murmu.

He said the tussle to assume leadership in the field of AI had seen many countries implementing orders and laws to promote adoption of responsible AI. “Notable among these are the US government’s Executive Order on Artificial Intelligence brought out last year, and the recently implemented law on Artificial Intelligence by the European Union,” he said.

The Government of India had unveiled the national strategy for AI in 2018. It aims to encourage innovation, skilling of the workforce, and promotion of responsible AI adoption.

“India AI Mission, a landmark initiative aimed at accelerating AI research, development, and adoption across various sectors was recently approved by the Cabinet. This mission marks a significant step towards bolstering India’s AI ecosystem and underscores the government’s commitment to harnessing the transformative potential of AI to address societal challenges, drive economic growth, and foster innovation,” Mr. Murmu added.

On the signing of the MoU, he said: “Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognises the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities... AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight.”

“By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy. Moreover, AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks...,” he said, adding that IIT Delhi had been at the forefront of AI research and innovation.

As part of the MoU, the CAG will have access to cutting-edge AI expertise, capacity building for our workforce, and development of bespoke AI solutions tailored to specific audit needs. <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/cag-signs-mou-with-iit-delhi-on-artificial-intelligence/article67972688.ece>

12. CAG brings IIT Delhi on board for AI-driven audits (*daijiworld.com*) March 20, 2024

CAG institution and IIT Delhi signed an MoU on Wednesday for a partnership in four key areas for use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

The MoU between the two institutions was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer & Additional Deputy CAG and Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi in the presence of the CAG of India Girish Chandra Murmu.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Murmu said, “Whether it be detecting fraudulent activities, or optimising compliance processes, AI-driven solutions empower auditors

to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.”

“By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy,” he explained.

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Stating that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for Governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, “AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight.”

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13. We have opportunity to shape future with AI serving as catalyst for positive change: CAG (*latestly.com*) 20 March, 2024

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Addressing the gathering, Murmu highlighted how AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to dynamic environments, detect fraudulent activities, optimize compliance processes, and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

He emphasized the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, unlocking new insights and creating value for the nation.

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He underscored the significant strides made by the Government of India in adopting AI for governance, positioning the country as a global hub for AI innovation.

Stating that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for Governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, “AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight.”

He added, “By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.”

Furthermore, Murmu highlighted the pivotal role of AI in enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and insight in the field of audit. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, uncovering patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.

The CAG said, “As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.”

The CAG emphasized that as the landscape of audit undergoes a profound transformation with the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.

Murmu reiterated the importance of the MoU in contributing to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit.

Through this collaborative endeavor, both institutions aim to harness the transformative potential of AI and enhance audit processes.

Murmu said, “As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognizes the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities.”

The partnership between the CAG institution and IIT Delhi will focus on four key areas, including the use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

Anand Bajaj said, “Through this partnership we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. The AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis a vis the performance of the government.” <https://www.latestly.com/agency-news/business-news-we-have-opportunity-to-shape-future-with-ai-serving-as-catalyst-for-positive-change-cag-5834571.html>

14. AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to ever-changing environment: CAG Murmu (*newsdrum.in*) 20 March 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu on Wednesday said AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

Speaking at an MoU signing ceremony between CAG institution and IIT, Delhi here, Murmu said AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.

“Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors, and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation,” he said.

The MoU was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG and Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi in the presence of the CAG of India.

Murmu further said Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for governance and is on track to become the global hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024.

“By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy,” he added.

Through the MoU, the two institutions would collaborate in four key areas for use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Bajaj said the AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance the efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis-a-vis the performance of the government. <https://www.newsdrum.in/business/ai-driven-solutions-empower-auditors-to-adapt-to-ever-changing-environment-cag-murmu-4381820>

15. We have opportunity to shape future with AI serving as catalyst for positive change: CAG (*lokmatimes.com*) 20 March, 2024

Girish Chandra Murmu, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, emphasized the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in revolutionizing audit practices and driving informed decision-making at the MoU signing ceremony

between the CAG institution and the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT Delhi), held today in New Delhi.

Addressing the gathering, Murmu highlighted how AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to dynamic environments, detect fraudulent activities, optimize compliance processes, and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

He emphasized the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, unlocking new insights and creating value for the nation.

Murmu said, “Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors, and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation.”

The MoU, signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG, and Professor Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi, in the presence of Murmu, signifies a collaborative effort between the two institutions to leverage AI in audit practices.

Murmu emphasized that AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, allowing auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities.

Murmu said, “AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.”

He underscored the significant strides made by the Government of India in adopting AI for governance, positioning the country as a global hub for AI innovation.

Stating that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for Governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, “AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight.”

He added, “By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.”

Furthermore, Murmu highlighted the pivotal role of AI in enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and insight in the field of audit. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, uncovering patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy.

The CAG said, “As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.”

The CAG emphasized that as the landscape of audit undergoes a profound transformation with the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency.

Murmu reiterated the importance of the MoU in contributing to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit.

Through this collaborative endeavor, both institutions aim to harness the transformative potential of AI and enhance audit processes.

Murmu said, “As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognizes the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities.”

The partnership between the CAG institution and IIT Delhi will focus on four key areas, including the use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

Anand Bajaj said, “Through this partnership we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. The AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis a vis the performance of the government.” <https://www.lokmatimes.com/business/we-have-opportunity-to-shape-future-with-ai-serving-as-catalyst-for-positive-change-cag/>

16. "AI is empowering auditors in informed decision making and creating value for nation," says CAG GC Murmu (*devdiscourse.com*)
Updated: Mar 20, 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu at the MoU signing ceremony between CAG institution and IIT Delhi said on Wednesday that whether it is detecting fraudulent activities, or optimizing compliance processes, AI driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

The CAG said, "Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI catalyses positive change, empowers auditors (/topic/auditors), and organisations to unlock new insights, drives informed decision-making, and creates value for the nation."

The MoU was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG and Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT (/topic/iit) Delhi (/topic/delhi) in the presence of the CAG of India. Murmu said that AI (/topic/ai)-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors (/topic/auditors) to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.

Stating that the Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI (/topic/ai) for governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu added, "AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy."

The CAG said, "As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency."

GC Murmu said, "As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognises the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities."

Through this MoU, the two institutions will partner in four key areas for the use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing. Bajaj said that through this partnership we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. "The AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis a vis the performance of the government," he added further. <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/headlines/2864027-ai-is-empowering-auditors-in-informed-decision-making-and-creating-value-for-nation-says-cag-gc-murmu>

17. CAG Brings IIT Delhi On Board For AI-Driven Audits (*ommcomnews.com*) March 20, 2024

CAG institution and IIT Delhi signed an MoU on Wednesday for a partnership in four key areas for use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

The MoU between the two institutions was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer & Additional Deputy CAG and Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi in the presence of the CAG of India Girish Chandra Murmu.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Murmu said, "Whether it be detecting fraudulent activities, or optimising compliance processes, AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making."

"By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy," he explained.

Murmu said that AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.

Stating that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for Governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, “AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight.”

Murmu also said, “As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit.” <https://ommcomnews.com/india-news/cag-brings-iit-delhi-on-board-for-ai-driven-audits>

18. We have opportunity to shape future with AI serving as catalyst for positive change: CAG (*devdiscourse.com*) 20 March 2024

Addressing the gathering, Murmu highlighted how AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to dynamic environments, detect fraudulent activities, optimize compliance processes, and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

Girish Chandra Murmu, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, emphasized the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in revolutionizing audit practices and driving informed decision-making at the MoU signing ceremony between the CAG institution and the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT Delhi), held today in New Delhi. Addressing the gathering, Murmu highlighted how AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to dynamic environments, detect fraudulent activities, optimize compliance processes, and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

He emphasized the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, unlocking new insights and creating value for the nation. Murmu said, "Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors, and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation."

The MoU, signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG, and Professor Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi, in the presence of Murmu, signifies a collaborative effort between the two institutions to leverage AI in audit practices. Murmu emphasized that AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, allowing auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities.

Murmu said, "AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes." He underscored the significant strides made

by the Government of India in adopting AI for governance, positioning the country as a global hub for AI innovation.

Stating that Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for Governance and is on track to become the Global Hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024, Murmu said, "AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight." He added, "By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy."

Furthermore, Murmu highlighted the pivotal role of AI in enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and insight in the field of audit. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, uncovering patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy. The CAG said, "As we stand on the threshold of a technological revolution, the landscape of audit is undergoing a profound transformation. With the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency."

The CAG emphasized that as the landscape of audit undergoes a profound transformation with the rapid advancement of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency. Murmu reiterated the importance of the MoU in contributing to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit.

Through this collaborative endeavor, both institutions aim to harness the transformative potential of AI and enhance audit processes. Murmu said, "As signatories to this MoU, we are well-positioned to contribute to the objectives of the India AI Mission, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to advance the frontiers of AI research, education, and application in the domain of audit. Today, we embark on a collaborative endeavour that recognizes the transformative potential of these technologies and the importance of partnership in harnessing their full capabilities."

The partnership between the CAG institution and IIT Delhi will focus on four key areas, including the use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building, and knowledge sharing. Anand Bajaj said, "Through this partnership we look forward to excellence and innovation in audit using emerging technologies. The AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance our efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis a vis the performance of the government."

<https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/business/2864328-we-have-opportunity-to-shape-future-with-ai-serving-as-catalyst-for-positive-change-cag>

19. AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to ever-changing environment: CAG Murmu (*takeonedigitalnetwork.com*) 20 March 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu on Wednesday said AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making.

Speaking at an MoU signing ceremony between CAG institution and IIT, Delhi here, Murmu said AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes.

“Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors, and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation,” he said.

The MoU was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG and Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi in the presence of the CAG of India.

Murmu further said Government of India has made huge strides in adopting AI for governance and is on track to become the global hub for AI Innovation as the chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in 2024.

“By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyze vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy,” he added.

Through the MoU, the two institutions would collaborate in four key areas for use of AI in audit, audit of AI systems, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Bajaj said the AI equipped audit processes will not only enhance the efficiency but would also provide greater assurance to the public vis-a-vis the performance of the government. <https://www.takeonedigitalnetwork.com/ai-driven-solutions-empower-auditors-to-adapt-to-ever-changing-environment-cag-murmu/>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

20. SC asks CAG to examine award of government contracts in Arunachal Pradesh to firms linked to CM's kin
(*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) 20 March 2024

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to examine the award of government contracts to firms allegedly linked to the family members of Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

The order came from a bench comprising Justices Aniruddha Bose and Bela M Trivedi while disposing of a 2010 plea filed by NGO ‘Voluntary Arunachal Sena’ seeking an investigation by a central agency like the CBI into allegations of corruption against Khandu's kin.

Lawyers Prashant Bhushan and Neha Rathi appeared for the Arunachal Pradesh-based organisation which had alleged “gross illegalities, malpractices, rampant corruption and misappropriation of funds coupled with abuse of power in critical areas of governance in the state”.

It was alleged that government contracts, including the one pertaining to distribution of rice, was awarded to firms of relatives of the chief minister.

“Illegalities and malpractices in carriage, distribution and in the raising of false carriage bills for head load with regard to 24,800 MTs of Food grains (rice) under Special Component of Sampoorna 'Gramin Rojgar Yojna', during 2003-04, resulting in the fraudulent realization of the amount to the tune of Rs. 68,44,07,911.00 (Rs sixty-eight crores forty-four lakhs seven thousand nine hundred eleven),” the plea said.

The foodgrains were to be distributed among less than 2 lakh people spread across 13 districts, and the monthly allocation to ration card holders under the public distribution system is around 8 to 10 Kg, the plea said.

The plea also alleged misuse and misappropriation of the National Calamity Contingency Fund and Calamity Relief Fund to the tune of Rs 3.34 crore.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud had on January 29 agreed to examine a separate plea seeking a CBI or SIT probe into the award of contracts for public works to firms owned by family members of Chief Minister Khandu.

It had issued notices to the Centre, the Arunachal Pradesh government and others on the PIL filed by NGOs Save Mon Region Federation and Voluntary Arunachal Sena.

Pema Khandu's father Dorjee Khandu's second wife Rinchin Drema and his nephew Tsering Tashi have been made parties in the case. Dorjee Khandu had died in a helicopter crash in 2011 when he was the chief minister.

The plea claimed Rinchin Drema's firm, Brand Eagles, has been awarded a large number of government contracts despite there being a clear conflict of interest. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/sc-asks-cag-to-examine-award-of-government-contracts-in-arunachal-pradesh-to-firms-linked-to-cms-kin/articleshow/108654036.cms>

21. Arunachal: Supreme Court asks CAG to examine government contracts awarded to CM Pema Khandu's kin (*indiatodayne.in*) Updated Mar 20, 2024

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to examine the award of government contracts to firms allegedly linked to the family members of Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

The order came from a bench comprising Justices Aniruddha Bose and Bela M Trivedi while disposing of a 2010 plea filed by NGO ‘Voluntary Arunachal Sena’ seeking an investigation by a central agency like the CBI into allegations of corruption against Khandu's kin.

Lawyers Prashant Bhushan and Neha Rathi appeared for the Arunachal Pradesh-based organisation which had alleged “gross illegalities, malpractices, rampant corruption and misappropriation of funds coupled with abuse of power in critical areas of governance in the state”.

It was alleged that government contracts, including the one pertaining to distribution of rice, was awarded to firms of relatives of the chief minister.

“Illegalities and malpractices in carriage, distribution and in the raising of false carriage bills for head load with regard to 24,800 MTs of Food grains (rice) under Special Component of Sampoorna 'Gramin Rojgar Yojna', during 2003-04, resulting in the fraudulent realization of the amount to the tune of Rs. 68,44,07,911.00 (Rs sixty-eight crores forty-four lakhs seven thousand nine hundred eleven),” the plea said.

The foodgrains were to be distributed among less than 2 lakh people spread across 13 districts, and the monthly allocation to ration card holders under the public distribution system is around 8 to 10 Kg, the plea said.

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Pema Khandu's father Dorjee Khandu's second wife Rinchin Drema and his nephew Tsering Tashi have been made parties in the case. Dorjee Khandu had died in a helicopter crash in 2011 when he was the chief minister.

The plea claimed Rinchin Drema's firm, Brand Eagles, has been awarded a large number of government contracts despite there being a clear conflict of interest. https://www.indiatodayne.in/arunachal-pradesh/story/arunachal-supreme-court-asks-cag-to-examine-government-contracts-awarded-to-cm-pema-khandus-kin-937121-2024-03-20?utm_source=rssfeed

22. कैग अरुणाचल में मुख्यमंत्री के रिश्तेदारों की कंपनियों को ठेके देने की जांच करे: न्यायालय (*ibc24.in*) March 20, 2024

उच्चतम न्यायालय ने बुधवार को नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) से अरुणाचल प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री पेमा खांडू के परिवार के सदस्यों से जुड़ी कंपनियों को कथित तौर पर सरकारी ठेके देने की जांच करने को कहा।

न्यायमूर्ति अनिरुद्ध बोस और न्यायमूर्ति बेला एम त्रिवेदी की पीठ ने गैर सरकारी संगठन 'वॉलंटरी अरुणाचल सेना' द्वारा 2010 में दायर याचिका का निपटारा करते हुए यह आदेश दिया, जिसमें खांडू

के रिश्तेदारों के खिलाफ भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों की जांच केंद्रीय अन्वेषण ब्यूरो (सीबीआई) जैसी केंद्रीय एजेंसी से कराने का अनुरोध किया गया था।

अरुणाचल प्रदेश स्थित संगठन की ओर से वकील प्रशांत भूषण और नेहा राठी पेश हुए। याचिका में राज्य में शासन के महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों में घोर कदाचार, बड़े पैमाने पर भ्रष्टाचार और सत्ता, धन के दुरुपयोग का आरोप लगाया गया था। यह आरोप लगाया गया था कि चावल वितरण सहित सरकारी ठेके मुख्यमंत्री के रिश्तेदारों की कंपनियों को दिए गए थे।

याचिका में कहा गया, “2003-04 के दौरान ग्रामीण रोजगार योजना के विशेष घटक के तहत 24,800 मीट्रिक टन खाद्यान्न (चावल) के परिवहन, वितरण और झूठे बिल जारी करने में भ्रष्टाचार हुआ। इस तरह, 68.44 करोड़ रुपये की धोखाधड़ी हुई।

याचिका में कहा गया कि खाद्यान्न 13 जिलों में 2 लाख से कम लोगों के बीच वितरित किया जाना था और सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के तहत राशन कार्ड धारकों को मासिक आवंटन लगभग 8 से 10 किलोग्राम है।

याचिका में राष्ट्रीय आपदा आकस्मिक निधि और आपदा राहत कोष के 3.34 करोड़ रुपये के दुरुपयोग का भी आरोप लगाया गया।

प्रधान न्यायाधीश डी वाई चंद्रचूड़ की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ 29 जनवरी को मुख्यमंत्री खांडू के परिवार के सदस्यों के स्वामित्व वाली कंपनियों को सार्वजनिक कार्यों के ठेके देने की सीबीआई या विशेष जांच दल (एसआईटी) से जांच कराने के अनुरोध वाली एक अलग याचिका पर विचार करने पर सहमत हुई थी।

पीठ ने गैर सरकारी संगठनों ‘सेव मोन रीजन फेडरेशन’ और ‘वॉलंटरी अरुणाचल सेना’ द्वारा दायर जनहित याचिका पर केंद्र, अरुणाचल प्रदेश सरकार और अन्य को नोटिस जारी किया था।

मामले में पेमा खांडू के पिता दोरजी खांडू की दूसरी पत्नी रिनचिन ड्रेमा और उनके भतीजे सेरिंग ताशी को पक्षकार बनाया गया है। दोरजी खांडू की 2011 में मुख्यमंत्री रहते हुए एक हेलीकॉप्टर दुर्घटना में मौत हो गई थी।

याचिका में दावा किया गया कि रिनचिन ड्रेमा की कंपनी ब्रांड ईगल्स को हितों का स्पष्ट टकराव होने के बावजूद बड़ी संख्या में सरकारी ठेके दिए गए। <https://www.ibc24.in/country/cag-should-probe-awarding-of-contracts-to-firms-owned-by-cms-relatives-in-arunachal-pradesh-2426024.html>

23. अरुणाचल प्रदेश में सीएम के रिश्तेदारों से जुड़ी कंपनियों को सरकारी ठेके देने की जांच करें, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कैग से कहा (jantaserishta.com) 21 March 2024

उच्चतम न्यायालय ने बुधवार को नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (सीएजी) से कथित तौर पर अरुणाचल प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री पेमा खांडू के परिवार के सदस्यों से जुड़ी कंपनियों को सरकारी ठेके देने की जांच करने को कहा।

यह आदेश न्यायमूर्ति अनिरुद्ध बोस और न्यायमूर्ति बेला एम. त्रिवेदी की पीठ ने गैर सरकारी संगठन ‘स्वैच्छिक अरुणाचल सेना’ द्वारा 2010 में दायर याचिका का निपटारा करते हुए दिया, जिसमें खांडू के रिश्तेदारों के खिलाफ भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों की जांच सीबीआई जैसी केंद्रीय एजेंसी से कराने की मांग की गई थी।

वकील प्रशांत भूषण और नेहा राठी अरुणाचल प्रदेश स्थित संगठन की ओर से पेश हुए, जिसने आरोप लगाया था कि "राज्य में शासन के महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों में घोर अवैधताएं, कदाचार, बड़े पैमाने पर भ्रष्टाचार और सत्ता के दुरुपयोग के साथ धन का दुरुपयोग।"

यह आरोप लगाया गया था कि चावल वितरण सहित सरकारी ठेके मुख्यमंत्री के रिश्तेदारों की फर्मों को दिए गए थे।

"2003-04 के दौरान 'संपूर्ण ग्रामीण रोजगार योजना' के विशेष घटक के तहत 24,800 मीट्रिक टन खाद्यान्न (चावल) के परिवहन, वितरण और झूठे बिल जारी करने में अवैधताएं और कदाचार, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप धोखाधड़ी हुई। रुपये की राशि. 68,44,07,911.00 (अड़सठ करोड़ चौवालीस लाख सात हजार नौ सौ ग्यारह रुपये)," याचिका में कहा गया है।

याचिका में कहा गया है कि खाद्यान्न 13 जिलों में फैले 2 लाख से कम लोगों के बीच वितरित किया जाना था और सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के तहत राशन कार्ड धारकों को मासिक आवंटन लगभग 8 से 10 किलोग्राम है।

याचिका में राष्ट्रीय आपदा आकस्मिकता निधि और आपदा राहत कोष के दुरुपयोग और दुरुपयोग का भी आरोप लगाया गया। 3.34 करोड़।

मुख्य न्यायाधीश डी.वाई चंद्रचूड़ की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ 29 जनवरी को मुख्यमंत्री खांडू के परिवार के सदस्यों के स्वामित्व वाली फर्मों को सार्वजनिक कार्यों के ठेके देने की सीबीआई या एसआईटी जांच की मांग वाली एक अलग याचिका पर विचार करने पर सहमत हुई थी।

इसने गैर सरकारी संगठनों सेव मोन रीजन फेडरेशन और वॉलंटरी अरुणाचल सेना द्वारा दायर जनहित याचिका पर केंद्र, अरुणाचल प्रदेश सरकार और अन्य को नोटिस जारी किया था।

मामले में पेमा खांडू के पिता दोरजी खांडू की दूसरी पत्नी रिनचिन ड्रेमा और उनके भतीजे त्सेरिंग ताशी को पक्ष बनाया गया है। याचिका में दावा किया गया है कि हितों का स्पष्ट टकराव होने के बावजूद रिनचिन ड्रेमा की कंपनी, ब्रांड ईगल्स को बड़ी संख्या में सरकारी ठेके दिए गए हैं। <https://jantaserishta.com/local/arunachal-pradesh/investigate-award-of-government-contracts-to-companies-linked-to-cms-relatives-in-arunachal-pradesh-supreme-court-tells-cag-3175679>

24. कैग अरुणाचल में मुख्यमंत्री के रिश्तेदारों की कंपनियों को ठेके देने की जांच करे: न्यायालय ([hindi.latestly.com](https://www.hindi.latestly.com)) March 20, 2024

उच्चतम न्यायालय ने बुधवार को नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) से अरुणाचल प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री पेमा खांडू के परिवार के सदस्यों से जुड़ी कंपनियों को कथित तौर पर सरकारी ठेके देने की जांच करने को कहा।

न्यायमूर्ति अनिरुद्ध बोस और न्यायमूर्ति बेला एम त्रिवेदी की पीठ ने गैर सरकारी संगठन 'वॉलंटरी अरुणाचल सेना' द्वारा 2010 में दायर याचिका का निपटारा करते हुए यह आदेश दिया, जिसमें खांडू के रिश्तेदारों के खिलाफ भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों की जांच केंद्रीय अन्वेषण ब्यूरो (सीबीआई) जैसी केंद्रीय एजेंसी से कराने का अनुरोध किया गया था।

अरुणाचल प्रदेश स्थित संगठन की ओर से वकील प्रशांत भूषण और नेहा राठी पेश हुए। याचिका में राज्य में शासन के महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों में घोर कदाचार, बड़े पैमाने पर भ्रष्टाचार और सत्ता, धन के दुरुपयोग का आरोप लगाया गया था। यह आरोप लगाया गया था कि चावल वितरण सहित सरकारी ठेके मुख्यमंत्री के रिश्तेदारों की कंपनियों को दिए गए थे।

याचिका में कहा गया, “2003-04 के दौरान ग्रामीण रोजगार योजना के विशेष घटक के तहत 24,800 मीट्रिक टन खाद्यान्न (चावल) के परिवहन, वितरण और झूठे बिल जारी करने में भ्रष्टाचार हुआ। इस तरह, 68.44 करोड़ रुपये की धोखाधड़ी हुई।

याचिका में कहा गया कि खाद्यान्न 13 जिलों में 2 लाख से कम लोगों के बीच वितरित किया जाना था और सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के तहत राशन कार्ड धारकों को मासिक आवंटन लगभग 8 से 10 किलोग्राम है।

याचिका में राष्ट्रीय आपदा आकस्मिक निधि और आपदा राहत कोष के 3.34 करोड़ रुपये के दुरुपयोग का भी आरोप लगाया गया।

प्रधान न्यायाधीश डी वाई चंद्रचूड़ की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ 29 जनवरी को मुख्यमंत्री खांडू के परिवार के सदस्यों के स्वामित्व वाली कंपनियों को सार्वजनिक कार्यों के ठेके देने की सीबीआई या विशेष जांच दल (एसआईटी) से जांच कराने के अनुरोध वाली एक अलग याचिका पर विचार करने पर सहमत हुई थी।

पीठ ने गैर सरकारी संगठनों 'सेव मोन रीजन फेडरेशन' और 'वॉलंटरी अरुणाचल सेना' द्वारा दायर जनहित याचिका पर केंद्र, अरुणाचल प्रदेश सरकार और अन्य को नोटिस जारी किया था।

मामले में पेमा खांडू के पिता दोरजी खांडू की दूसरी पत्नी रिनचिन ड्रेमा और उनके भतीजे सेरिंग ताशी को पक्षकार बनाया गया है। दोरजी खांडू की 2011 में मुख्यमंत्री रहते हुए एक हेलीकॉप्टर दुर्घटना में मौत हो गई थी।

याचिका में दावा किया गया कि रिनचिन ड्रेमा की कंपनी ब्रांड ईगल्स को हितों का स्पष्ट टकराव होने के बावजूद बड़ी संख्या में सरकारी ठेके दिए गए। <https://hindi.latestly.com/agency-news/cag-should-investigate-giving-contracts-to-companies-of-chief-ministers-relatives-in-arunachal-courtr-2108166.html>

25. Liquorgate Scandal: CAG Report Reveals Rs 2002 Cr Loss; Aam Aadmi 'Stirred & Shaken'? (timesnownews.com) Mar 21, 2024

In this segment of Newshour with Navika Kumar, the focus is on the 'Liquorgate' scandal, where a staggering loss of Rs 2002 crore has been uncovered. The discussion centers around the evidence presented by the CAG, consisting of 33 pages of damning proof in black and white. Revelations emerge regarding the clandestine actions of 'Kattar Imaandar,' allegedly favoring special friends with undue benefits. The Aam Aadmi is visibly disturbed by these revelations, demanding accountability. The key question remains: Will 'Kattar Imaandar' step forward to address these allegations and provide answers to the public? In the debate, one panelist, Ravi Srivastava, asserts that the Chief Minister of Delhi is answerable to the Delhi Assembly, particularly in light of the CAG report against AAP.

Video Link: <https://www.timesnownews.com/videos/times-now/newshour/liquorgate-scandal-cag-report-reveals-rs-2002-cr-loss-aam-aadmi-stirred-shaken-newshour-video-108662074>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

26. Little economic basis to ‘One nation one election’ (*thehindubusinessline.com*) March 20, 2024

It is tempting to take a somewhat contrarian view on how the economy gets affected by the ‘One Nation One Election’ report. The report does extol the economic benefits arising from simultaneous (or near simultaneous) elections for all the four layers of the government: Centre, State, municipalities and panchayats.

The conclusions are based on data that has been used to compare economic parameters when there were simultaneous elections, with those held at different points of time. The problem is that there have not been too many such cases to do a meaningful statistical analysis. Further, economic performance is driven by a variety of forces and hence the conclusions on the basis of any single parameter could seem off target. Can we really believe that GDP growth next year will be an additional 1 per cent higher or inflation lower by 1 per cent if all elections were held in May?

First, there are strong reasons to believe that GDP growth is enhanced when there are separate elections. One is aware of the spending that takes place when elections are held. This has strong backward linkages to the SME sector when food, shamanas, furniture, vehicles, etc., are involved and used which adds to overall spending. In a way it is just like having simultaneous World Cup 50 overs and 20 overs at the same time, when teams play different tournaments within the span of 45 days! But if spread over different time periods, spending increases even more and adds to GDP.

Economies in spending

In fact, having simultaneous elections definitely brings in economies in spending for sure and the Election Commission will be better off. But these savings also mean less spending and lower GDP growth. Hence there is reason to believe that having elections for different bodies at different points of time leads to higher GDP than holding them all at once.

Second, the report also talks of having lower inflation with simultaneous elections. This can be contested. It is one thing to say that if spending for all four elections were to take place simultaneously, it would not lead to a 4x rise in spending where x is the amount spent on a single election. But it does not follow that prices will necessarily rise less, as the prices of rentals of chairs, vehicles, volunteers and speakers could increase.

As for the government dropping prices before elections, as it has done just now with respect to fuel, these acts will increase if the elections are held separately. So separate elections are likely to be less inflationary. When they are held simultaneously it becomes hard for the voter to ascertain which layer of government provided the benefit.

Third, the report talks of how fiscal order is better when there is a single election. Here again it can be argued that with the FRBM firmly in place, every government is managing the budget within the rules. Notwithstanding the talk around ‘freebies’, the FRBM has ensured that there is nothing much given out of the ordinary.

Fourth, the report argues that capital formation increases when there are simultaneous elections. Governments anyway tend to impress with higher capex allocations before elections, whether or not elections are held separately or simultaneously. Their capex is driven by fiscal space.

The argument that the private sector does not invest unless the election outcomes are known, has never been proved. Companies are not short-sighted to look only at elections when investing. India has already seen some very strong policy reforms across all sectors which are the guiding signals for investment.

The pertinent point, however, made by the report is the disruption caused on the education front where government schools and teachers are used multiple times. But if one does evaluate the number of days involved for each of these elections, it may not be very significant. Often, the classes are extended as every Board of Education does insist on a fixed number of days of classes.

Hence, the economic rationale for simultaneous elections is less than convincing. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/little-economic-basis-to-one-nation-one-election/article67973290.ece>

27. Poor procurement main reason for farmers' crisis (*thehindubusinessline.com*) Updated - March 20, 2024

Centre must bring in an Act to make it mandatory for private traders to procure grain at MSP

As farmers continue to agitate over the issue of minimum support price (MSP), let us try to unpack the issues involved. There are two issues here: the level of MSP, and the amount procured at that price. The second lies at the heart of the problem.

The MSP is presently offered for 23 crops. Historically, the MSPs are determined based on factors such as cost of cultivation, input prices, supply and demand of crops, the price level in world markets, among other parameters.

The MSPs were fixed based on cost A2+FL formula till 2018. While the cost C2 includes all the expenses incurred for crop cultivation, the A2 covers only the cost that the farmer spends out of his pocket for cultivation. That is, the cost A2+FL (family labour) does not take into account the fixed investment made on farm machinery/irrigation infrastructures, the interest on loans, etc. Therefore, the gap between C2 and A2+FL cost now comes to 30-40 per cent for most mandated crops.

Farmers in most States could not harvest any profit from crop husbandry due to A2+FL pricing formula. They have been demanding MSPs that cover the full cost of production. In the meantime, MS Swaminathan headed Farmers Commission (2006) recommended that MSPs for crops should be fixed at 50 per cent over and above the cost of production.

The Centre made a historic announcement in its Budget 2018-19 that the MSPs will be fixed at least one and half times the cost of production. However, even after the

unprecedented rise in MSPs since then, farmers allege that the income from crop cultivation is inadequate. This is because of poor procurement of crops.

Skewed procurement

Procurement of crops has been poor over the years except for paddy and wheat. Even in paddy and wheat where impressive procurement has taken place since the early 1970s, not all States/farmers have benefited from such procurement.

In 2021-22, about 22 per cent of paddy and 31 per cent of wheat were procured from Punjab alone. That is, about 53 per cent of money spent on account of procurement of paddy and wheat has gone to Punjab alone. Can this skewed procurement help other States' farmers?

In 2021-22, Punjab's share in India's paddy production was only 9.89 per cent, but its share in the procurement was 21.79 per cent. West Bengal accounted for 12.87 per cent of India's paddy production, but its share in the procurement was only 4.17 per cent. Similarly, Tamil Nadu accounted for 6.19 per cent of paddy production, but its share was only 3.26 per cent of the procurement.

This means that the paddy-growing farmers in most States may have sold their crops below the MSP to private traders. This is also reinforced by the data of the Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of farmers in 2018-19 which underlined that only about 17 per cent of farmer households sold paddy to procurement agencies. If we settle the issue of procurement of crops linking it with its production in each State, most issues concerning MSP will go away.

Middleman factor

The issue of 'legalising MSP' arises mainly because of the continuous exploitation of middlemen and private traders in the market. Often farmers do not get even 70 per cent of MSP for their produce from the private traders.

The data published by CACP shows that the market prices rule below the MSP for most mandated crops most of the time. Therefore, the government should bring an Act disallowing private traders/agencies to buy any crop below the MSP.

As per the SAS data of 2018-19, the percentage of farmer households who sold their crops to procurement agency is only around 5 per cent in most crops (17 per cent for paddy). With this low procurement, how can the farmers avail MSP? If arrangements are made to procure 20-25 per cent of the production of all mandated crops, it will increase the market prices, benefiting all farmers. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/poor-procurement-main-reason-for-farmers-crisis/article67973163.ece>

28. Land reforms: Modi 3.0 may pick low-hanging fruits (*financialexpress.com*) March 21, 2024

To focus on reducing disputes, delays in land acquisition.

While the amendments to land acquisition law was put in abeyance in 2015 due to fierce political opposition, the Centre will likely revisit the issue after the general election to

usher in the much-needed reforms in land records and titling and tenancy. Changes could be proposed in the land-use policies for urban, forest and agricultural land, to ensure that the pace of industrialisation and infrastructure creation is not stymied by delays in land acquisition.

Streamlining these issues would augment credit flow to the needy sectors and resolve land-related disputes, which comprise almost two-thirds of pending court cases in India, analysts said.

“Small and fragmented land holdings are likely the biggest challenge to improving India’s economic productivity. Reform in land laws and records for ownership and tenancy are critical to bring agricultural activity to a more competitive scale, enable mechanisation, bring greater financial flexibility, and improve supply chain efficiencies,” said Ajit Pai, Strategy Lead Partner, Government and Public Sector, EY India.

After coming to power in May 2014, the Narendra Modi government promulgated an Ordinance to amend the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013, which was enacted during the previous Manmohan Singh government and came into effect from January 1, 2014.

On December 31, 2014, the government sought to amend the Act by promulgating an Ordinance to make several changes to the 2013 Act including empowering it to exempt five categories of projects — national security, rural infrastructure, affordable housing, industrial corridors, and infrastructure and social infrastructure projects — from the requirements of ‘determination of social impact and public purpose’, and ‘special provision to safeguard food security’. It also exempted these categories of projects from the ‘consent’ clause provided under the 2013 law. Faced with widespread protests, the government allowed the Ordinance to lapse.

In 2021, the government had also withdrawn three farm laws which included legalising contract farming as farmer groups argued against it as they thought it would lead to loss of land ownership. Nearly 40% of the total cultivable land follows a tenancy farming model.

“Today, it is estimated that about 44% of India’s workforce is engaged in agriculture, compared to about 2% for advanced large economies. Small and fragmented holdings are a critical factor driving this massive underemployment” Pai said.

To improve land access to small and marginal farmers through land leasing, the Centre enacted the Model Agriculture Land Leasing Act, 2016, which also provided a mechanism for tenants to avail of institutional credit. A major constraint to land leasing under the present regulatory environment is the unwillingness of landowners to lease out land due to fears of land capture by tenants. The Model Act spells out the rights and responsibilities of both landowners and tenants as well as dispute resolution within a specified timeframe. However, most states did not implement it, major not to antagonise farmers, which form a large chunk of electoral base.

After coming back to power, the BJP-led government will make sure that low-hanging fruits like the ongoing Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) and Bhū-Aadhar or Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) are completed to make it easier for banks to lend for projects where land is collateral as well as bring down land-related disputes, a major issue in the implementation of infrastructure/industrial projects, said Sandeep Vempati, an Economist with the BJP.

Substantial progress has been achieved under the DILRMP Programme. In terms of basic components, 95.08% of Record of Rights (RoR) have been completed (6,25,062 villages out of a total 6,57,396 villages in the country), 68.02% of Cadastral Maps have been digitized (2,49,57,221 maps out of total 3,66,92,728 maps), 94.95% Computerization of Registration completed (5060 Sub-Registrar Offices out of total 5,329 SROs) and 87.48% Integration of Sub Registrar offices(SROs) with Land Records have been completed (4,662 SROs out of total 5329 SROs). The DILRMP, a central sector scheme, will run till FY26.

“We want to make sure these projects are fully implemented and see the greater impact of these reforms in the next five years or so,” Vempati said.

ULPIN system is a 14 digit Alpha–numeric unique ID for each land parcel based on Geo-coordinates of vertices of the parcel which is of international standard and complies with Electronic Commerce Code Management Association (ECCMA) standard and Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) standard, is being implemented across the country. ULPIN will have ownership details of the plot besides its size and longitudinal and latitudinal details. This would facilitate real estate transactions, help resolve property boundaries issues and improve disaster planning and response efforts, among others.

“India needs to shift from presumptive land titling to a conclusive titling system providing guaranteed titles that cannot be challenged in court,” Pai said.

According to the Ministry of Rural Development, the GDP loss to the country’s economy is about 1.3% due to projects being stalled over litigation involving land disputes. A study says, 66% of all Civil suits in India are related to land or property disputes, and the average pendency of a land acquisition dispute is 20 years.

Some of the main reasons of cost escalation in projects include spiralling land acquisition costs, high cost of environmental safeguards and rehabilitation measures, changes in scope of projects, monopolistic pricing by vendors of equipment services and time overrun. The main causes of time overrun are delays in land acquisition and obtaining environment clearances, lack of infrastructure support and linkages and delays in tie-up of project financing.

“This is where part of the east becomes a drag for the country for the reasons that even today a lot of land in these regions are not digitised. Then only investments can pick up in those regions,” said N R Bhanumurthy, Vice-Chancellor of Bengaluru’s BASE University. <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/land-reforms-modi-3-0-may-pick-low-hanging-fruits/3432011/>

29. Study reveals soaring income disparity in India; top 1% share reaches historic highs (*financialexpress.com*) March 20, 2024

The paper recommends implementing a “super tax” of 2 percent on the net wealth of the 167 wealthiest families in 2022-23.

A recent study paper shows the growing income disparity in India since 2000s as the top 1 percent population share in income and wealth soaring to 22.6 percent and 40.1 percent, respectively, by 2022-23.

Titled ‘Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj’, the paper, authored by Thomas Piketty of Paris School of Economics and World Inequality Lab, Lucas Chancel of Harvard Kennedy School and World Inequality Lab and Nitin Kumar Bharti of New York University and World Inequality Lab, highlights a sharp rise in top-end inequality, especially in terms of wealth concentration, between 2014-15 and 2022-23.

The paper underscores that by 2022-23, the top 1 percent’s income and wealth shares have reached historic highs, positioning India’s top 1 percent income share among the highest globally, surpassing South Africa, Brazil, and even the US.

Addressing the issue, the paper suggests a restructuring of the tax code to account for both income and wealth, alongside broad-based public investments in health, education, and nutrition to ensure broader societal benefits from globalization.

Proposing measures to combat inequality, the paper recommends implementing a “super tax” of 2 percent on the net wealth of the 167 wealthiest families in 2022-23, which could generate substantial revenue and create fiscal space for necessary investments.

However, the paper highlights the poor quality of economic data in India, noting a recent decline in data quality. Despite this, India’s top 1 percent income share ranks among the highest globally, with wealth shares falling in the middle range compared to countries like Brazil and South Africa, which exhibit extreme wealth concentration levels. <https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-study-reveals-soaring-income-disparity-in-india-top-1-share-reaches-historic-highs-details-inside-bkg-3432106/>

30. IndiaAI: The next steps |The mission outlines plans to build a strong AI ecosystem in the country (*financialexpress.com*) March 21, 2024

India is setting its sights on becoming a major player in AI.

The Union Cabinet’s approval on March 7 on how it will operationalise the IndiaAI Mission shows how serious the government is about making India an AI power. It recognises all the building blocks of an AI ecosystem—computational power, data, algorithms, skills, entrepreneurship, and the approach towards regulating the technology, though the level of details vary.

The financial commitment of Rs 10,372 crore over five years to set up compute infrastructure for access to start-ups and research ecosystem has received plenty of media attention. What has been less commented about is the clarity in the direction of AI research and innovation.

The Action Plan envisages enabling the development of indigenous Large Language Models (LLMs) and domain specific Foundational Models. The current LLMs like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini have been developed in English and may not capture the cultural nuances and sensitivities of the Indian context. Development of LLMs in local Indian languages using training data specific to a particular language, culture, and region may better capture the context, expressions, and cultural nuances. This will make the output more relatable and relevant and also useful for a wide range of applications, particularly in areas of administration and service delivery. This would also foster trust in the AI ecosystem. Domain-specific foundational models could be used by both the government and private players to solve critical challenges that are more India-specific, for example, tracking diseases or provision of public services specific to India.

The government has also stated its plan to facilitate access to non-personal data (NPD). While details are awaited, it will need to principally cover two areas. The first part would involve maximising open data (OD). This is open for anyone to access, modification, reuse, and share. The second would deal with implementing frameworks and infrastructure to access NPD.

The government will set up a data platform that will then provide start-ups and research institutions access to NPD. Data.Gov, set up in the US, is an example of open sourcing of data and provides access to approximately 300,000 data sets released by federal, state and local governments and universities. The Indian government could open source some data, especially what may be available within the government machinery such as with stock exchanges, commodity exchanges, in surveys and census, geo-spatial data, and so on.

To access non-OD, data marketplaces are beginning to come up in other jurisdictions. Some of the issues that the government could address as it works on operationalising access to this data are bringing in more clarity with regard to ownership of NPD between the government, the entities collecting the data and the businesses/ individuals whose data is collated. It will also need to incentivise private players to share data and participate in data platforms/marketplaces. Inter-operability is also needed between different systems that have access to data, especially in important sectors like healthcare.

The government could also consider a framework around making available confidential data to private players for AI development, taking a leaf from the proposals in EU. The issue of data sovereignty also needs attention—France and Germany are two countries that are considering implementing sovereign data clouds.

In addition to promoting and facilitating the development and deployment of AI, there is a need for safe and trusted AI. As the government moves forward and brings in amendments under various Acts to regulate AI, it would need to balance the need to prevent public harm without hampering development and innovation.

Regulation and development of AI would also require the creation of institutional capacity within the government. Suggestions have been made about the need to set up a regulatory agency like Sebi for AI. The technology is evolving rapidly and therefore a specialised body with the requisite technical skills that are updated regularly is extremely important. Such a body could prescribe norms for oversight over algorithms to address issues such as unlawful content and standards for inter-operability. It could also be used to implement a “regulatory sandbox” under which a new algorithm can be tested in a controlled environment and policy and regulatory changes needed to deploy such an algorithm can be identified.

The IndiaAI Mission announcement is a welcome step and will help establish a comprehensive ecosystem, catalysing AI innovation through strategic programs and public private partnerships. AI is a strategic technology (with military and economic consequences) and all countries are working furiously to move ahead and develop their own strengths. The speed and effectiveness of implementation will impact India’s technological and economic sovereignty.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/indiaai-the-next-steps-indiaai-mission-outlines-plans-to-build-a-strong-ai-ecosystem-in-the-country/3432076/>