

## **NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS**

### **1. ‘Undue concession’ to Reliance in Maharashtra led to Rs 41.1 cr loss: CAG (*newslaundry.com*) 20 Dec, 2023**

A Comptroller and Auditor General of India report has pulled up the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation over undue concessions in subletting charges on industrial plots. These ineligible concessions, it noted, were granted to five entities and caused a loss of Rs 48.94 crore to the exchequer, of which a lion’s share – around Rs 41.1 crore – was claimed by Reliance affiliates.

The report, tabled in the Maharashtra assembly on Wednesday, also questioned the direct allotment of 15 industrial plots instead of auctioning them, and the allotment of as many as 103 plots despite their non-availability.

The MIDC, functioning under the state industries ministry, is the nodal agency in Maharashtra for promotion of businesses and the development of industrial infrastructure. It is run by a board, with the industries minister as the chairman and a bureaucrat as the secretary, among other members.

The CAG report also highlighted irregularities in the allotment of 28 industrial plots to 23 companies by the MIDC. It pointed out that these allotments deviated from the bidding policy, with decisions made overriding the management’s mandate.

In response, the MIDC defended its actions, stating that the “decisions were on merit and taken consciously to encourage entrepreneurs”. “There was an increase in demand for products of certain companies and thus they were in need of more land for the project. In a few cases, the decisions were taken to meet Covid-19 emergencies. Similarly, in a few allotments, the parties were the sole bidder for the plot.”

#### Reliance among five entities

The CAG report said that the MIDC had in February 2008 allowed subletting of areas for commercial purposes for a maximum period of 10 years, with penalty for unauthorised subletting fixed at 5 percent per annum per square metre of the prevailing land rate.

However, it said its audit had found that the MIDC had granted ineligible concessions in subletting charges to the extent of Rs 48.94 crore to five parties in apparent violations of prevailing policies, and detailed these in a table titled “allottees granted undue concession in subletting charges”.

It said four of them were granted these concessions in the Trans Thane Creek industrial area, including Reliance Corporate IT Park Limited, Arpee Consultants Private Limited, Nand Kumar Infotech Private Limited and Aurum Platz IT Park Limited. Sudarshan Flexible Packaging Private Limited was named as the fifth entity in Satpur.

The concession to Reliance made up for around Rs 41.1 crore loss to revenue until December 2021, it said. The CAG report alleged that the MIDC had observed in May 2010 that 10 affiliated companies were using 1.1 lakh square metres of industrial area

without obtaining prior permission on payment of subletting charges. It said the MIDC demanded Rs 7.69 crore in December 2010 for a period from April 2008 to March 2009, but Reliance sought an exemption.

The report said the MIDC management had then submitted a proposal to the board stating that it was essential to recover subletting charges. “The board, however, considering request of the allottee, overruled management’s proposal and permitted in April 2011 the utilisation of plot by affiliate companies without recovery of sub-letting charges on the ground that the allottee was not recovering any rent from them. The board also stated that said decision was limited to this case.”

The report then pointed to Arpee Consultants Private Limited, whose subletting charges and penalty worked out to Rs 8.65 crore for the period between January 2008 and December 2020, but a recovery of only Rs 5.31 crore was made. The allottee neither paid the demanded amount nor took permission for further subletting from January 2021, the report said. “MIDC, however, had not taken any action against the allottee,” it said.

The matter pertained to the commercial use of a plot granted to Arpee for a showroom by the firm's sister company Sharayu Motors.

The company’s four promoters include NCP rebel Ajit Pawar’s elder brother Shrinivas Anantrao Pawar and the latter’s wife Sharmila, according to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs website. Among the other two promoters of the company are Ajit Pawar’s deceased brother-in-law Amarsinh Patil and his wife Priya.

The report said that in August last year, the MIDC said that its board has the “power to take decisions considering the overall merit in the proposal by overruling management’s observations as per MID Act. It was further stated that the board took the conscious decision after due deliberation on merit and there was no financial loss to MIDC.”

However, the CAG report said the MIDC’s response is not tenable as the board’s decision was “contrary to the laid down policy”.

The report said that MIDC, in December 2021, stated that “due care would be taken to recover rent by issuing rental bills regularly and constant follow up”.

### **CAG’s criticism**

The CAG had several other points of criticism for the corporation.

“Relaxation in rules/policies on a case to case basis, lacked transparency and brought in arbitrariness in decision making and governance causing loss to public exchequer,” it said.

“MIDC made direct allotment of plots to ineligible allottees contrary to the laid down policies (such as e-bidding, waiting list, priority and expansion). Further, allottees were issued offer letters for allotment of land despite non-availability of carved out plots in violation of MIDC Regulations. Instances of undue concession to allottees in recovery of revenue from lease premium, transfer charges, Urban Land Ceiling (ULC)

Exemption transfer charges, extension charges and sub-letting charges were observed. Irregular grant of instalments for payment of lease premium and non-forfeiture/refund of lease premium in violation of regulations/policy were also observed. MIDC may ensure prompt recovery of dues from allottees as per laid down policies and responsibility needs to be fixed for granting undue concessions to allottees.”

“MIDC did not formulate any programme/plan for achievement of targets set in the State Industrial Policy. MIDC also did not have a perspective plan for land acquisition, development and allotment activities detailing physical targets to be achieved. In the absence of any physical targets, there was no benchmark to assess performance of MIDC,” it said.

The CAG also said that there was no database or system to ascertain or record allottee-wise details regarding “actual employment generated and investment made by an allottee vis-a-vis the DPR. MIDC, thus, confined its role to development or allotment of land.” <https://www.newslaundry.com/2023/12/20/undue-concession-to-reliance-in-maharashtra-led-to-rs-411-cr-loss-cag>

## **2. CAG: MIDC favoured ineligible players, gave concessions** (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) 20 Dec 2023

MUMBAI: The CAG has said in a report tabled on Wednesday that MIDC flouted norms to favour some companies and caused losses to the exchequer in the allotment of 178 industrial plots in 2022-23.

A total of 103 ‘unavailable’ plots were allotted, while 28 were leased to 23 companies on an alternative basis at old rates, the CAG said. In 32 cases, the MIDC re-allotted the plots but did not keep the deposits from the earlier bids, it said, adding that such irregularities overruled the bidding policy.

“Allotments were made on a selective basis without framing a policy for the stated purpose, which would have enabled all interested applicants to avail [themselves of the] benefit of direct land allotment,” it said.

It said the MIDC did not ensure that tenders were finalised within the validity period, resulting in their cancellation and re-tendering at extra cost. “The policy of fixation/revision of land rates was not appropriate. Systemic delays in implementation of revised land rates were observed.”

The auditor said not only were plots leased out to “ineligible allottees” in violation of policies, there were also instances of some being given undue concessions in lease premium, transfer charges, urban land ceiling exemption transfer charges, extension charges and subletting charges. It also said some companies were selectively allowed to pay their premium in instalments. “Relaxation in rules/policies on a case-to-case basis lacked transparency and brought in arbitrariness in decisionmaking and governance, causing loss to public exchequer,” it said.

In response, the MIDC asserted that there was no financial loss, and that its decisions were based on merit and “taken consciously to encourage entrepreneurs”. “There was

an increase in demand for products of certain companies and they were in need of more land for projects. In a few cases, the decisions were taken to meet Covid-19 emergencies. In a few allotments, the parties were the sole bidder for the plot,” it said. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/cag-midc-favoured-ineligible-players-gave-concessions/articleshow/106168002.cms>

### **3. CAG report on MIDC flags issues with policies, highlights unutilised industrial plots (*indianexpress.com*) Updated: December 21, 2023**

**As per the CAG report on MIDC, out of the 3,284 industrial plot allottees at the Trans Thane Creek area, 3,053 plots are lying unutilised. The report was presented in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday.**

The report has also pointed out that the policy of fixation or revision of land rates was not appropriate. Systemic delays in the implementation of revised land rates were observed leading to a loss to MIDC, the report said. (File Photo)

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has flagged several issues in the functioning of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) in its report, highlighting unutilised industrial plots, systemic delays in implementation of land rates, undue concessions being granted to allottees, direct allotment of plots to ineligible allottees etc.

The performance audit on the MIDC’s role in the industrial development of the state during the 2014-2021 period was presented in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday by state Finance Minister Ajit Pawar.

As per the report, out of the 3,284 industrial plot allottees at the Trans Thane Creek (TTC) area, 3,053 plots are lying unutilised. The MIDC had decided in June 2017 to implement a scheme in the TTC industrial area (IA) whereby allottees (including closed industries) were granted an opportunity to return excess/unutilised land. It was further directed to take action against allottees who did not participate in the scheme as per Section 42A of the MIDC Act.

“Audit observed that none of the allottees participated in the said scheme and MIDC had not taken any action for acquisition of unutilised portion of plot till date (December 2021). Data analysis in respect of TTC IA revealed that only 231 (7 per cent) out of 3,284 allottees had fully utilised their plots. In case of remaining 3,053 allottees, land admeasuring 60.51 lakh sqm was lying unutilised,” the report said.

It further pointed out that data analysis of allottees from the other 158 industrial areas revealed that only 1,687 (5 per cent) of the 34,574 allottees had utilised the maximum FSI (floor space index). There was unutilised land measuring 12.15 crore sqm with 32,887 allottees, it added.

The report has also pointed out that the policy of fixation or revision of land rates was not appropriate. Systemic delays in the implementation of revised land rates were observed leading to a loss to MIDC, the report said. The MIDC allots plots of land on

a lease basis for 95 years on recovery of upfront lease premium at rates fixed from time to time. Recovery of transfer fees, sub-letting charges, time limit extension charges, conversion charges, compounding charges etc. are also based on the land rates fixed by MIDC. It was, thus, essential to ensure proper pricing policies and periodic revision of land rates to protect MIDC's financial interests.

The audit, however, observed that MIDC had not devised any methodology or weightage formula for the revision of land rates and rates were revised uniformly in all the IAs on an ad-hoc basis without any cost analysis or justification on record.

“MIDC made direct allotment of plots to ineligible allottees contrary to the laid down policies (e-bidding, waiting list, priority and expansion). Further, allottees were issued offer letters for allotment of land despite non-availability of carved-out plots in violation of MIDC regulations,” the report said.

Instances of undue concession to allottees in the recovery of revenue from lease premium, transfer charges, Urban Land Ceiling (ULC) exemption transfer charges, extension charges and sub-letting charges were observed. Irregular grant of instalments for payment of lease premium and non-forfeiture/refund of lease premium in violation of regulations/policy were also observed.

“Lack of system for periodic revision of water charges and service charges from the allottees was observed which led to short recovery of expenses. MIDC had not levied and recovered Goods and Services Tax on non-exempted services from the plot holders leading to non-payment of statutory dues,” it said.

There was no effective system to monitor cases of non-development of plots/obtaining a building completion certificate (BCC) within the stipulated time limit. MIDC did not initiate prompt action for resumption of plots and timely issue of notices for recovery of extension charges, the report said.

Instances of unauthorised sub-lease and change in use of allotted plots, lack of system for monitoring, removal of encroachments and irregular allotment of land to encroachers were also observed.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/cag-report-midc-flags-issues-policies-highlights-unutilised-industrial-plots-9076207/>

#### **4. CAG: MIDC caused losses in allotment of 178 plots** (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) Dec 21, 2023

MUMBAI: The comptroller and auditor general has said the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), which is the nodal investment promotion agency, breached policies, showed undue favour to some companies and caused financial losses in the allotment of 178 industrial plots in the state in 2022-23.

In a report tabled in the assembly on Wednesday, the CAG said the MIDC directly allotted 15 industrial plots, instead of opting for e-bidding or auctioning them, during the period.

The CAG has said in a report tabled on Wednesday that MIDC flouted norms to favour some companies and caused losses to the exchequer in the allotment of 178 industrial plots in 2022-23. A total of 103 'unavailable' plots were allotted, while 28 were leased to 23 companies on an alternative basis at old rates, the CAG said. In 32 cases, the MIDC re-allotted the plots but did not keep the deposits from the earlier bids, it said, adding that such irregularities overruled the e-bidding policy. "Allotments were made on a selective basis without framing a policy for the stated purpose, which would have enabled all interested applicants to avail [themselves of the] benefit of direct land allotment," it said.

It said the MIDC did not ensure that tenders were finalised within the validity period, resulting in their cancellation and retendering at extra cost. "The policy of fixation/revision of land rates was not appropriate. Systemic delays in implementation of revised land rates were observed." The auditor said not only were plots leased out to "ineligible allottees" in violation of policies, there were also instances of some being given undue concessions in lease premium, transfer charges, urban land ceiling exemption transfer charges, extension charges and subletting charges.

It also said some companies were selectively allowed to pay their premium in instalments. "Relaxation in rules/policies on a case-to-case basis lacked transparency and brought in arbitrariness in decision-making and governance, causing loss to public exchequer," it said. In response, the MIDC asserted that there was no financial loss, and that its decisions were based on merit and "taken consciously to encourage entrepreneurs". "There was an increase in demand for products of certain companies and they were in need of more land for projects. In a few cases, the decisions were taken to meet Covid-19 emergencies. In a few allotments, the parties were the sole bidder for the plot," it said. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/cag-midc-caused-losses-in-allotment-of-178-plots/articleshow/106166717.cms>

## **5. Industrial plots in Trans Thane Creek area not utilised by 3 053 allottees CAG report (*theweek.in*) Updated: December 20, 2023**

The CAG has pointed out that 3,053 out of 3,284 industrial plots allotted by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) in the Trans Thane Creek (TTC) area are lying unutilised.

The CAG report on the performance audit of MIDC's role in industrial development during 2014-21 also observed systemic delays in the implementation of revised land rates, which caused revenue loss, and instances of MIDC making direct allotment of plots to ineligible allottees contrary to the policies.

The report was tabled in the assembly on Wednesday by state finance minister Ajit Pawar on the last day of the winter session of the state legislature.

The MIDC had decided (in June 2017) to implement a scheme in the TTC industrial area, whereby allottees (including closed industries) were granted the opportunity to return excess/unutilised land. It was further directed to take action against that allottee, who did not participate in the scheme as per section 42A of the MID Act, it said.

"Audit observed that none of the allottees participated in the said scheme and MIDC had not taken any action for acquisition of an unutilised portion of plot till date (December 2021)," as per the report.

Data analysis concerning TTC IA (industrial area) revealed that only 231 (7%) out of 3,284 allottees had fully utilised their plots. In the case of the remaining 3,053 allottees, land admeasuring 60.51 lakh sqm was lying unutilised, it said.

Data analysis concerning allottees from the other 158 industrial areas revealed that only 1,687 (5%) out of 34,574 allottees had utilised maximum FSI. There was unutilised land admeasuring 12.15 crore sqm with 32,887 allottees, as per the report.

The report has pointed out that the policy of fixation /revision of land rates was not appropriate.

"Systemic delays in implementation of revised land rates were observed leading to loss to MIDC. MIDC allots plots of land on a lease basis for a period of 95 years on recovery of upfront lease premium at rates fixed from time to time," it said.

Recovery of transfer fee, charges for sub-letting, extension, conversion, compounding etc. are also based on the land rates fixed by MIDC. The audit observed that MIDC had not devised any methodology/weightage formula for the revision of land rates and rates were revised uniformly in all the IAs on an ad-hoc basis without any cost analysis/justification on record, as per the report.

"MIDC made direct allotment of plots to ineligible allottees contrary to the laid down policies (e-bidding, waiting list, priority and expansion). Further, allottees were issued offer letters for allotment of land despite non-availability of carved-out plots in violation of MIDC Regulations," the report said.

The report pointed out instances of "undue concession to allottees in the recovery of revenue from lease premium, transfer charges, Urban Land Ceiling (ULC) exemption transfer charges, extension charges and sub-letting charges".

Irregular grant of instalments for payment of lease premium and non-forfeiture/refund of lease premium in violation of regulations/policy were also observed, it stated.

"Lack of system for periodic revision of water charges and service charges from the allottees was observed which led to short recovery of expenses. MIDC had not levied and recovered Goods and Services Tax on non-exempted services from the plot holders leading to non-payment of statutory dues," the audit report said.

There was the absence of an effective system to monitor cases of non-development of plots/obtaining the Building Completion Certificate (BCC) within the stipulated time limit, it added.

"The MIDC did not initiate prompt action for resumption of plots and timely issue of notices for recovery of extension charges. Instances of unauthorised sub-lease and change in use of allotted plots, lack of system for monitoring, removal of encroachments and irregular allotment of land to encroachers was observed," the report

said. <https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2023/12/20/bes1-mh-assembly-cag-midc.html>

**6. Supplementary provisions of Rs 26,000 crore proved to be unnecessary: CAG report in Maha assembly** (*theprint.in*) Dec 21, 2023

The Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) report tabled in the Maharashtra Assembly on Wednesday said that supplementary provisions of Rs 26,214.03 crore obtained during the year proved unnecessary.

The actual expenditure was Rs 1,97,603.11 crore against the provisions of Rs 2,41,614 crore, it said.

“An avoidable extra provision in an estimate is as much a budgetary irregularity as an excess in the sanctioned expenditure. Supplementary provisions aggregating Rs 26,214.03 crore obtained in 38 cases (Rs 10 crore or more in each case) during the year proved unnecessary as the actual expenditure (Rs 1,97,603.11 crore) did not come up to the level of the original provision (Rs 2,41,614.91 crore),” the report said. <https://theprint.in/india/supplementary-provisions-of-rs-26000-crore-proved-to-be-unnecessary-cag-report-in-maha-assembly/1894631/>

**7. CAG questions allotment of 178 industrial plots in Maharashtra** (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) Dec 20, 2023

MUMBAI: A comptroller and auditor general (CAG) report tabled in the state legislative assembly on Wednesday has pointed out that the state industrial development corporation (MIDC) directly allotted 15 industrial plots instead of e-bidding or auctioning them. Around 103 plots were allotted despite their non-availability with the MIDC, the CAG report said.

Around 28 industrial plots were allotted to 23 companies on an alternate basis at old rates while in 32 cases it was found that MIDC re-allotted them and did not forfeit earnest money deposits made in the earlier bids, the report said pointing out that these administrative and financial irregularities clearly overruled the policies and management's mandate.

"Decisions were in violation of the laid down policy of e-bidding and were taken by the board overruling management proposals which were in line with the policy. Allotments were made on selective basis without framing a policy for land allotment for the stated purpose, which would have enabled all interested applicants to avail benefit of direct land allotment," said CAG in its remarks in various cases.

Meanwhile MIDC in its clarifications to the CAG said, "Its decisions were on merit and taken consciously to encourage entrepreneurs. There was an increase in demand for products of certain companies and thus they were in need of more land for the project. In a few cases the decisions were taken to meet covid 19 emergencies. Similarly in a few allotments the parties were the sole bidder for the plot." In case of old allotments,



MIDC said since they were via auction and new allotments were at the highest rate in the previous auctions, there were no financial losses.

CAG said the Board of MIDC took important decisions having financial implications overriding the extant rules/policy in cases of land allotment, levy of lease premium/transfer charges/extension charges and subletting charges in favour of private parties. "Relaxation in rules/policies on a case to case basis, lacked transparency and brought in arbitrariness in decision making and governance causing loss to public exchequer," it said directing MIDC to ensure strict implementation of regulations and laid down policies in land allotment and recovery of charges.

"MIDC made direct allotment of plots to ineligible allottees contrary to the laid down policies (such as e-bidding, waiting list, priority and expansion). Further, allottees were issued offer letters for allotment of land despite nonavailability of carved out plots in violation of MIDC Regulations. Instances of undue concession to allottees in recovery of revenue from lease premium, transfer charges, Urban Land Ceiling (ULC) Exemption transfer charges, extension charges and sub-letting charges were observed. Irregular grant of instalments for payment of lease premium and non-forfeiture/refund of lease premium in violation of regulations/policy were also observed. MIDC may ensure prompt recovery of dues from allottees as per laid down policies and responsibility needs to be fixed for granting undue concessions to allottees," the report stated.

"MIDC did not formulate any programme/plan for achievement of targets set in the State Industrial Policy (SIP). MIDC also did not have a perspective plan for land acquisition, development and allotment activities detailing physical targets to be achieved. In the absence of any physical targets, there was no benchmark to assess performance of MIDC," CAG said asking MIDC to prepare plans quantifying physical targets to be achieved.

"There was no database/system to ascertain/record allottee wise details regarding actual employment generated and investment made by an allottee vis-a-vis the DPR. MIDC, thus, confined its role to development/allotment of land. MIDC may evolve a system of recording/monitoring of actual investment and employment generation and ensure that expected outcomes of industrial development from such land allotment are achieved," the report suggested.

"MIDC did not ensure timely finalisation of tenders within the validity period as per delegation of powers which resulted in cancellation of tenders and re-tendering at extra cost. MIDC may ensure timely finalisation of tenders within the validity period in accordance with delegation of powers to avoid re-tendering of works. Policy of fixation / revision of land rates was not appropriate. Systemic delays in implementation of revised land rates were observed leading to loss to MIDC," CAG said at the end asking MIDC to ensure that revised land rates are implemented immediately after approval of the Board and a suitable clause regarding recovery of lease premium at revised rates may be incorporated in the offer letters. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/cag-questions-allotment-of-178-industrial-plots-in-maharashtra/articleshow/106157337.cms>

## 8. Aid of 26,000cr may not have reached beneficiaries: Report ([timesofindia.indiatimes.com](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com)) Dec 21, 2023

MUMBAI: The comptroller and auditor general (CAG) suspects that grants of nearly Rs 26,000 crore did not reach beneficiaries of government schemes in the state in 2021-22.

In its general overview of state accounts, it said utilisation certificates (UCs) for grants or aid received from the state or the Centre are to be submitted in 12 months, before applications for further grants are moved.

Its report said in 2022-23, Rs 1,17,754 crore pertaining to 48,294 UCs till March 2022 was cleared. "But UCs worth Rs 25,759 crore are still to be furnished." Urban development, planning, rural development and water conservation, and industries, energy and labour departments are the major defaulters.

The CAG also put the spotlight on the state's liabilities, saying it rose in a year by Rs 54,459 crore (from Rs 6,06,295 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 6,60,754 crore in 2022-23), while public debt, comprising the internal debt of the state and loans and advances from the Centre, increased by Rs 49,907 crore in the same period (from Rs 4,83,035 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 5,32,942 crore in 2022-23). The per person liability or debt stands at Rs 50,209, it said. However, since the state revenue increased by Rs 62,242 crore (23%) in 2022-23 over the previous year, the percentage of liabilities to the gross state domestic product was at 19%, as it was in the previous fiscal, the auditor said. The increase in revenue was mainly due to more receipts under state GST, and taxes on sales, trade and electricity duty, besides excise, income tax, vehicle tax and taxes collected by local bodies and other public service undertakings, the report said.

The CAG said the state recorded a revenue deficit of Rs 1,937 crore and a fiscal deficit of Rs 67,602 crore, which constituted 14% of the total expenditure. "The deficit was met mainly from public debt (Rs 49,907 crore), net increase in public account (Rs 4,923 crore) and decrease in cash balance at the end of the year (Rs 12,772 crore). <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/aid-of-26000cr-may-not-have-reached-beneficiaries-report/articleshow/106166726.cms>

## 9. महाराष्ट्र में 26,000 करोड़ रुपये के अनुपूरक प्रावधान अनावश्यक रहे: कैग रिपोर्ट ([ibc24.in](https://ibc24.in)) 20 Dec 2023

महाराष्ट्र विधानसभा में बुधवार को पेश की गई नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (सीएजी) की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि इस वर्ष प्राप्त 26,214.03 करोड़ रुपये के अनुपूरक प्रावधान अनावश्यक साबित हुए हैं।

इसमें कहा गया है कि 2,41,614 करोड़ रुपये के अनुपूरक प्रावधानों के मुकाबले वास्तविक व्यय 1,97,603.11 करोड़ रुपये था।

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है, "बजट संबंधी किसी अनुमान में टाला जा सकने वाला अतिरिक्त प्रावधान उतनी ही बड़ी बजटीय अनियमितता है जितनी स्वीकृत व्यय से अधिक खर्च।"

<https://www.ibc24.in/maharashtra/rs-26000-crore-supplementary-provisions-in-maharashtra-remained-unnecessary-cag-report-1889859.html>

## 10. महाराष्ट्र: टीटीसी में आवंटित 3,284 प्लॉट में 3,053 का कोई इस्तेमाल नहीं हुआ (hindi.theprint.in) 20 Dec 2023

महाराष्ट्र औद्योगिक विकास निगम (एमआईडीसी) ने ट्रांस ठाणे क्रीक (टीटीसी) क्षेत्र में जिन 3,284 औद्योगिक भूखंडों का आवंटन किया था, उनमें से 3,053 का कोई इस्तेमाल नहीं हुआ।

कैग (नियंत्रक एवं महालेखापरीक्षक) ने 2014-21 के दौरान औद्योगिक विकास में एमआईडीसी की भूमिका पर एक ऑडिट रिपोर्ट में यह बात कही।

कैग रिपोर्ट में संशोधित भूमि दरों को लागू करने में प्रणालीगत देरी की ओर भी ध्यान दिलाया गया, जिससे राजस्व हानि हुई। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, ऐसे उदाहरण भी मिले, जहां एमआईडीसी ने नीतियों के विपरीत अयोग्य आवंटियों को भूखंडों का आवंटन किया।

महाराष्ट्र के वित्त मंत्री अजीत पवार ने राज्य विधानमंडल के शीतकालीन सत्र के आखिरी दिन बुधवार को यह रिपोर्ट विधानसभा में पेश की।  
<https://hindi.theprint.in/india/economy/maharashtra-out-of-3284-plots-allotted-in-ttc-3053-were-not-used/642537/>

## 11. दो अफसरों के कब्जे में सरकार के 2 लाख करोड़, एक लाइन के आदेश से 56 ट्रेजरी के पावर छीन लिए (amarujala.com) 20 Dec 2023

पिछली गहलोट सरकार में भुगतान प्रणाली को लेकर बड़ा घोटाला सामने आ रहा है। वित्त विभाग के दो अफसरों ने एक लाइन का आदेश निकाल कर सालाना दो लाख करोड़ की भुगतान व्यवस्था को अपने कब्जे में कर लिया। इसके लिए राजस्थान की सभी 56 ट्रेजरी के पावर ई-सिलिंग सॉफ्टवेयर के नाम पर खुद ले लिए। सीएजी ने इस पर जबरदस्त तरीके से आपत्ति रिपोर्ट मांगी है।

राजस्थान के ट्रेजरी नियमों में जो भुगतान व्यवस्था अब तक जिलों में ट्रेजरी अफसरों के पास थी, उसे एक लाइन के आदेश से वित्त (मार्गोपाय) विभाग के दो अफसरों ने अपने कब्जे में कर लिया। इसके लिए एक ई-सिलिंग सॉफ्टवेयर लाया गया। इसके सॉफ्टवेयर के जरिए राजस्थान की सभी 56 ट्रेजरी के ईसीएस (भुगतान) करने के अधिकार वित्त विभाग के मार्गोपाय विंग में चले गए।

राजस्थान में ट्रेजरी के माध्यम से सालाना दो लाख करोड़ रुपये का भुगतान किया जाता था, जो अब सिर्फ दो अफसरों की मर्जी पर चल रहा है। अब भुगतान में मनमर्जी का ये आलम है कि ठेकेदारों से लेकर कर्मचारियों तक की लाइनें यहां इन अफसरों के चेंबर पर लगी रहती हैं। 2,500 करोड़ के पेंशनर्स के परिलाभ भी रोक रखे हैं। कर्मचारियों के सरेंडर लीव से लेकर ग्रेच्युटी, जीपीएफ और सरेंडर लीव तक के भुगतान कई महीनों से पेंडिंग चल रहे हैं।

## अब तक एक लाख 30 हजार करोड़ पेमेंट ई-ट्रेजरी से



सरकार के ट्रेजरी रूल्स मुताबिक, संबंधित जिले में भुगतान का अधिकार वहां की ट्रेजरी को ही होता है। यही नहीं भुगतान प्रणाली में किए किसी भी बदलाव से पहले सरकार को इसकी जानकारी सीएजी को भी देनी जरूरी है। लेकिन वित्त विभाग के अफसरों ने ऐसा नहीं किया। अब सीएजी ने इस मामले में वित्त विभाग से जवाब मांगा है।

### सीएजी की आपत्ति

ट्रेजरी रूल्स 144 (a)(1)(2)(3) के अनुसार, आरबीआई ई-कुबेर के माध्यम से भुगतान करने की प्रक्रिया समस्त स्टेट होल्डर्स (आरबीआई-सीएजी ऑफिस एवं राज्य सरकार) के मध्य लंबे विमर्श के बाद लागू की गई थी। उसी के अनुरूप दिनांक 7.08.2020 को कोषागार नियम 2012 का नियम 144 (a), (144 (b) जोड़ा गया। इससे कोषालयों की डीएससी से इलेक्ट्रॉनिक पेमेंट फाइल्स ई-कुबेर पोर्टल द्वारा स्वीकार किया जाने का स्पष्ट उल्लेख है। इसी प्रक्रिया के तहत कोषालय वार बैंक खाते आरबीआई में खोले गए हैं।

आपके उत्तरानुसार ई-कुबेर ट्रेजरी वाइज डीएससी स्वीकार नहीं करके केवल SFTP सर्वर सर्टिफिकेट ही स्वीकार करता है। पूर्व में इस प्रक्रिया के बदलाव का कोई पत्राचार इस कार्यालय को उपलब्ध नहीं है। अब इस हेतु आरबीआई एवं इस कार्यालय से हुए पत्राचार का विवरण SFTP सर्वर सर्टिफिकेट की स्वीकार्यता के बारे में आईटी एक्ट 2000 एवं भारत सरकार की ओर से जारी अन्य गाइड लाइन्स में लिए गए प्रावधान उपलब्ध करवाएं, ताकि नियमों में संशोधन पर टिप्पणी की जा सके।

# ये नियम है

31 अमर उजाला  
amarujala.com



राजस्थान में प्रत्येक ट्रेजरी के लिए आरबीआई में एक अलग खाता खुलवाया जाता है

संबंधित ट्रेजरी में जो ट्रेजरी अफसर बैठता है, उसके डिजिटल साइन (डीएससी) से आरबीआई भुगतान की अनुमति प्रदान करता है

इसमें बिल वेरीफिकेशन से लेकर ईसीएस तक काम ट्रेजरी से ही होने का प्रावधान है

## वित्त विभाग कैसे किया ट्रेजरी को पॉवर लैस

वित्त विभाग के ई-सीलिंग का एक सॉफ्टवेयर तैयार किया, जिसका कोषागार नियमों में कहीं प्रावधान नहीं है। कोषागार नियमों के मुताबिक, संबंधित जिले की कोषाधिकारी की डीएससी से भुगतान संभव हो सकता है। ई-ट्रेजरी का गजट नोटीफिकेशन यह था कि ई-ट्रेजरी की स्थापना सिर्फ राजस्थान में राजस्व प्राप्त के लिए की जाएगी, किसी भी प्रकार के भुगतान के लिए नहीं। लेकिन यहां अफसरों ने गुपचुप तरीके से राजस्थान की सभी ट्रेजरी के पावर अपने पास ले लिए और पिछले दो साल से ई-ट्रेजरी के मार्फत सिंगल सर्टिफिकेट से ही आरबीआई से भुगतान करवाना शुरू कर दिया।

कर्मचारी संगठन बोले चक्कर लगवा रहे वित्त विभाग के अफसर

भुगतान प्रणाली में इस बदलाव से कर्मचारियों को भी खासी परेशानी उठानी पड़ रही है। यहां तक की सरेंडर लीव का पैसा भी उन्हें नहीं मिल रहा। कर्मचारियों के भुगतान से संबंधित सभी तरह के मामले, जिसके अंतर्गत समर्पित अवकाश का भुगतान, आरजीएचएस से संधबित सभी भुगतान, कम्प्यूटेशन भुगतान, ग्रेच्युटी भुगतान महीनों तक नहीं हो रहे हैं। सितंबर महीने तक के भुगतान अब तक पेंडिंग हैं।

## इनका कहना है

जिलाध्यक्ष राजस्थान राज्य मंत्रालयिक कर्मचारी महासंघ, मुकेश मुदगल का कहना है कि मेरे पर ऐसी सैंकड़ों कर्मचारियों के नाम हैं, जिन्होंने अपने बच्चों की शादी के लिए लोन अप्लाई किया है। ट्रेजरी से बिल पारित है, लेकिन अब तक खाते में पैसा नहीं आ रहा है। पूर्व में सभी तरह के भुगतान कोष कार्यालय द्वारा संपादित किए जाते थे। लेकिन विगत एक साल से यह सभी भुगतान वित्त विभाग द्वारा अपने हाथों में ले लिए जाने के कारण यह परेशानी हो रही है। वित्त विभाग के अफसर मनमर्जी पर उतारू हैं। ट्रेजरी ऑफिसर जगदीश मीणा ने कहा, सरेंडर लीव के भुगतान पेंडिंग हैं यह सही है। इसलिए मेरी तरफ से तो मैंने बिल वेरिफाई कर दिए, लेकिन भुगतान वहां से होना है।

<https://www.amarujala.com/rajasthan/jaipur/exclusive-officer-who-was-in-gehlot-government-committed-scam-of-two-lakh-crore-through-one-order-2023-12-20>

## 12. T.N.'s Own Tax Revenue likely to be impacted by unprecedented floods (*thehindu.com*) December 21, 2023

Tamil Nadu's Own Tax Revenue, which accounts for over 70% of total revenue, is likely to be affected by the floods in Chennai and the Southern districts.

For 2023-24, the State's Own Tax Revenue (SOTR) is projected to be ₹1,81,182 crore, as per the Budget estimates, which is a 20.61% growth from 2022-23. The SOTR accounts for 78.9% of Tamil Nadu's total revenue. The key components of SOTR include collection from State Goods and Services Tax (SGST), taxes on vehicles, revenue from Stamps and Registration Fees, VAT on petrol and diesel and liquor, The State Excise Duties (which reflect liquor revenue).

So far in 2023-24 (Till October 2023), Tamil Nadu's Own Tax Revenue was ₹84,930.9 crore, as per the provisional figures from the Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG). This constitutes around 46.88% of the Budget estimates.

The floods would definitely have an adverse impact on all major components of SOTR. The impact cannot be quantified at the moment, a senior State government official said.

Commercial Taxes account for 73.3% of the SOTR. Stamps and registration account for 14.1%, State Excise account for 6.5%, while taxes on Motor Vehicles account for 4.9% and other taxes contribute 1.2%.

Tamil Nadu has estimated revenue from Commercial Taxes at ₹1,32,813 crore for 2023-24. Revenue from Stamps and Registration Fees is projected at ₹25,567 crore, while State Excise is projected at ₹11,819 crore. Taxes on vehicles are estimated at ₹8,783 crore for 2023-24.

In 2021-22, also SOTR was affected due to pandemic and unprecedented floods in certain districts. The SOTR estimate was revised to ₹1,21,857.55 crore from ₹1,26,644.15 crore in the Budget estimates for 2021-22.

Any shortfall in State's revenue will also impact the projected revenue deficit number. Revenue deficit is when the revenue expenditure exceeds revenue receipts. Tamil Nadu has estimated a revenue deficit of ₹37,540 crore for 2023-24, factoring into the expenditure on account of the Kalaigiar Magalir Urimai Thogai Thittam. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/tns-own-tax-revenue-likely-to-be-impacted-by-unprecedented-floods/article67658695.ece>

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

### 13. Defence ministry seals deal to procure six patrol vessels (*millenniumpost.in*) 20 Dec 2023

The defence ministry on Wednesday signed a Rs 1,614 crore contract with Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders Ltd for procurement of six next generation offshore patrol vessels for the Indian Coast Guard.

The acquisition of the platforms is aimed at boosting the Coast Guard's capability towards maritime security, the defence ministry said.

“The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders Ltd on December 20 for the procurement of six next generation offshore patrol vessels for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG),” the ministry said. It said the contract was made under the buy (Indian-IDD) category at a total cost of Rs 1614.89 crore.

Out of the six vessels being procured, four would replace the existing aging offshore patrol vessels and the other two would augment the Coast Guard's fleet.

“The acquisition of these major ICG platforms is aimed to boost the ICG's capability and reinforces the increased focus of the Government towards maritime security,” the ministry said in a statement.

“These modern and high-tech ships will play a critical role in enhancing surveillance, law enforcement, search and rescue, maritime pollution response, and other important capabilities including humanitarian assistance,” it said.

It said along with several high-tech advanced features and equipment, these offshore patrol vessels would be equipped with multipurpose drones, AI (artificial intelligence) capabilities, and wirelessly controlled remote water rescue craft lifebuoy, enabling greater flexibility and operational edge. <https://www.millenniumpost.in/delhi/defence-ministry-seals-deal-to-procure-six-patrol-vessels-545056?infinitemscroll=1>

#### **14. Procurement of 114 MRFA under Make in India framework: Govt to Par panel (*devdiscourse.com*) 20 Dec 2023**

**The shortage in the number of fighter squadrons is being addressed through multi-pronged approaches to ensure that this is realised within time, budget and under the Make-in-India initiative, it added. The defence ministry told the committee that the IAF plans to induct the MRFA in a phased manner and that the case is being progressed under the Make in India provisions of the Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020. The committee had earlier expressed concerns over the depleting strength of the IAF's fighter squadrons.**

The proposed procurement of 114 multi-role fighter aircraft (MRFA) is being "progressed" under the "Make in India" framework, the government has told a parliamentary standing committee.

In its report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has recommended that the government should consider buying fifth-generation fighter aircraft "over the counter" without "losing time" if the MRFA project gets delayed.

The report of the panel was tabled in Parliament on Wednesday.

In April 2019, the Indian Air Force (IAF) issued an RFI (request for information) or initial tender to acquire 114 MRFA at a cost of around USD 18 billion. It was billed as one of the world's biggest military procurement programmes in recent years.

The committee cited delays in the supply of the initial 40 light combat aircraft (LCA) to the IAF as well as the Kaveri jet engine project, and said the option of buying state-of-the-art fifth-generation fighter aircraft over the counter should be explored.

"The committee find that there has been a considerable delay in the supply of 40 LCA from HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) to the IAF and as on date, 38 aircraft have reached the Air Force.

"The case of procurement of 114 multi-role fighter aircraft, in advanced stage; in case it also goes the LCA or Kaveri ways, the government should consider buying state-of-the-art fifth generation fighter aircraft over the counter, without losing time to keep the force in a comfortable position," the panel said.

The committee is headed by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Jual Oram.

The project Kaveri, under which India plans to develop an indigenous fighter jet engine, has witnessed considerable delays.

The government told the panel that the IAF currently has 31 fighter aircraft squadrons against the authorised strength of 42.

"Though the IAF faces a challenge with respect to the draw-down of its number of fighter squadrons, it is at present fully capable of defending the nation," it said.

"The IAF has strived to arrest the draw-down of its fighter fleet and is currently in the process of gradually building it up. The shortage in the number of fighter squadrons is being addressed through multi-pronged approaches to ensure that this is realised within time, budget and under the 'Make-in-India' initiative," it added.

The defence ministry told the committee that the IAF plans to induct the MRFA in a phased manner and that the case is being "progressed" under the "Make in India" provisions of the Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020.

The committee had earlier expressed concerns over the depleting strength of the IAF's fighter squadrons. <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/law-order/2753078-procurement-of-114-mrfa-under-make-in-india-framework-govt-to-par-panel>

## **15. India's total debt rises to Rs 205 lakh crore in Sep quarter** (*moneycontrol.com*) 20 Dec 2023

The country's total debt, or the total outstanding bonds which are being traded in the market, rose to USD 2.47 trillion (Rs 205 lakh crore) in the September quarter, according to a report. The total debt amount in the March quarter of the previous fiscal was USD 2.34 trillion (Rs 200 lakh crore).

The central government's debt stood at USD 1.34 trillion, or Rs 161.1 lakh crore, in the September quarter, up from USD 1.06 trillion, or Rs 150.4 lakh crore, in the March quarter, Vishal Goenka, Co-Founder of Indiabonds.com, said, quoting data provided by the Reserve bank of India. Indiabonds.com, which was launched in 2021, is a Sebi-



registered online bond platform that provides investing solutions. The report is a collation of data from the RBI, Clearing Corporation of India, and the Securities and Exchange Board of India. At Rs 161.1 lakh crore, the central government's debt constitutes the highest 46.04 per cent share of the total amount.

At Rs 161.1 lakh crore, the central government's debt constitutes the highest 46.04 per cent share of the total amount. State governments' debt share was 24.4 per cent, or USD 604 billion (Rs 50.18 lakh crore), the report said. Treasury bills were worth USD 111 billion, or Rs 9.25 lakh crore, constituting 4.51 per cent of the total debt, it said. Corporate bonds had a 21.52 per cent share of the total debt at USD 531 billion (Rs 44.16 lakh crore) in the second quarter of the current fiscal, as per the report. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/indias-total-debt-rises-to-rs-205-lakh-crore-in-sep-quarter-11935151.html>

## **16. Climate as compass: COP28 disappointment notwithstanding, India must keep to its chosen GHG action path** *(financialexpress.com)* Dec 21, 2023

In the history of the Conferences of Parties (COP) for climate change since 1995, the world has witnessed only two significant global accords coming out. One in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997 (COP3): the Kyoto Protocol, in which the developed nations agreed to take up legally binding emission cuts. The other in 2015 in Paris: a landmark climate deal adopted not only by the developed nations but by all the leading emerging economies, including China and India, who took up legally binding but nationally determined emission reduction targets with a common goal to limit the warming to 1.5°C by 2100. This climate deal has so far been a success story, as the world has witnessed thousands of organisations and around 150 countries committing to Net Zero by mid-century and triggered funding from both public and private sector entities. As a sequel, the expectation from COP28 was to create an enabling institutional and financing framework to further accelerate and incentivise climate actions.

Compared to the expectations, CoP28 falls short. Though the final agreement focusses on transitioning away from fossil fuels, operationalisation and capitalisation of the loss and damage fund, tripling renewable energy, reduction in methane emissions, and forging a framework for the global goal on adaptation, it does not provide clear direction on how the climate targets set will be supported by facilitating access to technology and finance. On the issues of climate finance, the pledges and commitments include the Loss and Damage Fund (\$700 million), Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund (\$174 million) and to the Adaptation Fund (\$188 million). It's a far cry from the quantum requirement—India alone needs \$1 trillion for its 2030 goals—and clarity on specifics of operationalisation of the funds is needed.

### India's approach to climate change

India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) encapsulate its roadmap to achieve the Net Zero by 2070 target while aiming to decouple economic growth and emissions. India's latest communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) based on the 2019 emissions inventory indicates that the country has already achieved its initial emission intensity reduction target, more

than a decade ahead. In order to enhance the country's energy transition, in February 2023, the government of India notified 13 capital-intensive clean technologies and processes where India will seek international climate finance. This was followed by the notification in May 2023, for the formation of a domestic carbon market mechanism that aims to incentivise deeper decarbonisation efforts by the Indian industries.

This year, India has also spearheaded "going beyond carbon" through its Green Credit Initiative that was unveiled at COP28 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The mechanism, lauded by global leaders at the conference, aims to combat the impacts of climate change through a crediting system based on water harvesting and tree plantation. While India continues to make headway on these mechanisms, this year's COP saw fewer outcomes on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement which primarily pertains to developing international carbon markets. Numerous discussions took place, each targeting different aspects of Article 6, from voluntary carbon markets to the establishment of a UN-led international carbon market framework; however, further discussions are expected in future COPs for final outcomes. In a significant first, six of the world's major voluntary carbon crediting standards announced a collaboration to enhance the integrity and transparency of the crediting mechanisms in the international offset market. Increased robustness of these mechanisms is expected to expedite bilateral agreements on carbon trading that India is currently exploring with Singapore, Japan and Switzerland to mobilise international climate finance for the 13 capital-intensive, low-carbon technologies as notified by the Centre earlier this year.

#### Response from Indian Inc

PwC India has been collaborating with the World Economic Forum (WEF) on developing a business case for climate adaptation to accelerate private sector participation. The framework presents actions for businesses to build resilience for themselves as well for the community around them by managing risks, capitalising on opportunities and shaping collaborative outcomes. As per the latest business stocktake conducted by WEF and PwC India, while 87% of businesses recognise their role in protecting their operations and the communities around them from climate risks, only 23% are pursuing adaptation opportunities that contribute to sustainability and climate resilience.

#### Way forward

Sustainability can also be a powerful economic driver for India, creating jobs and opportunities for revenue generation. For example, companies can opt to view co-firing biomass residues with coal for energy generation not only to meet emission reduction goals but also as an income generation and alternative livelihood option for the local communities and farmers who would collect and transport such residues and create a sustainable supply chain.

India has made significant progress towards decarbonising the economy, without losing sight of the developmental targets. The measures that may be taken up at a national level, irrespective of COP outcomes, are:

Ensuring optimum utilisation of national schemes such as Performance Linked Incentives to accelerate uptake of technologies such as green hydrogen, offshore wind and storage based renewable energy for deeper decarbonisation.

Setting up collaborative institutional frameworks where project promoters, investors, climate start-ups and technology vendors may come together to make informed decisions on which technology to go for, how and by when.

India should look at incentivising existing mechanisms like green bonds. While global investor response has been mixed, a transparent and seamless regulatory framework could attract more participants in the Indian green bonds.

Developing a comprehensive monitoring, reporting and verification framework for efficient and transparent transaction of carbon credits in the domestic carbon market.

Accelerating mobilisation of the national adaptation funds, or reviving the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change to bridge the gap between mitigation and adaptation financing.

India's journey toward meeting its climate goals will serve as inspiration for other nations facing similar challenges. The collective effort to combat climate change hinges on the success of individual countries in meeting their commitments. By staying steadfast in its pursuit of a greener, more sustainable future, India Inc has a definitive role to play in this, leading by example in the global fight against climate change. <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/climate-as-compass-cop28-disappointment-notwithstanding-india-must-keep-to-its-chosen-ghg-action-path/3343823/>

## **17. AI regulation needs to get serious and global** *(thehindubusinessline.com)* Updated December 20, 2023

While healthy competition can drive innovation, an unregulated race can lead to a fragmented landscape where standards, ethics, and accountability are overlooked

The recently concluded Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) summit in Delhi marked a significant milestone. The meet — attended by representatives from diverse nations, industry leaders, and experts — recognised the importance of establishing ethical guidelines and standards for AI technologies. It also rightly stressed the need for international collaboration in navigating the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence.

It is clear that there is a global race for AI dominance. Nations across the world are investing heavily in AI research, development, and deployment. While healthy competition can drive innovation, an unregulated race can lead to a fragmented landscape where standards, ethics, and accountability are overlooked. In this race, countries may prioritise advancements without considering the potential risks and societal impact. To prevent a dystopian future and ensure a collaborative approach, it is essential to establish international agreements and standards for AI development and

use. The summit participants agreed that AI systems should be developed in a manner that upholds human rights, fairness, and accountability.

Recent global initiatives have taken significant steps towards establishing a regulatory framework that balances innovation with ethical considerations. Notable among these initiatives are the Bletchley Declaration, the US White House Executive Order, and the legislative efforts by the European Parliament and Council. There are many initiatives being undertaken by private players to put in place a framework to limit the negative impact of AI. For example, tech giants including Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, Google and OpenAI have signed a voluntary agreement to emphasise safety, security and trust when developing AI technologies. In India, industry body Nasscom has come out with a framework listing out the obligations of all stakeholders in the development of AI.

But the biggest challenge is that no one knows for certain what's going to happen next with AI. This technology is evolving so fast that stakeholders are falling behind miserably when it comes to putting safeguards. Therefore, it is essential to recognise that the success of these regulatory efforts hinges on their implementation. International cooperation that prevents regulatory fragmentation and ensures a level playing field for AI developers and users worldwide is crucial. The global community has acknowledged the need to bridge the digital divide. Recognising the potential for AI to exacerbate existing inequalities, participants committed to promoting diversity in AI research and development, as well as addressing the socio-economic impacts of automation. Implementing the principles and agreements reached at the summit will require sustained effort and coordination among participating nations. The global community must remain vigilant in monitoring developments in AI and adapting regulatory frameworks to address emerging challenges. The GPAI summit has laid the groundwork for a collaborative approach. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/editorial/ai-regulation-needs-to-get-serious-and-global/article67657932.ece>