

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG /AUDIT REPORTS

1. Ladakh: आयुष्मान भारत पर CAG रिपोर्ट में लगे प्रश्नचिन्ह, अपात्रों को दिया गया लाभ; नहीं करवाया गया आडिट (jagran.com) 27 Aug 2023

प्रधानमंत्री जन आरोग्य योजना (आयुष्मान भारत) पर नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) की रिपोर्ट में केंद्र शासित प्रदेश लद्दाख में भी कई खामियां गिनाई गई हैं। इसमें कहा गया है कि न तो कभी इंश्योरेंस कंपनी ने कोई आडिट किया और न ही स्टेट हेल्थ एजेंसी ने आडिट करवाया। सैंपल आडिट करवाने के लिए कोई लक्ष्य निर्धारित ही नहीं किया। कई ऐसे लोगों को योजना का लाभ दे दिया गया जिन जो इसके पात्र ही नहीं थे।

नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि लद्दाख में दो जिलों के तीन अस्पतालों का आडिट किया गया लेकिन इंश्योरेंस कंपनी ने कभी भी आडिट नहीं करवाया जबकि यह अनिवार्य होता है। कई अन्य प्रदेशों की तरह ही लद्दाख में स्टेट हेल्थ एजेंसी ने 335 उन मरीजों को योजना का लाभ दिया जो कि इसके पात्र नहीं थे।

इंश्योरेंस कंपनी ने एमओयू के तहत कई क्षेत्रों में अच्छा प्रदर्शन नहीं किया लेकिन बावजूद इसके स्टेट हेल्थ एजेंसी 39.66 लाख रुपयों का जुर्माना कंपनी पर लगाने में विफल हुई है। पंद्रह मरीज ऐसे थे जिन्हें योजना का लाभ तो मिला लेकिन उन्हें अस्पतालों से छुट्टी देने की तिथि ही नहीं बताई गई है।

लद्दाख की स्टेट हेल्थ एजेंसी की कार्यप्रणाली पर प्रश्नचिन्ह लगाते हुए यह कहा गया है कि केंद्र शासित प्रदेश में जिला शिकायत निवारण समितियों का गठन ही नहीं हुआ। हर समिति को एंटी फ्राड सेल गठित करना अनिवार्य है लेकिन उसका भी गठन नहीं किया। यही नहीं लद्दाख में लाभार्थियों को पंपलेट और बुकलेट भी नहीं दी गई।

नियमों के तहत नहीं हुआ राजस्व का वितरण रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि लद्दाख के कुछ सरकारी अस्पतालों में नियमों के तहत राजस्व का वितरण नहीं हुआ। सरकारी अस्पतालों में इलाज के बाद जो क्लेम अर्थात दावा राजस्व उन्हें मिलता है, उसका भी सही वितरण नहीं हो पाया है। यह राजस्व इंश्योरेंस कंपनियां सीधे अस्पताल के बैंक खातों में डालती है।

लद्दाख में इस राजस्व का 75 प्रतिशत हिस्सा रोगी कल्याण समितियों को जाना चाहिए जबकि बीस प्रतिशत कर्मचारियों को लाभ के तौर पर और पांच प्रतिशत स्टेट हेल्थ सोसायटी को। लेकिन दो जिलों के तीन प्रमुख अस्पतालों एसएनएम अस्पताल लेह, सीएचसी संखु और जिला अस्पताल कारगिल का जब आडिट हुआ तो किसी में भी नियमों का पालन नहीं हुआ था।

एसएनएम अस्पताल लेह को मिले 13,31,792 रुपयों में रोगी कल्याण समिति को 36.56 प्रतिशत, 10.68 प्रतिशत इंसेटिव के तौर पर दिया गया। स्टेट हेल्थ सोसायटी को कुछ भी नहीं। इसी तरह सीएचसी संखु को 14,974 रुपये मिले और उसमें से किसी को एक रुपया नहीं दिया गया। जिला अस्पताल कारगिल को 8,22,340 रुपये मिले और इसमें से

99.81 प्रतिशत रोगी कल्याण समिति को दे दिए गए। <https://www.jagran.com/jammu-and-kashmir/jammu-pmjay-cag-report-on-ayushman-bharat-benefits-given-to-ineligible-23514097.html>

2. The CAG reports: Do expose the ‘error’, minister
(*nationalheraldindia.com*) August 27, 2023

In November 2010, a CAG report claimed that allotting the 2G spectrum on the principle of ‘first come, first serve’ rather than auctioning had resulted in a ‘notional loss’ of Rs 1.76 lakh crore.

The BJP and the media interpreted it as an instance of ‘massive corruption’ in the Manmohan Singh-led government; and Kapil Sibal’s attempt to explain that there was ‘zero loss’ only deepened the people’s distrust. The failure to unlock the potential value of the spectrum triggered a political storm that arguably unseated the UPA government and helped Narendra Modi to power in the 2014 general election.

In 2017, the CBI court acquitted all the accused and held that there was no evidence of corruption.

In August this year, 13 years later, a series of reports by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India (CAG) have released embarrassing details of potential fraud and corruption. These include not just violation of rules and established norms but also surprising decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

There are three noticeable differences between the two instances. Unlike Vinod Rai, then Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the present CAG Girish Chandra Murmu has not spoken up on actual or notional losses. The media (especially TV channels) have not put the government in the dock.

Finally, the present government and the ruling party have brazenly claimed that the CAG reports are ‘erroneous’. This claim should be examined by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Lok Sabha. But the PAC chairman, leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, has been suspended from the House for alleged unruly conduct. Is there a connection between the suspension and the impending PAC meetings? Who can tell.

One of the CAG reports states that the ministry of road transport ended up paying Rs 250 crore per kilometre for a 19 km stretch of highway in Haryana whereas the cost approved by the CCEA was Rs 18 crore per kilometre. The same report also states that for the rest of the highway, the payment made was Rs 32 crore per kilometre compared to the CCEA’s approval of Rs 15 crore per kilometre.

Union minister Nitin Gadkari, as glib as ever, was ready with an explanation when he was ‘asked’ to comment at a live event on TV. The CAG had made a mistake, he asserted. The report was erroneous and the project had, in fact, been completed at less than the expected cost and resulted in savings, he added. He graciously admitted to a ‘small error’ on the part of ministry officials, who had orally convinced the auditors that there was no irregularity but had failed to communicate the same in writing.

Well, “the auditors are not idiots” was the acerbic comment of a distinguished senior officer, now retired from the CAG’s office, who went on to serve the United Nations as auditor in several countries. As he pointed out, auditors these days are not just commerce graduates, they are equipped with technical expertise. Many of them are engineers with additional degrees in finance, banking or insurance. The computerisation of accounts and digital records has also significantly reduced the probability of mistakes.

The audit process is also geared towards minimising errors. CAG sources clarify that audit objections are brought to the notice of the concerned government officials. If auditors receive satisfactory and convincing explanations, the objections are dropped.

The mystery can be unravelled only if Murmu and his auditors are summoned by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for a proper explanation. However, unless PAC chairman Chowdhury’s suspension from the Lok Sabha is withdrawn, he may not be able to even attend PAC meetings, suggest media reports.

Significantly, Chowdhury had written to Murmu about inordinate delays in the submission of CAG reports: ‘Delay in reports ensure that the burning issues are soon forgotten. By the time reports come, the governments have changed in states or events have overtaken the subject.’ The letter may have prompted the tabling of several CAG reports during the monsoon session of Parliament.

Word is that Murmu’s predecessor Rajiv Mehrishi sat on a large number of reports. Compared to an average of around 200 reports submitted during the UPA government, the CAG produced 98 reports in 2017–18 and 73 reports in 2018–19, most of them relating to the 2013–2015 period. The reports thereafter dried up, partly on the pretext of the pandemic and the lockdown.

Nitin Gadkari has not yet cared to refute the CAG’s observation that while the CCEA had approved a budget of Rs 5.34 lakh crore to build 34,000 kilometre of national highway, contracts worth Rs 8.46 lakh crore have been awarded for building 26,000 kilometre.

The draft audit report, once finalised, is again shared with the government, which is then given time to raise objections, if any. Once the reports are approved and signed by the CAG, printed copies are sent to the government to be placed before Parliament, following which the reports go public and are posted on the CAG’s website.

The CAG is, of course, not the CBI and can only point to the potential for fraud, embezzlement and corruption. It was a ‘proactive’ or ‘activist’ Supreme Court that had ordered a CBI inquiry into the 2G scam. The BJP government which successfully stalled a CBI inquiry into the Rafale ‘deal’ by replacing the CBI director overnight is, of course, unlikely to order an inquiry into the findings of the CAG in 2023. The Supreme Court, which refused to order a CBI inquiry into the Rafale deal, is also unlikely to entertain the thought in 2023. A case of ‘once bitten, twice shy’?

Nonetheless, issues flagged in CAG reports are worthy of independent inquiries. In the much-publicised Ayushman Bharat health scheme, which ensures medical treatment up

to Rs 5 lakh per family, the CAG found that as many as 75 lakh people across different states had been registered under a single mobile number.

Anonymous sources in the government and a few retired officials explained it away as a ‘technical glitch’—apparently an arbitrary phone number was used to register the patients since the platform was not yet ready.

The explanation is far from convincing. How could the same number be used across different hospitals, cities and states unless there was complicity? The CAG report actually identifies not one but three such numbers; and since CAG performance audits look at only a small part of the scheme in randomly selected samples, the magnitude of the ‘scam’ or the ‘scandal’ could be a lot larger.

Indeed, the CAG report also mentions that its audit found that payments had been released to 88,000 people who were dead. The clarification proffered by government spokesmen is that the CAG had, once again, made a mistake. Registering and approving claims under Ayushman Bharat usually takes 2–4 days and it was during this period that patients undergoing treatment had died. Payments were released to the ‘dead’ because they were found after their death to be eligible under the scheme. Convinced?

Present CAG Murmu’s background in the finance ministry is another reason to find the government’s claims of ‘mistakes’ in the reports rather far-fetched.

Murmu, who completes three years as the CAG this month, served as joint secretary and expenditure secretary in the Union finance ministry and was part of the team that presented the 2019 Union budget. Could he have cleared an ‘error-prone report’ or reports, as Gadkari has alleged—despite his intimate knowledge of finance and the functioning of government departments?

Although CAG reports point out irregularities in other ministries as well—contractors in Ayodhya have been paid Rs 20 crore in excess, the rural development ministry has diverted Rs 2.83 crore from its pension fund for publicity—the charges against the NHAI and the ministry of road transport and highways happen to be the most serious.

This, in turn, has triggered the conspiracy theory that the CAG, who worked closely with Prime Minister Modi and home minister Amit Shah, deliberately released reports with the potential to embarrass Gadkari, who is not known to be on the best of terms with either of them, besides being perceived as one of the ‘better’ Union ministers.

With mainstream media and TV channels showing little interest in pursuing the lead, there is no pressure at all on the government to order an investigation. If the irregularities turn out to be grave enough, the

Modi–Shah duo may not be averse to throwing Gadkari under the bus ahead of the next election. It would cement the prime minister’s image as a ‘crusader against corruption’ and present him as someone who is not averse to taking action against his own party leader and Union minister.

Nobody knows yet if this is simply the trailer and picture abhi baaki hai (the show is yet to begin). <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/india/the-cag-reports-do-expose-the-error-minister>

3. मोदी सरकार की कई योजनाओं पर कैग के संगीन आरोप, क्या ये सब ट्रेलर है और पिक्चर अभी बाकी है! (navjivanindia.com) August 27, 2023

नवंबर, 2010 में कैग (सीएजी - नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक) की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि 2जी स्पेक्ट्रम की नीलामी नहीं करके इसे 'पहले आओ पहले पाओ' के आधार पर आवंटित करने से सरकार को स्पेक्ट्रम का वास्तविक मूल्य नहीं मिल सका और इसका नतीजा यह हुआ कि सरकार को 1.76 लाख करोड़ रुपये का 'सांकेतिक नुकसान' हो गया। इसने ऐसा राजनीतिक तूफान खड़ा किया कि यूपीए सरकार उखड़ गई और इससे 2014 के आम चुनाव में नरेंद्र मोदी को सत्ता में आने में मदद मिली।

बीजेपी और मीडिया ने इसे मनमोहन सिंह के नेतृत्व वाली सरकार में 'बड़े पैमाने पर भ्रष्टाचार' के उदाहरण के रूप में पेश किया; और जब कपिल सिब्बल ने यह समझाने की कोशिश कि इसमें 'शून्य नुकसान' हुआ है, तो इसने लोगों के अविश्वास को और गहरा कर दिया। आखिरकार, सात साल बाद सीबीआई अदालत ने सभी आरोपियों को बरी कर दिया और माना कि इसमें भ्रष्टाचार होने का कोई सबूत नहीं है।

13 साल बाद अगस्त, 2023 में कैग रिपोर्टों की श्रृंखला ने न केवल नियमों और तय मानदंडों के उल्लंघन को उजागर किया है, बल्कि सरकार को शर्मिंद करने वाले विवरण जारी किए हैं जो संभावित धोखाधड़ी और भ्रष्टाचार की ओर इशारा कर रहे हैं। इसके साथ ही कैग ने यह भी कहा कि आर्थिक मामलों की कैबिनेट समिति (सीसीईए) द्वारा लिए गए निर्णयों का भी उल्लंघन किया गया है।

हालांकि तब की कैग रिपोर्ट और अब की अब की रिपोर्ट में तीन बड़े अंतर हैं। तत्कालीन कैग प्रमुख विनोद राय के उलट, मौजूदा कैग प्रमुख गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू ने वास्तविक या सांकेतिक नुकसान के बारे में बात नहीं की है। 2010-11 के विपरीत मीडिया और विशेष रूप से टीवी चैनल इन रिपोर्टों पर ने 'शिकारी' की तरह झपट नहीं पड़े हैं और सरकार को कटघरे में खड़ा करना तो दूर, उससे सवाल तक नहीं पूछे गए हैं।

सबसे बड़ी बात, मौजूदा सरकार और सत्तारूढ़ दल ने बेशर्मी से दावा किया है कि कैग की रिपोर्टें 'गलत' और दोषपूर्ण हैं। सरकार के दावे की जांच लोकसभा की लोक लेखा समिति (पीएसी) कर सकती है लेकिन पीएसी अध्यक्ष, लोकसभा में विपक्ष के नेता अधीर रंजन चौधरी को केंद्रीय मंत्री पीयूष गोयल द्वारा पेश एक प्रस्ताव पर सदन से निलंबित कर दिया गया है।

क्या निलंबन और पीएसी की बैठकों के बीच कोई रिश्ता है, यह अभी तक स्पष्ट नहीं है।

इस बार कैग की एक रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि सड़क परिवहन मंत्रालय ने हरियाणा में 19 किलोमीटर के राजमार्ग के लिए प्रति किलोमीटर 250 करोड़ रुपये का भुगतान किया जबकि सीसीईए द्वारा अनुमोदित लागत 18 करोड़ रुपये ही थी। इसी रिपोर्ट में यह भी कहा गया है कि शेष राजमार्ग के लिए, सीसीईए की 15 करोड़ रुपये की मंजूरी की तुलना में प्रति किलोमीटर 32 करोड़ रुपये का भुगतान किया गया।

केंद्रीय मंत्री नितिन गडकरी से जब लाइव टीवी पर एक कार्यक्रम में इस पर टिप्पणी करने के लिए 'कहा गया' तो वह जैसे स्पष्टीकरण के साथ तैयार थे। उन्होंने जोर देकर कहा कि कैग ने गलती की है। गडकरी ने यह तक कहा कि वास्तव में यह परियोजना अपेक्षित लागत से कम में पूरी हुई है और इसके परिणामस्वरूप बचत हुई है। हालांकि गडकरी ने मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों की ओर से हुई एक 'छोटी सी गलती' स्वीकार की कि अधिकारियों ने ऑडिटर्स को मौखिक रूप से बताया था कि कहीं कोई अनियमितता नहीं हुई लेकिन उन्होंने यही बात लिखित में नहीं दी।

खैर, कैग कार्यालय से सेवानिवृत्त एक प्रतिष्ठित पूर्व वरिष्ठ अधिकारी जिन्होंने कई देशों में संयुक्त राष्ट्र के लेखा परीक्षक के तौर पर काम किया है, ने इस पर तीखी टिप्पणी की- 'ऑडिटर बेवकूफ तो नहीं हैं।' उन्होंने बताया कि इन दिनों ऑडिटर सिर्फ वाणिज्य स्नातक नहीं हैं बल्कि तकनीकी विशेषज्ञता से लैस हैं। उनमें से कई वित्त, बैंकिंग या बीमा में डिग्री वाले इंजीनियर हैं। खातों और डिजिटल रिकॉर्डों के कम्प्यूटरीकरण ने भी काफी हद तक गलतियों की संभावना को कम कर दिया है।

प्रक्रिया ही ऐसी होती है कि कैग रिपोर्टों में गलतियां असंभावित जान पड़ती हैं। कैग सूत्रों का कहना है कि ऑडिट आपत्तियां चर्चा के दौरान संबंधित सरकारी अधिकारियों के ध्यान में लाई जाती हैं; और अगर लेखा परीक्षकों को संतोषजनक और ठोस स्पष्टीकरण मिल जाता है तो आपत्तियां हटा दी जाती हैं। अंतिम रूप देने के बाद ड्राफ्ट ऑडिट रिपोर्ट को दोबारा सरकार से साझा करके उसे आपत्तियां उठाने के लिए पर्याप्त समय दिया जाता है। एक बार जब रिपोर्ट को कैग मंजूरी देकर उसपर दस्तखत कर देता है, उसके बाद इसकी मुद्रित प्रतियां संसद में रखने के लिए सरकार को भेज दी जाती हैं और फिर रिपोर्ट सार्वजनिक हो जाती हैं और कैग की वेबसाइट पर उपलोड कर दी जाती हैं।

कैग निश्चित रूप से सीबीआई नहीं है और यह केवल धोखाधड़ी, गबन और भ्रष्टाचार की संभावनाओं की ओर इशारा कर सकती है। यह तो एक 'प्रो-एक्टिव' या 'एक्टिविस्ट' सुप्रीम कोर्ट था जिसने 2जी घोटाले की सीबीआई जांच के आदेश दे दिए थे। बीजेपी सरकार जिसने रातों-रात सीबीआई निदेशक को हटाकर राफेल 'सौदे' की सीबीआई जांच को रोक दिया, के 2023 के कैग के नतीजों की जांच का आदेश देने की कोई संभावना नहीं है। राफेल सौदे पर सीबीआई जांच से इनकार करने वाले सुप्रीम कोर्ट की ओर से भी कैग रिपोर्ट पर किसी तरह की जांच के आदेश की संभावना नहीं है।

फिर भी कैग रिपोर्ट में उठाए गए मुद्दे स्वतंत्र जांच के विषय हैं। प्रति परिवार पांच लाख रुपये तक चिकित्सा उपचार सुनिश्चित करने वाली बहुप्रचारित आयुष्मान भारत स्वास्थ्य योजना में कैग ने पाया कि राज्यों में लगभग 75 लाख लोगों को सिर्फ एक मोबाइल

नंबर के जरिये पंजीकृत किया गया था। सरकार के अज्ञात सूत्रों और कुछ सेवानिवृत्त अधिकारियों ने इसे 'तकनीकी गड़बड़ी' करार देते हुए कहा कि चूंकि तब तक प्लेटफॉर्म तैयार नहीं हुआ था, इसलिए मरीजों को पंजीकृत करने के लिए एक मनमाने फोन नंबर का इस्तेमाल कर लिया गया।

हालांकि इस दलील पर यकीन करना मुश्किल है। जब तक कोई मिलीभगत न हो, एक ही नंबर का इस्तेमाल अलग-अलग अस्पतालों, शहरों और राज्यों में भला कैसे किया जा सकता है? कैग रिपोर्ट वास्तव में इस्तेमाल किए गए एक नहीं बल्कि तीन ऐसे नंबरों की पहचान करती है; और चूंकि कैग ऑडिट चुनिंदा राज्यों और केन्द्रों में योजना के केवल एक छोटे से हिस्से से संबंधित है, इसलिए 'घोटाले' का आकार बहुत बड़ा हो सकता है।

दरअसल, कैग रिपोर्ट में इस बात का भी उल्लेख है कि इसके ऑडिट में पाया गया कि ऐसे 88,000 लोगों को भुगतान दिया गया था जो मर चुके थे।

सरकारी प्रवक्ताओं द्वारा दिया गया स्पष्टीकरण यह है कि एक बार फिर कैग ने गलती की; आयुष्मान भारत के तहत दावों को पंजीकृत करने और मंजूरी देने में आमतौर पर 2-4 दिन लगते हैं और इस अवधि के दौरान इलाज करा रहे मरीजों की मृत्यु हो जाती है, तब भी उनका भुगतान किया जाता है। ऐसे में, भुगतान 'मृतकों' को जारी कर दिया गया क्योंकि उनकी मृत्यु के बाद उन्हें योजना के तहत 'पात्र' पाया गया।

मौजूदा कैग गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू की पृष्ठभूमि भी रिपोर्ट में 'गलती' की संभावनाओं को दूर की कौड़ी बनाती है। मुर्मू ने केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्रालय में संयुक्त सचिव और व्यय सचिव के रूप में कार्य किया और 2019 में वह केंद्रीय बजट पेश करने वाली टीम का हिस्सा थे। क्या वह वित्त और सरकारी विभागों के कामकाज के बारे में गहन जानकारी के बावजूद 'दोषयुक्त' रिपोर्ट को मंजूरी दे सकते हैं, जैसा कि गडकरी ने आरोप लगाया है?

रहस्य से पर्दा तभी उठ सकता है जब उन्हें और उनके ऑडिटर्स को लोक लेखा समिति (पीएसी) द्वारा स्पष्टीकरण देने के लिए बुलाया जाए। समिति की अध्यक्षता वर्तमान में लोकसभा में विपक्ष के नेता अधीर रंजन चौधरी कर रहे हैं; लेकिन जब तक लोकसभा से उनका निलंबन वापस नहीं लिया जाता, तब तक वह पीएसी की बैठकों में भी शामिल नहीं हो पाएंगे, ऐसा मीडिया रिपोर्टों से पता चलता है।

गौरतलब है कि चौधरी ने इस महीने कैग के रूप में तीन साल पूरे करने वाले मुर्मू को पत्र लिखकर पिछले कई वर्षों में कैग की रिपोर्ट जमा करने में हुई अत्यधिक देरी को लेकर शिकायत की थी। चौधरी ने लिखा था कि 'रिपोर्टों में देरी से होता यह है कि ज्वलंत मुद्दे जल्द ही भुला दिए जाते हैं। जब तक रिपोर्ट आती है, तब तक राज्यों में सरकारें बदल चुकी होती हैं या बाद की घटनाएं मूल विषय पर हावी हो चुकी होती हैं।' साथ ही अधीर ने मीडिया को बताया था कि देरी के बारे में स्पष्टीकरण देने के लिए पीएसी ने कैग को बुलाया है। हो सकता है कि अधीर के इस पत्र ने संभवतः मानसून सत्र में कई कैग रिपोर्टों को पेश करने के लिए प्रेरित किया हो।

ऐसी चर्चा है कि मुर्मू से पहले के कैग राजीव महर्षि कई रिपोर्टों को दबाए बैठे थे। यूपीए सरकार के दौरान प्रस्तुत की गई औसतन लगभग 200 रिपोर्टों की तुलना में कैग ने 2017-18 में 98 रिपोर्टें और 2018-19 में 73 रिपोर्टें तैयार कीं जिनमें से ज्यादातर 2013-2015 की अवधि से संबंधित थीं। इसके बाद रिपोर्टें बंद हो गईं और इसका एक कारण कोरोना और उसके बाद का लॉकडाउन भी रहा।

उधर गडकरी ने अब तक कैग की इस टिप्पणी का खंडन करने की जहमत नहीं उठाई है कि जहां सीसीईए ने 34 हजार किलोमीटर राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग बनाने के लिए 5.34 लाख करोड़ रुपये के बजट को मंजूरी दी थी वहीं केवल 26 हजार किलोमीटर के निर्माण के लिए 8.46 लाख करोड़ रुपये के ठेके कैसे जारी कर दिए गए।

हालांकि कैग की रिपोर्टें अन्य मंत्रालयों में भी अनियमितताओं की ओर इशारा करती हैं और खुलासा करती हैं कि कैसे अयोध्या में ठेकेदारों को 20 करोड़ रुपये ज्यादा दे दिए गए और ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय ने अपने पेंशन फंड से 2.83 करोड़ रुपये का इस्तेमाल प्रचार के लिए कर लिया। जाहिर है, एनएचएआई और सड़क परिवहन और राजमार्ग मंत्रालय के खिलाफ आरोप काफी संगीन हैं।

मुख्यधारा के मीडिया और टीवी चैनलों ने जिस तरह कैग की रिपोर्टों में गड़बड़ियों की तरफ से मुंह फेर रखा है, उससे सरकार पर इनके खिलाफ जांच का आदेश देने का भी कोई दबाव नहीं है। लेकिन अगर अनियमितताओं ने किसी कारण तूल पकड़ भी लिया तो मोदी-शाह की जोड़ी अगले चुनाव से पहले गडकरी को सूली पर चढ़ाने से शायद ही गुरेज करे। यह भ्रष्टाचार के खिलाफ योद्धा के रूप में प्रधानमंत्री की छवि को और मजबूत ही करेगा और उन्हें ऐसे व्यक्ति के रूप में दिखाएगा जो अपनी ही पार्टी के नेता और केन्द्रीय मंत्री के खिलाफ कार्रवाई करने से भी नहीं हिचकता।

किसी को नहीं पता कि क्या यह सब महज ट्रेलर है और 'पिक्चर अभी बाकी है'?

<https://www.navjivanindia.com/opinion/cag-indicated-gross-violation-and-possible-corruption-in-modi-governments-flagship-programs-will-someone-take-note-of-it>

4. India's humble ceiling fan is a hidden catalyst in the country's energy transition (*scroll.in*) Aug 26, 2023

Look up, and whirring above you, more often than not, is a ceiling fan with a draught that is essential to cool off during the hot summer months. Ceiling fans are a staple in Indian households, coming in various shades, styles and sizes. Now, they also come with energy savings and the potential to reduce India's growing electricity consumption. The ceiling fan, experts say, is a hidden catalyst in India's energy transition that's going unnoticed.

Ceiling fans are the second most commonly found service product in Indian households, according to the 2019-21 National Family Health Survey, with 88% of households surveyed reporting they had one. India sells around 41 million ceiling fans every year, with both urban and rural households reporting high numbers of ceiling fan ownership. Their near ubiquity also means they account for a large share in India's residential electricity consumption – around 20%, according to some estimates.

Even though ceiling fans consume less energy than air conditioners, their sheer volume means their total annual energy consumption is “only slightly lower than the total annual energy consumption of room air conditioners,” according to a 2019 government document.

“There’s huge potential to reduce emissions and electricity consumption through replacing old fans with newer ones that are more energy efficient, making them an important part of India’s decarbonisation journey,” said Aditya Chuneekar, a fellow at Prayas Energy Group, an energy think tank.

According to India’s 2019 Cooling Plan, by replacing commonly found ceiling fans consuming 70 watts of energy, with energy efficient fans consuming around 50 watts, “energy saving of 10%-15% will be possible in 2027-’28”. Fans that use a lower wattage could bring even greater energy savings, the Plan said. But much of these savings will only be possible if the fans are actually bought and used. A survey by Prayas, led by Chuneekar, found that only a quarter of fans available in the market were five star rated. As per 2020 data, only 3% of households had installed star rated fans.

The star rating of an appliance is an indicator of how much electricity it consumes, with five stars indicating the highest available efficiency and one star indicating the lowest. This star rating system is routinely revised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

Last month, the G20 agreed to double the rate of improvement of energy efficiency by 2030. Just like LED light bulbs, ceiling fans are considered a low-hanging fruit for energy efficiency that could help India achieve this goal, say experts.

Slow start

In 2022, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency made it mandatory for ceiling fan manufacturers to sell only star rated fans and the products had to be prominently labeled at the point of sale. Star labels could only be fixed after taking permission from the Bureau and manufacturers were banned from producing and selling unstarred fans January 1, 2023 onwards.

As of August, there are over 2700 starred fans in the market, but only around 20%-25% are five star rated. A majority of fans supplied in the market are of one star.

“Previously, the average electricity consumption of fans was around 78-82 watts, but with the revised norms, the consumption has reduced to 55 watts and below. Fans in the five star category consume somewhere between 30 and 35 watts, so there is a shift and a reduction in power consumption which could range to up to 50%,” said Ravindra Singh Negi, former chairman of the Indian Fan Manufacturers Association and chief operating officer of Bajaj Electricals.

“The first challenge was to comply and get the products tested to meet the BEE’s [Bureau of Energy Efficiency] standards. This is a tedious process and requires a huge amount of investment and technical changes to the motor, but the industry was able to do this in time to meet deadlines,” Negi said. The second challenge, he said, has been to shield consumers from the rising costs of production.

The high capital costs along with lack of awareness and a tardy start have challenged the government's attempt to mainstream energy efficient fans, say experts, who nonetheless consider it a welcome step.

Compared to air conditioners and fridges, which have proved the success of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's star labeling programme, ceiling fans have been late to the party. Air conditioners were first made part of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's standards and labelling programme on a voluntary basis in 2006 and then made mandatory in 2010. The standards for energy efficiency have been revised periodically since then, to encourage innovation and judicious use of electricity. Ceiling fans, however, were introduced to the programme on a voluntary basis in 2010, and made mandatory only last year, 12 years after the programme started. Since 2010, the standards have been revised only once – in 2019.

This lackluster effort to mainstream energy efficient ceiling fans has meant that, until recent years, energy inefficient fans consuming 60 watts or more were abundantly found in the market. In 2012, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency was poised to launch a Super Efficient Equipment Program to incentivise the manufacturing and sale of super energy efficient fans consuming 35 watts of electricity or less. The programme was never launched, but it encouraged manufacturers to create models which were available to consumers in the market. Demand, however, remained low – in 2017, 95% of ceiling fans sold in the market were unlabelled and twice as inefficient compared to the most efficient model in the market.

“Ceiling fans can last for 10, 15, sometimes 20 years. It's rare for consumers to replace their fans unless they fail, and there is a very small margin of urban consumers who may choose to replace their fans for aesthetic or other reasons. When you buy an energy inefficient ceiling fan, you're locking in those inefficiencies for more than a decade,” said Pramod Kumar Singh, Senior Director of Research and Programmes at the Alliance for Energy Efficiency Economy (AEEE).

There were also teething problems along the way. A 2016 survey by Consumer Voice, an advocacy group, found that even though manufacturers were able to make energy efficient models, most tested in the survey faltered on air delivery. This has since been rectified, with five star rated fans performing better on air delivery now.

When the Bureau of Energy Efficiency revised its standards of energy efficiency for ceiling fans in 2019, the changes were a huge leap for the industry. A five star rated fan runs on Brush-Less Direct Current technology, which is more expensive than the traditional induction-motor models because two thirds of its parts have to be imported. While a one star fan can be sold from anywhere between Rs 1,300-Rs 1,700, five star rated fans cost at least double – Rs 3,000 and above.

The Energy Efficiency Services Limited, a government subsidiary, announced it would procure Brush-Less Direct Current fans in bulk in order to drive down their prices, but import dependency may come in the way of a steep drop, said Singh.

“Even with millions of orders coming, a price reduction could be in the range of 20% to 25% in the current market, because two thirds of the parts still need to be imported. There won't be a price reduction from Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,000 rupees so soon,” he said.

Replacing old stuck

A 2022 survey of 25 shops selling ceiling fans, across six states, found that a year after the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's rules came into force, nearly all still had old stocks of unlabelled fans which were being sold. The survey by Prayas Energy Group also found that two-thirds of the models it surveyed on e-commerce sites "did not have any information on star-labels. Most of these models when compared with the BEE database were one star models. The models with information on star labels were all five star rated. Hence, it looks like labels of only five star rated models are displayed on the product listing page since it acts as a marketing feature."

Omer Basith, founder and CEO of Virtual Forest, a manufacturer of motor controllers used in super efficient Brush-Less Direct Current fans, said it wasn't against the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's rules for old, unstarred stock to be sold in the market. "Prior to the enforcement of the star rating norms, every single fan manufacturer just did everything in their power to exhaust the inventory of non-star rated fans. That meant pushing everything to trade as quickly as they could. The norms require manufacturers to stop selling unstarred fans after January 1, but whatever's already in trade can still be exhausted. That's also going to artificially lower the adoption numbers for starred energy efficient fans because retailers are sitting on so much stock."

Negi too said that the unstarred stock could be of ceiling fans with sizes that are not specified in the notification, and that every manufacturer associated with the Indian Fan Manufacturers Association is in compliance with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's new norms.

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency is supposed to undertake surveys and routine testing of products under the standards and labeling programme to ensure they are complying with the new norms, but there is no publicly available data to suggest this has been done for ceiling fans as yet. The Comptroller Auditor General said in a 2020 report that check testing for other products under the S&L programme was "negligible, incomplete and ineffective," lab testing had been neglected, and label verification "was not taken up at all," recommending all three be scaled up for better consumer protection.

When reached, officials in the Bureau of Energy Efficiency did not respond to requests for an interview.

Testing outside lab conditions is essential to make sure the product works under various settings that can affect its performance, like in areas with an erratic electricity supply or with high humidity, said Chunekar.

An updated survey by Consumer Voice from March this year, which did its own comparative testing of five star fans in the Indian market, found that all met the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's norms and complies with air delivery standards as well. Of the four brands tested, Atomberg Efficio performed the best.

"A lot of people are buying fans online these days. Ideally, e-commerce websites should be displaying those labels prominently, so when you buy online you can see them, but that is not being done uniformly. The rules say that the label has to be shown at the

point of sale, but there is no explicit mention of e-commerce sites, which is where the government can intervene,” Chuneekar said.

Making fans affordable

Despite high levels of ownership, the market for ceiling fans will only swell as India develops and global warming sets in. A market analysis by IMARC forecasts an annual growth rate of 2.6% between 2023 and 2028, driven by “rapid urbanization and significant growth of the construction industry in the new residential buildings.” More essentially, ceiling fans are an affordable way to stay cool when dealing with extreme heat, which is on the rise in India.

Manufacturers are now on a quest to find cheaper ways to make five star rated fans, in order to reduce input costs. “Five star fans with an induction motor are still a work in progress. Ideally, it should be priced lower than its BLDC counterpart,” said Negi of the Indian Fan Manufacturers Association. Reducing the weight of the fan is another way to potentially reduce costs.

According to Singh from the Alliance for Energy Efficiency Economy, the government must also look to ensure small scale fan manufacturers don’t miss out on this market transformation.

“There are so many small fan manufacturing clusters in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and South India selling fans at Rs 600-Rs 700, for whom it will be difficult to go for that extra capital investment to produce higher efficiency fans. MSMEs [micro, small and medium enterprises] are the backbone of India’s economy, and this is a just transition issue that the government can look into by providing production-linked incentive schemes, for example,” he said.

All experts Mongabay India spoke to were optimistic that the mandatory star rated system would lead to increased sales of higher rated fans eventually, and that it was just a matter of time.

“It was always expected that in this first year, adoption would peak at, you know, maybe 8% to 10% and it’s likely that 8%-10% of fans sold at the end of this year will be BLDC [Brush-Less Direct Current] fans. This is what happened with the other home appliances that have been down the street, like air conditioning. Moving forward a couple of years down the line, I feel like adoption will be much higher,” said Basith. <https://scroll.in/article/1054714/indias-humble-ceiling-fan-is-a-hidden-catalyst-in-the-countrys-energy-transition>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

5. No lab facility in Haryana for testing uranium contamination: CAG report (*hindustantimes.com*) August 27, 2023

A performance audit of Haryana’s rural and urban water schemes by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has found that there was no facility for testing uranium contamination in the state laboratory at Karnal despite the fact that 18 districts were partly affected with high uranium in groundwater.

As per the CAG report tabled in the state assembly last week, uranium concentration was found more than 30 PPB22 (permissible limit for drinking water prescribed by World Health Organisation) in Haryana with maximum value observed as 131.4 parts per billion in Sahu village of Hisar.

As per a June 2020 report of the Central Ground Water Board, the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti on Uranium Occurrence in Shallow Aquifers in India, 19.5 % samples (88 out of total 450 samples) analysed in Haryana had uranium concentration more than 30 PPB22. Eighteen districts - Ambala, Bhiwani, Faridabad, Fatehabad, Gurugram, Hisar, Jhajjar, Jind, Kaithal, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Mahendergarh, Palwal, Panipat, Rohtak, Sirsa, Sonapat and Yamunanagar were found partly affected by high uranium in groundwater, the report said. "It was observed that there was no testing facility for testing uranium contamination in the state laboratory at Karnal. No efforts had ever been made to tie up with other laboratories for checking the presence of uranium in ground water in the areas where tubewell-based water supply was in practice whereas uniform drinking water quality monitoring protocol emphasises that state laboratories should coordinate with the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) approved laboratories /NABL accredited laboratories for monitoring radioactive and virological parameters," the audit said.

The public health department in April 2022 stated that contamination of uranium in drinking water drawn from shallow tubewells would have given rise to kidney diseases in that region which would have been easily captured through an epidemiological survey, but no such evidence has ever been reported across the state. Audit is of the view that timely and appropriate remedial measure was required to be taken in respect of uranium contamination so as to timely restrict the chances of people getting exposed to the contaminated underground water as traces of uranium presence (though within permissible limit) have been detected at three out of five randomly selected locations during sampling exercise, the report said.

'No data on testing from all sources'

The audit said the engineer-in-chief, public health department, issued instructions in December 2017 to the sub-ordinate officers for testing chemical contamination for every ground water source i.e., tubewells and spring-based sources and were directed to submit samples of groundwater to the State Water Testing Laboratory, Karnal. Each test report was required to be scrutinised by the executive engineer concerned for failed samples and remedial measures were required to be taken on priority. For the purpose, Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (AAS) had been installed in the State Water Testing Laboratory, Karnal, which had the capacity to test the presence of heavy metals in drinking water. As per data provided by the department, it was noticed that 2,835 deep tubewells (2,480-rural, 355-urban) and 268 (244-rural, 24-urban) shallow tubewells were operated by department in selected divisions.

The CAG said that public health department division -1 Karnal had got water samples tested for heavy metals more than the number of sources but no data in this regard was available to confirm whether all the sources had actually been tested or not. Therefore, audit cannot comment on 100% coverage of sources. Whereas in the case of other divisions the percentage of source tested ranged from 0 to 68% during 2017-21. Thus, instructions of higher authorities to test all sources for chemical contamination were not

adhered to as the divisional offices had not sent samples for all the sources under their jurisdiction, the report said. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/cag-audit-reveals-lack-of-uranium-testing-facility-in-haryana-s-water-schemes-contamination-found-in-18-districts-101693155693307.html>

6. Frogs, algae, coliform in drinking water supply in Haryana: CAG
(tribuneindia.com) August 26, 2023

A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), submitted in the House today, says drinking water in Haryana is contaminated with coliform, while physical and chemical parameters are beyond the permissible limits.

In an audit of rural and urban water supply schemes, CAG took samples of water supply at 25 locations in the state by the Public Health Engineering Department (13), Urban Local Bodies (eight), and Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran (four). One set of samples was sent to the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) laboratory at Karnal and the other set was sent to the Shri Ram Institute of Industrial Research (SRI), New Delhi, for analysis.

14 deaths, 2,901 cases of water-borne diseases in five years

-The CAG noted that during 2016-21, 2,901 cases of water-borne diseases and 14 deaths were reported, as per information furnished by Health Department

-In four out of eight selected districts (Fatehabad, Karnal, Kurukshetra and Panchkula), 1,382 cases of water-borne diseases and 12 death cases against these cases were noticed during 2016-21

-There was no facility of physical and chemical testing at Kalka, Assandh, Indri and Hansi Sub-Divisional Water Testing laboratories

It was observed that at 12 locations (out of the selected 25), chlorination was not detected in the water samples. At 11 locations, chlorination was found to be more than the prescribed limit (maximum value of three parts per million PPM as against the requirement of 0.2 PPM) and at two locations, chlorination was found within the permissible limit. However, at the SRI lab, chlorination was found slightly above the permissible limit in two samples, and in the rest of the 23 samples, chlorination was not detected at all.

“At all 25 locations, it was observed that no record related to the dosing of the chlorination was maintained. In its absence, it is assessed that water pump operators/JEs were negligent about proper dosing for chlorination,” said CAG.

Out of the 25 locations, at seven locations Clear Water Tank (CWT)/ Over Head Service Reservoir (OHSR) was in use, and at three locations, the cleaning status was not satisfactory. There was a formation of algae inside the CWT in Katesra, frogs in CWT in Sahu, and the one at Kabrel was without cover.

There was growth of Sarkanda in the water tank at Khijuri. The CAG even published pictures to prove the fact.

In the bacteriological analysis of the samples, the presence of coliform confirmed that water was not potable, said CAG. The presence of coliform was detected in 19 samples (76 per cent water samples) out of 25 samples, as per analysis done at the PHED laboratory. However, at the SRI lab, the same was detected in five samples (20 per cent water samples).

The physical and chemical properties of water in the Municipal Corporation, Faridabad, revealed that the total dissolved salts, hardness, calcium, magnesium, chloride and nitrate were above the permissible limits at seven out of eight locations in the PHED lab, while in the SRI lab, five out of eight locations failed the tests.

It was noticed that 2,64,025 water samples were tested during the period April 2016 to March 2021 out of which 18,104 samples (6.86 per cent) were found unfit. During August 2021 to May 2022, it was found that there was no record follow-up action, implying it could not be ascertained whether timely action was carried out by the department to ensure safe and potable drinking water to the inhabitants of areas where water sample were found unfit. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/frogs-algae-coliform-in-drinking-water-supply-in-haryana-cag-538457>

7. Haryana: कैग की रिपोर्ट में खुलासा- हरियाणा में पानी पीने योग्य नहीं, सप्लाई भी कम, वाटर टैंक में मिले मेंढक (amarujala.com) August 27, 2023

हरियाणा के घरों में सप्लाई होने वाला पानी न तो पीने लायक है और न ही लोगों की जरूरतों को पूरा कर पा रहा है। यह खुलासा विधानसभा के मानसूत्र पेश की गई नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) की एक रिपोर्ट में हुआ है। रिपोर्ट में बताया गया है कि हरियाणा के 25 स्थानों से पानी के नमूने लिए गए। एक सेट को करनाल की सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य इंजीनियरिंग विभाग (पीएचईडी) की लैब में और दूसरे सेट को विश्लेषण के लिए श्री राम इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ इंडस्ट्रियल रिसर्च (एसआरआई) नई दिल्ली भेजा गया।

रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक पानी की शुद्धता तय मानकों पर खरी नहीं उतरी है। वहीं, 32 में से 23 स्थानों पर जलापूर्ति प्रति व्यक्ति आपूर्ति से कम पाई गई है। वहीं, शहरी क्षेत्र में 3.16 लाख कनेक्शनों में मीटर नहीं थे। 16 फीसदी लोगों ने माना कि एक दिन छोड़कर पानी की सप्लाई होती थी। वहीं, 21 फीसदी लोगों ने माना कि गर्मियों में पानी की भारी कमी थी।

पांच साल में 14 मौतें

कैग ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में बताया है कि स्वास्थ्य विभाग द्वारा दी गई जानकारी के अनुसार, 2016-21 के दौरान जल-जनित बीमारियों के 2,901 मामले सामने आए और 14 लोगों की मौत हुई। सिर्फ चार जिले फतेहाबाद, करनाल, कुरुक्षेत्र और पंचकूला में 2016-21 के दौरान जल-जनित बीमारियों के 1,382 मामले और 12 लोगों की मौत हुई। वहीं, कैग ने यह भी पाया है कि कालका, असंध, इंद्री और हांसी उपमंडल में जल परीक्षण प्रयोगशालाओं में भौतिक और रासायनिक परीक्षण की कोई सुविधा नहीं है।

12 स्थानों में पानी के नमूनों में क्लोरीन नहीं मिला

कैग ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में बताया है कि 25 में से 12 स्थानों में पानी के नमूनों में क्लोरीन नहीं मिला है। कुछ जगहों पर क्लोरीन की मात्रा ज्यादा पाई गई है, वहीं, कुछ जगहों पर तय मात्रा से कम पाई गई है।

वहीं, जल पंप संचालकों व जेई की बड़ी लापरवाही सामने आई है। कई जगह क्लोरीन संबंधी कोई रिकॉर्ड नहीं रखा गया था। इससे पता चलता है कि अधिकारी पेयजल की शुद्धता को लेकर जागरूक नहीं है।

पानी के 18104 नमूने फेल
कैग की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक अप्रैल 2016 से मार्च 2021 की अवधि के दौरान 2,64,025 पानी के नमूनों का परीक्षण किया गया। इनमें से 18,104 नमूने (6.86 प्रतिशत) मानकों पर खरे नहीं उतरे।

वहीं, अगस्त 2021 से मई 2022 तक यह रिकॉर्ड नहीं मिला है। इसके तहत यह पता लगाया जा सके कि जिन-जिन क्षेत्रों में पानी के नमूने लिए गए थे, वहां शुद्ध पेयजल को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए गए।

वाटर टैंक में मिले शैवाल व मेंढक
जांच के दौरान वाटर टैंक में शैवाल व मेंढक मिले हैं। कटेसरा में सीडब्ल्यूटी के अंदर शैवाल के समूह थे, वहीं साहू के सीडब्ल्यूटी में मेंढक थे। कुछ टैंकों की सफाई संतोष जनक नहीं थी। <https://www.amarujala.com/chandigarh/big-revelation-in-cag-report-water-is-not-potable-in-haryana-2023-08-27?pageId=1>

8. कैग रिपोर्ट में हुआ खुलासा: दस साल के बाद भी लागू नहीं जलनीति, 9 शहरों में 135 लीटर भी नहीं मिल रहा पानी (bhaskar.com) August 28, 2023

राज्य में पेयजल को लेकर नीतियां बंद कमरों में बनाई जा रही है। इसे लेकर आम लोगों से लेकर ग्राम पंचायतों तक से कोई सुझाव तक नहीं लिए जा रहे। लोगों को जहां पर्याप्त पानी नहीं मिल रहा, वहीं राज्य में बनाई गई जल नीति 10 वर्ष के बाद भी लागू नहीं हुई। जनस्वास्थ्य विभाग के अधिकारी कई जगह तो झूठे दावे तक कर रहे हैं। लोगों को शुद्ध पानी के लिए सरकार की ओर दिया जाने वाला पूरा पैसा तक खर्च नहीं किया जा रहा है। यह खुलासा कैग की रिपोर्ट में हुआ है।

पेयजल की मात्रा में बढ़ाने में पांच साल में भी ज्यादा सुधार नहीं हुआ है। 2016 में राज्य में 1878 गांवों में रहने वाले लोगों को निर्धारित मात्रा में पानी नहीं मिल रहा था, वहीं 2022 में भी 1737 गांवों में लोगों को निर्धारित मानक अनुसार मिलने वाले पानी से वंचित रहे हैं। प्रति व्यक्ति जलापूर्ति के लिए 10 वर्ष पहले बनी योजना अभी तक पूरी तरह लागू नहीं हुई।

राज्य में 1737 गांवों में प्रति व्यक्ति 55 लीटर तो 9 शहरों में 135 लीटर से कम पानी प्रति व्यक्ति सप्लाई किया जा रहा है। विभाग ने दावा किया कि सभी घरों तक कनेक्शन लगाकर पानी चालू कर दिया गया है। जबकि कैग की रिपोर्ट ने खुलासा किया है कि

निरीक्षण किए गए 44 गांवों में से 17 गांवों में यानी 39 प्रतिशत गांवों में ऐसे गरीब लोगों के लिए पानी की आपूर्ति की व्यवस्था ही नहीं की गई।

मुख्यमंत्री हो गए थे धरती के दोहन पर भावुक

मुख्यमंत्री पानी की बचत के लिए अनेक योजनाएं ला रहे हैं। धरती दोहन कर पानी निकालने पर वे पहले भावुक भी हो चुके हैं। कह चुके हैं कि धरती माता का दोहन मत करो, लेकिन जनस्वास्थ्य विभाग ने पानी की बचत के लिए कोई ठोस कदम नहीं उठा रहा। पानी की बर्बादी जानने के लिए मीटर तक नहीं लगाए गए हैं।
<https://www.bhaskar.com/local/chandigarh/news/revealed-in-the-cag-report-131749529.html>

9. CAG रिपोर्ट में खुलासा: दस साल बाद भी लागू नहीं हुई जल नीति
(*jantaserishta.com*) August 28, 2023

देश में पेयजल को लेकर बंद कमरे में नीतियां बनाई जा रही हैं। इसे लेकर आम लोगों से लेकर ग्राम पंचायतों तक से कोई सुझाव नहीं लिया जा रहा है। जहां लोगों को पर्याप्त पानी नहीं मिल रहा है, वहीं राज्य में बनी जल नीति 10 साल बाद भी लागू नहीं हो पायी है। जनस्वास्थ्य विभाग के अधिकारी कई जगह झूठे दावे भी कर रहे हैं। सरकार द्वारा लोगों को शुद्ध पानी के लिए दिया गया पूरा पैसा भी खर्च नहीं हो रहा है। इसका खुलासा CAG रिपोर्ट में हुआ है।

पांच साल में भी पेयजल की मात्रा बढ़ाने में कोई खास सुधार नहीं हुआ है। 2016 में जहां राज्य के 1878 गांवों में रहने वाले लोगों को निर्धारित मात्रा में पानी नहीं मिल रहा था, वहीं 2022 में भी 1737 गांवों के लोग तय मानक के मुताबिक पानी से वंचित रह गये। प्रति व्यक्ति जल आपूर्ति के लिए 10 साल पहले बनी योजना अब तक पूरी तरह क्रियान्वित नहीं हो सकी है।

राज्य में 1737 गांवों में प्रति व्यक्ति 55 लीटर और 9 शहरों में प्रति व्यक्ति 135 लीटर से कम पानी की आपूर्ति की जा रही है। विभाग का दावा है कि सभी घरों में कनेक्शन देकर पानी चालू कर दिया गया है। जबकि सीएजी रिपोर्ट में खुलासा हुआ है कि निरीक्षण किए गए 44 गांवों में से 17 गांवों यानी 39 फीसदी गांवों में ऐसे गरीब लोगों के लिए जलापूर्ति की व्यवस्था नहीं थी।

धरती के दोहन पर मुख्यमंत्री भावुक हो गये थे

मुख्यमंत्री पानी बचाने के लिए कई योजनाएं ला रहे हैं। धरती का दोहन कर पानी निकालने पर वे पहले भी भावुक हो चुके हैं। कहा गया है कि धरती मां का दोहन मत करो, लेकिन जनस्वास्थ्य विभाग पानी बचाने के लिए कोई ठोस कदम नहीं उठा रहा है। पानी की बर्बादी जानने के लिए मीटर भी नहीं लगाए गए हैं।
<https://jantaserishta.com/local/haryana/disclosure-in-cag-report-water-policy-not-implemented-even-after-ten-years-2756705>

10. हरियाणा में पेयजल आपूर्ति में मेंढक, शैवाल, कोलीफॉर्म: CAG
(jantaserishta.com) August 27, 2023

सदन में प्रस्तुत नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (सीएजी) की एक रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि हरियाणा में पीने का पानी कोलीफॉर्म से दूषित है, जबकि भौतिक और रासायनिक पैरामीटर अनुमेय सीमा से परे हैं।

ग्रामीण और शहरी जल आपूर्ति योजनाओं के ऑडिट में, सीएजी ने राज्य में सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य इंजीनियरिंग विभाग (13), शहरी स्थानीय निकाय (आठ), और हरियाणा शहरी विकास प्राधिकरण (चार) द्वारा 25 स्थानों पर जल आपूर्ति के नमूने लिए। नमूनों का एक सेट करनाल में सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य इंजीनियरिंग विभाग (पीएचईडी) प्रयोगशाला में भेजा गया था और दूसरे सेट को विश्लेषण के लिए श्री राम इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ इंडस्ट्रियल रिसर्च (एसआरआई), नई दिल्ली भेजा गया था।

पांच साल में 14 मौतें, जल जनित बीमारियों के 2,901 मामले सीएजी ने कहा कि स्वास्थ्य विभाग द्वारा दी गई जानकारी के अनुसार, 2016-21 के दौरान जल-जनित बीमारियों के 2,901 मामले और 14 मौतें हुईं।

आठ चयनित जिलों में से चार (फतेहाबाद, करनाल, कुरूक्षेत्र और पंचकुला) में 2016-21 के दौरान जल-जनित बीमारियों के 1,382 मामले और इन मामलों में 12 मौत के मामले सामने आए। कालका, असंध, इंद्री और हांसी उपमंडल जल परीक्षण प्रयोगशालाओं में भौतिक और रासायनिक परीक्षण की कोई सुविधा नहीं थी।

यह देखा गया कि 12 स्थानों पर (चयनित 25 में से) पानी के नमूनों में क्लोरीनीकरण नहीं पाया गया। 11 स्थानों पर, क्लोरीनीकरण निर्धारित सीमा से अधिक पाया गया (0.2 पीपीएम की आवश्यकता के मुकाबले प्रति मिलियन पीपीएम तीन भागों का अधिकतम मूल्य) और दो स्थानों पर, क्लोरीनीकरण अनुमेय सीमा के भीतर पाया गया। हालाँकि, एसआरआई प्रयोगशाला में, दो नमूनों में क्लोरीनीकरण अनुमेय सीमा से थोड़ा ऊपर पाया गया, और बाकी 23 नमूनों में, क्लोरीनीकरण बिल्कुल भी नहीं पाया गया।

“सभी 25 स्थानों पर, यह देखा गया कि क्लोरीनीकरण की खुराक से संबंधित कोई रिकॉर्ड नहीं रखा गया था। इसकी अनुपस्थिति में, यह आकलन किया गया है कि जल पंप संचालक/जेई क्लोरीनीकरण के लिए उचित खुराक के प्रति लापरवाह थे,” सीएजी ने कहा।

25 स्थानों में से, सात स्थानों पर क्लियर वॉटर टैंक (सीडब्ल्यूटी)/ओवर हेड सर्विस रिजर्वायर (ओएचएसआर) का उपयोग किया जा रहा था, और तीन स्थानों पर, सफाई की स्थिति संतोषजनक नहीं थी। कटेसरा में सीडब्ल्यूटी के अंदर शैवाल का गठन था, साहू में सीडब्ल्यूटी में मेंढक थे, और काब्रेल में एक आवरण के बिना था।

खिजुरी स्थित जलकुंड में सरकंडा का विकास हुआ। इस बात को साबित करने के लिए CAG ने तस्वीरें भी प्रकाशित कीं।

सीएजी ने कहा, नमूनों के बैक्टीरियोलॉजिकल विश्लेषण में कोलीफॉर्म की मौजूदगी से पुष्टि हुई कि पानी पीने योग्य नहीं है। पीएचईडी प्रयोगशाला में किए गए विश्लेषण के अनुसार, 25 नमूनों में से 19 नमूनों (76 प्रतिशत पानी के नमूने) में कोलीफॉर्म की उपस्थिति पाई गई। हालाँकि, एसआरआई लैब में, पाँच नमूनों (20 प्रतिशत पानी के नमूने) में इसका पता चला।

नगर निगम, फ़रीदाबाद में पानी के भौतिक और रासायनिक गुणों से पता चला कि पीएचईडी प्रयोगशाला में आठ स्थानों में से सात स्थानों पर कुल घुलनशील लवण, कठोरता, कैल्शियम, मैग्नीशियम, क्लोराइड और नाइट्रेट अनुमेय सीमा से ऊपर थे, जबकि एसआरआई में प्रयोगशाला, आठ में से पांच स्थान परीक्षण में विफल रहे।

यह देखा गया कि अप्रैल 2016 से मार्च 2021 की अवधि के दौरान 2,64,025 पानी के नमूनों का परीक्षण किया गया, जिनमें से 18,104 नमूने (6.86 प्रतिशत) अनुपयुक्त पाए गए। अगस्त 2021 से मई 2022 के दौरान, यह पाया गया कि कोई रिकॉर्ड अनुवर्ती कार्रवाई नहीं की गई, जिसका अर्थ यह है कि यह सुनिश्चित नहीं किया जा सका कि जिन क्षेत्रों में पानी का नमूना लिया गया था, वहाँ के निवासियों को सुरक्षित और पीने योग्य पेयजल सुनिश्चित करने के लिए विभाग द्वारा समय पर कार्रवाई की गई थी या नहीं। अयोग्य पाए गए। <https://jantaserishta.com/local/haryana/frogs-algae-coliforms-in-haryanas-drinking-water-supply-cag-2751873>

11. Dehradun News: अवैध खनन... ठेकेदारों से कैसे वसूल हो जाएगा 315 करोड़ का जुर्माना, पांच गुना वसूलने की सिफारिश (amarujala.com) August 27, 2023

प्रदेश सरकार के सामने सरकारी एजेंसियों को बिना रवन्ना खनन की आपूर्ति करने वाले ठेकेदारों से 315 करोड़ रुपये का जुर्माना वसूलने का बड़ा सवाल खड़ा हो गया है। कैग ने इस धांधली को पकड़ा था और सरकार से उत्तराखंड खनन नियमावली के प्रावधान के अनुसार रायल्टी का पांच गुना जुर्माना वसूलने की सिफारिश की थी।

वसूली के संबंध में कैग की ओर से सरकार को सिफारिश पर कार्रवाई करने के संबंध में बार-बार कहा जा रहा है। करोड़ों रुपये की वसूली पर क्या निर्णय लिया जाए, यह प्रश्न पिछले दिनों हुई प्रदेश मंत्रिमंडल की बैठक में भी उठा। निर्णय लेने के लिए कैबिनेट ने एक मंत्रिमंडलीय उपसमिति बनाने का फैसला किया है। उधर, वित्त विभाग इतनी बड़ी राशि माफ करने के कतई पक्ष में नहीं है।

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक की 31 मार्च 2020 और 2021 की रिपोर्ट में इस धांधली का विस्तार से जिक्र है। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, 2017-18 से 2021 के दौरान खनन का कारोबार करने वालों ने अकेले देहरादून में लोनिवि, सिंचाई व अन्य सरकारी एजेंसियों को 37.17 लाख मीट्रिक टन खनन सामग्री की आपूर्ति की।

पांच गुना जुर्माना वसूलने की सिफारिश ठेकेदारों के पास अभिवहन पास (रवन्ना) नहीं थे या उन्हें फर्जी रवन्ना के जरिये खनन का कारोबार किया। इस आपूर्ति के एवज में उन्होंने पूरी रायल्टी जमा की, लेकिन कैग ने बिना ई-प्रपत्र खनन का उपयोग करने को उत्तराखंड खनन (अवैध खनन परिवहन भंडारण) नियमावली के प्रावधानों का उल्लंघन माना और रायल्टी पर पांच गुना जुर्माना वसूलने की सिफारिश की।

यह राशि करीब 315 करोड़ रुपये है। नियमानुसार बिना रवन्ना अवैध खनन सामग्री का उपयोग करने वाली सरकारी एजेंसियों को उन्हें आपूर्ति करने वाले ठेकेदारों से जुर्माना वसूलना है, लेकिन बड़ी चुनौती यह है कि वे उन ठेकेदारों को कहां खोजेंगे।

जुर्माना माफ के पक्ष में नहीं वित्त विभाग

आधिकारिक सूत्रों के मुताबिक, बेशक अभी इस मसले पर निर्णय होना है, लेकिन एक पक्ष 315 करोड़ की जुर्माने की राशि माफ करने का भी विकल्प सुझा रहा है। इस पक्ष का कहना है कि रायल्टी के रूप में सरकारी खजाने में 63 करोड़ रुपये की धनराशि जमा हो गई है। सरकार को कोई नुकसान नहीं हुआ है, लेकिन वित्त विभाग इसके पक्ष में नहीं हैं। कैबिनेट की बैठक में वित्त विभाग की ओर से यही बात रखी गई है कि जुर्माना माफ करने का कोई औचित्य नहीं बनता।

प्रदेश मंत्रिमंडल के समक्ष यह प्रस्ताव रखा गया कि कैग ने जो सवाल उठाया है, उसके तहत 315 करोड़ जुर्माना वसूली पर क्या निर्णय लिया जाना चाहिए। कैबिनेट ने मंत्रिमंडलीय उपसमिति बनाने का फैसला किया है। अब उपसमिति ही रास्ता सुझाएगी। - डॉ. पंकज पांडेय, सचिव, खनन

प्रदेश सरकार के लिए 315 करोड़ रुपये बहुत बड़ी धनराशि है। इसलिए इस पर सोच-विचार हो रहा है। अब मंत्रिमंडलीय उपसमिति के पास यह मामला है। उपसमिति की रिपोर्ट आने के बाद आगे की दिशा तय हो पाएगी। - दिलीप जावलकर, सचिव वित्त <https://www.amarujala.com/dehradun/illegal-mining-cabinet-decided-to-form-a-sub-committee-to-recover-money-from-contractors-uttarakhand-news-2023-08-27?pageId=1>

12. Mizoram govt incurs ₹4.88 crore wasteful expenditure due to negligence: CAG (*thehindu.com, newindianexpress.com, business-standard.com*) August 28, 2023

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has slammed the Mizoram Government for incurring an "avoidable" expenditure of ₹4.88 crore on formation cutting of Darlak-Sihthiang road in Mamit district due to "negligence".

The CAG report tabled in the assembly by Chief Minister Zoramthanga in the recently concluded session said that the construction of the Darlak-Sihthiang road was undertaken under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) despite the village being already connected.

It said that Sihthiang was connected by a 11-km long Chuhvel-Sihthiang paved road, which is an all-weather road since December 2020.

While the construction of the Chuhvel-Sihthiang paved road was being taken up in May 2016, an agreement was signed in August 2019 between Mizoram Rural Road Development Agency of the state Public Works department and contractors for the construction of Darlak-Sihthiang road at a cost of ₹52.81 crore and the project was scheduled to be completed by June 2020.

"The Detailed Project Report (DPR) for construction of Darlak-Sihthiang road indicated that Sihthiang village, with a population of 495 was unconnected from any part of Mamit district and the length of the proposed Darlak-Sihthiang road was 35.61 km and the estimated project cost was ₹58.32 crore," the audit report said.

The contractor started the work in February 2020 and completed the formation cutting of 7.3 km in June 2021.

However, the work was put on hold since July 2021 due to non-availability of Forest clearance and the department proposed for dropping of the project to the Ministry in July 2022, it said.

Out of the contract value of ₹52.81 crore, the PWD incurred expenditure of ₹4.88 crore till April 2022.

Meanwhile, test check of records of the Executive Engineer, Kawrthah Division of the state PWD showed that Sihthiang village was connected by 11 km Chuhvel-Sihthiang paved road constructed under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) with an estimated cost of ₹9.59 crore.

This work was executed by two contractors – M/s North East Consultancy Services (NECS) for construction of culverts and protection walls at a cost of ₹0.93 crore starting from May 13, 2016, and V. Malsawmdawngliana for the construction of flexible pavement at a cost of ₹7.77 crore starting from June 23, 2016 – totalling ₹8.70 crore and was completed in December 2020.

The CAG report pointed out that the expenditure of ₹4.88 crore on formation cutting of this road was "wasteful as the project was proposed to be dropped".

The State Government admitted (August 2022) that since Sihthiang village has been connected through NABARD loan, the project under PMGSY was proposed for dropping to the Ministry of Rural Development in July 2022, the audit report said. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/mizoram-govt-incurs-488-crore-wasteful-expenditure-due-to-negligence-cag/article67243999.ece>

13. 9000 Audit Paras replied by J&K Govt, another 14000 to be taken up shortly (dailyexcelsior.com) August 28, 2023

JAMMU: A total of 9000 Audit Paras of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India have been replied to/addressed by the Government of Union Territory of

Jammu and Kashmir and another 14000 will be taken up shortly as matter is required to be closed before the Winter Session of the Parliament when the concerned committee will table a report in this regard.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that few days back Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta held deliberations on the settlement of pending Audit Paras with senior officers of different departments particularly Principal Secretary Finance and accordingly he reiterated the earlier direction to all the Administrative Secretaries to focus on reconciliation of pending Audit Paras.

In the meeting, Principal Secretary Finance Department apprised the Chief Secretary that 9000 Audit Paras have been replied to/addressed and another 14000 Audit Paras will be taken up during the scheduled 3rd and 4th phase.

“Emphasizing the importance of the issue, the Chief Secretary observed that before the Winter Session of the Parliament the matter will have to be placed before the concerned Parliamentary Committee for closure”, sources informed.

The Chief Secretary has already fixed October 31, 2023 deadline for the clearance of Audit Paras pertaining to the Financial Years 2019-20, 2021-22 and 2022-23 contained in the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

It is pertinent to mention here that the broad objectives of audit are to ensure legality, regularity, efficiency and effectiveness of financial management and public administration mainly through assessment as to whether the financial statements are properly prepared, are complete in all respects and are presented with adequate disclosures (financial audit); whether the provisions of the Constitution, the applicable laws, rules and regulations made there-under and various orders and instructions issued by competent authority are being complied with (compliance audit) and the extent to which an activity, programme or organization operates economically, efficiently and effectively (performance audit).

“As per the Regulations of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India each department is supposed to have audit committee for settlement of pending Audit Paragraphs and from time to time the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir issued directions through the General Administration Department to all the departments for ensuring timely settlement of Audit Paragraphs”, sources said.

“The audit committees are required to hold meetings on number and gist of audit observations/paragraphs included in the audit report(s) of the CAG of the previous year; number of gist of major irregularities intimated by the Accountant General (Audit) during the previous year, action taken report by the department on these aspects and number of audit observations communicated in draft audit reports/inspection reports issued during the previous year and gist of observations with substantial money value and those with serious internal control lapses”, sources informed.

As per CAG Regulation 197, the officer in charge of the auditable entity is required to send the reply to an audit note or inspection report within four weeks of its receipt. Even if it is not feasible to furnish the final replies to some of the observations in the audit note or inspection report within this time limit, the first reply shall not be delayed on

that account and an interim reply may be given indicating the likely date by which the final reply shall be furnished.

Thereafter, Accountant General (Audit) shall give full consideration to the reply of the Government and the draft paragraph may be modified or settled or may not be included in the audit report in the light of the reply.

Meanwhile, Principal Secretary Finance Department has brought to the notice of all the Administrative Secretaries that the Department of Expenditure, Government of India has required that the Legacy Data of 2020-21 and 2021-22 should be uploaded for each Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Public Financial Management System (PFMS) Portal and the interest on the CSS funds should be deposited to Consolidated Fund of India as per the sharing portal.

Further, in this connection the Nodal Departments have been requested to expedite the action on the mapping of Centrally Sponsored Schemes on PFMS portal; uploading of Legacy Data on PFMS after scrutiny by the Finance Department; remission of interest to CFI; submission of joint undertakings and submission of request letter to Ministry concerned for Centrally Sponsored Scheme installment. <https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/9000-audit-paras-replied-by-jk-govt-another-14000-to-be-taken-up-shortly/>

14. Noida's toppled twin towers remain a beacon of warning for gullible home buyers (*ianslive.in*) August 26, 2023

It was another hot and sultry day in the open but the discomfort meant little for residents of Emerald Court as they gathered around a priest in the western corner of the housing society that 13 months ago faced an existential crisis.

Residents put up a sign board with “Vijay Path” emblazoned on it to mark a cobbled path built to demarcate the 660-flat society and an open site of the fallen twin towers, which were built illegally by the Supertech Group in connivance with corrupt Noida officials.

On the Supreme Court’s orders the towers which blocked air and sunlight to Emerald Court were turned into 80,000 tons of rubble on August 27, 2022.

Until then it was emblematic of the corruption involving members of the Noida bureaucracy and realtors who have flocked to the boomtown of wide boulevards, swanky malls, pubs, restaurants and executive golf clubs to rake in thousands of crores in profit.

“We fought well against Supertech and so let this message go down,” Emerald Court RWA president U.B.S Teotia said as the priest showered residents with Shanti Jal.

Teotia took the battle against the powerful business group to the Allahabad High Court which on 12th April 2014 ordered the demolition of Supertech’s semi-finished towers where 633 of the 915 apartments had been booked by home buyers, eager for a taste of promised luxury.

Seven years later, the Supreme Court upheld the lower court's verdict and by that time 133 home buyers had reinvested in other projects of Supertech, 248 had taken refund but 252 clung on until the end hoping for a miracle.

K.K. Mittal, a chartered accountant, accepted a swap deal but for years he had to wait for the statutory completion certificate for a flat he chose at Supertech's Azure Heights project in Noida.

"Wish we too had not accepted the hollow assurances of Supertech," said a Noida lawyer who appeared unsure if the apartment he accepted in the swap deal was at par in value with flats of Emerald Court, also built by Supertech.

"We should have read the performance and past history of realty firms before investing our life's savings," said the lawyer alluding to controversies and complaints of financial jiggery-pokery dogging a group of real estate firms that have set up base in Noida.

Even the Comptroller and Accountant General (CAG) seems to agree with the home buyers left in the lurch in Noida, now India's second software hub after Bengaluru with a young population of professionals eager to invest in the real estate industry.

The national auditors said nearly 80 percent of commercial land in Noida was sanctioned to three high-flying builders who defaulted in paying their dues leaving hundreds of investors' in the lurch for over a decade.

CAG in a report to Parliament in 2021 named Wave, Three C and Logix Group and said they had cornered the lion's share of Noida projects between 2005 and 2018 but defaulted in paying dues to the Noida administration for 43,438 of the 100,005 flats they built.

"This position of non-completion of projects is evidence that Noida has created conditions for bypassing its own stipulations by allowing financially ineligible bidders to garner more plots on the back of insufficient net worth thereby extending undue favours to them," it said.

CAGs scrutiny of the affairs in Noida has spotlighted others including Supertech, which became an infamous household name ever since its two towers were razed within nine seconds in India's biggest ever peace time demolition. <https://ianslive.in/noida-pkg-noidas-toppled-twin-towers-remain-a-beacon-of-warning-for-gullible-home-buyers--20230825115236>

15. CM Stalin cites CAG reports to accuse BJP of graft (*newindianexpress.com*)
August 28, 2023

TIRUVARUR: Launching a frontal attack on the BJP, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president MK Stalin on Sunday charged that recent CAG reports had exposed the corruption of the union government, led by the saffron party, over the past nine years.

Speaking in Tiruvarur on Sunday at a wedding function, Stalin said Prime Minister Modi has been rattled by the formation of the INDIA alliance, aimed at removing the BJP government from the centre in the Lok Sabha elections.

He faulted the Modi regime for failing to fulfil its poll promises of bringing black money, stashed abroad, back to the country and distributing it among the people and of providing 2 crore jobs to the youth every year.

“Contrary to the promise, there have been job losses in the country during the BJP’s rule,” he charged.

Worse, he said, the dispensation at the union level is trying to foster an atmosphere of division in the country by fomenting communal clashes in various places. He claimed that Modi has been angered that the DMK’s strong alliance in Tamil Nadu has contributed to the formation of the INDIA alliance and has been belittling the alliance and the DMK wherever he goes.

He said Modi has been alleging that corruption has arrived in TN and that he will eradicate graft and questioned whether the PM or the BJP had any standing to speak on corruption. Stalin said CAG reports have exposed corruption in the union government in seven areas.

DMK has even faced Emergency, says Stalin

This includes the Bharat Mala scheme, Dwarka Expressway construction project, toll plaza and Ayushman Bharat scheme. He claimed the Central Vigilance Commission’s (CVC) annual report has said the highest number of corruption complaints received were against the union home ministry led by Amit Shah. “Such people are talking about corruption (by others),” he quipped.

To hide their wrongdoings, these people (Modi and Amit Shah) are heaping unsubstantiated allegations against us, the DMK leader added. Frustrated over the exposure of their wrongdoings and of the opposition raising these issues, the ruling BJP is trying to scare these parties with CBI, ED and IT (raids), he said.

“The DMK cannot be cowed by these threats. We have even faced the Emergency,” he added.

Stating that the upcoming parliamentary elections are not just any other elections but the polls to save democracy in India, he called upon the electors to defeat the “fascist dictatorship” of BJP. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2023/aug/28/cm-stalin-cites-cag-reports-to-accuse-bjp-of-graft-2609379.html>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

16. P75(I) programme: India’s rocky submarine-making voyage
(*financialexpress.com*) August 28, 2023

For two and a half decades, India has stumbled and dithered with its submarine development programmes. A combination of structural inefficiencies, budgetary changes, tendering problems, delays, and institutional ad-hocism have hindered India’s submarine manufacturing ambitions. It is now time for India to reinvigorate its arc on submarine building.

These problems have plagued both iterations of the Indian Navy's submarine manufacturing programmes—the 1997 launched Project 75 or P75 and the more recent Project 75 (India) or P75(I)—which was cleared in 2019.

The original P75 proposed the domestic construction of six Scorpène-class conventional diesel-electric submarines by Mazagaon Docks Limited through a transfer of technology collaboration with what is now known as France's Naval Group. The project was supposed to be completed by 2017. However, far from completion, the lead boat of the P75 project, INS Kalvari, was only commissioned in 2017. Only recently has the country commissioned the fifth submarine out of the proposed six submarines; the final one is expected next year.

The more recent P75(I) programme budgeted at approximately Rs 40,000 crore to build six conventional submarines with state-of-the-art sensors and weapons and, most importantly, with an air-independent propulsion system (AIP)—that empowers submarines to reduce their surface-level exposure and increase their underwater endurance—is also lagging behind schedule, currently stuck in the tendering stage.

A spate of early exits from the P75(I) programme, including the Swedish and French, compounded by complaints regarding the technical demands of the programme from the Russians, has shrouded its future in uncertainty. Further, the project seemed to be on the brink earlier this year when rumours suggested the government was cancelling it. As a consequence of this scenario, the Indian Navy now finds itself in a situation where it could face submarine shortages in the future, while also being endowed with submersibles with outdated technology. Data suggests the Indian Navy has only 16 functional submarines, with a significant portion older than 30 years. Further, India doesn't currently operate a nuclear-powered-attack submarine (SSN)—the INS Chakra—its last deployed SSN returned to Russia in 2021. Though, it does have two nuclear-powered-ballistic missile submarines (SSBN).

Contrastingly, China's submarine capacity has grown exponentially in the past two decades. Currently, Beijing commands a total of 56 submarines. This includes six nuclear-powered-attack submarines (SSNs). While estimates suggest that China also deploys 17 AIP-enabled Yuan-class submarines. Given Beijing's growing posturing in the Indo-Pacific under the garb of anti-piracy missions, such a situation creates a detrimental naval asymmetry for India—undermining its position.

However, the trajectory of India's submarine manufacturing capacity has not entirely been downward. There seems to be some forward movement on the P75(I) programme. Recently, reports have suggested that two competing bids have been registered with the Ministry of Defence to manufacture the six submarines. These have reportedly come from state-owned Mazagaon Docks Limited, tying up with Germany's Thyssenkrupp AG, while the other has been from a private firm, Larsen & Toubro, aligning with Spain's Navantia.

It is now essential for India to reinvigorate the P75(I) programme and capitalise on the reported bids. Central to the way forward is first resolving the overarching issues preventing progress. The Navy and the ministry of defence must sort out impractical delivery schedules, stringent technology transfer requirements, detrimental liability

clauses, restrictive contractual practices, and penalties that have, until now, impeded the programme.

Further, the AIP technology criterion seems to be a stumbling block. Many of the original contenders for the programme, like France and Russia, backed out as they did not have the technology. Complicating the matter further is the development of an AIP system by DRDO. While noteworthy, the indigenous system must first be installed and trialled on a submarine before its contribution to the P75(I) can be assessed.

Further, if it meets the requisite standards, the AIP system will have to be located in the contours of the P75(I) programme, adding another layer of contractual and structural dealings. Currently, the DRDO-developed system is being qualified by the Naval group for the Kalvari class submarines. The sooner the Indian establishment can solve the AIP issue, the faster the project could move.

Given the slow pace of progress, New Delhi must ensure adequate institutional thrust on overcoming impediments and moving ahead with the P75(I) programme. The country needs to have its submarine capacity and underwater capabilities at full strength to deter any threats from China in the Indo-Pacific and protect its regional ambitions. <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/p75i-programme-indias-rocky-submarine-making-voyage/3224299/>

17. Is India Edging Ahead In A Global Radar Race? (swarajyamag.com) August 27, 2023

Around a quarter century ago, the nature of aerial warfare underwent a revolutionary transformation with the advent of a new type of radar. It could be fitted into both planes and missiles, and was called the AESA: an Active Electronic Scanned Array.

With an AESA fitted in its nosecone, a fighter plane could now detect smaller objects from farther away, gain a tremendous first-shot advantage, and unleash a missile with its own, smaller AESA, which improved accuracy, and the probability of a kill, by orders of magnitude.

The AESA also triggered a paradigm shift in electronic warfare, and electronic counter measures. Scanners could be jammed. Missiles could be forced to veer off course. A pilot could be electronically ‘blinded’, and his countermeasures to inbound threats rendered ineffective.

At the heart of this revolution lay a semiconductor made of Gallium Arsenide (GaAs), which could emit pulses furtively, in multiple directions, at frequencies which made some features of otherwise-stealthy aircraft fatally redundant, and with far more power than ever before. Its formidability was encapsulated in a chilling descriptor: “first look, first shot, first kill”.

India missed this revolution because, in those days, defence procurement from abroad was the norm – except in the arena of ballistic and cruise missiles. As a result, we only got what a vendor nation would let us have, and were forced to either remain content with what he had, or pay through our noses for a prohibitively-expensive upgrade.

This critical gap was covered to some extent early this century, through the acquisition of the BARS radar along with the Sukhoi-30 MKI from Russia. But the BARS, although an extremely powerful radar, was still only a passive-scanning array. The gap closed slightly further two decades later with the purchase of French Rafales, which carry a modern AESA radar plus a full-fledged electronic warfare system.

A third effort to close this yawning gap was through the purchase of Israeli radars, as upgrades for our Mig-21s and the Tejas MK1. Nonetheless, the gap remains, and a deplorable legacy of import dependency continues to hamper our fighter fleet.

At the same time, a second silent revolution is taking place across the world today, in the obscure domain of radar technology. A new generation of semiconductors, made of Gallium Nitride (GaN), are driving a quantum leap in a pilot's ability to detect, disrupt, and destroy a threat.

The revolution is global, the competition is fierce, and GaN-based radars are once again set to rewrite the rules of aerial warfare. A number of countries are in the race, including America, Britain, France, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Sweden. Their GaN radar projects are in various stages of progress.

Very little is known of China's efforts, but there are unverified reports that their most advanced fighter jet, the J-20 Chengdu, will sport a GaN-based AESA radar within this decade. We know that they are not quite there yet because their 'iron-brother', Pakistan, was forced to source GaN-based receivers for their Chinese fighter jets from Italy last year.

SAAB, the Swedish industrial giant, tested its new GaN radar last year. The Americans are fitting new GaN radars manufactured by Raytheon onto their Navy's ageing F/A-18A-D Hornet fighter jets. Experts believe that this new GaN radar will double the jet's detection distance.

Ironically, they have been forced to do this on account of delays in the rolling out their latest fighter jet, the F-35, which is meant to replace the Hornets. Even more ironically, this means that a plane designed in the 1970s will have a superior radar to one which is meant to dominate the coming two decades.

And then, there is India – a country which hardly ever features in articles on radars written by top global defence industry experts. If only they bothered to read documents available in the public domain, they would learn to their surprise, that India is all set to steal a march in the cutting-edge domain of GaN-semiconductor technology.

As unbelievable as it may sound, India has not only mastered GaN technology, but is also applying this mastery to a whole host of military systems, including different types of radars, for varied purposes. The bigger surprise is that this silent revolution is being propelled by a remarkably-productive partnership between the public and private sectors.

The breaking news is that a Hyderabad-based company named Astra Microwave is poised to manufacture a GaN-based radar for our Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jets, based on

technologies originally developed by our Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

This is the same company which recently supplied the largest, most powerful, game-changing, ship-based radar in the world to the Indian Navy for testing. It is being developed for the Nave's next generation of warships.

Here is the chronology which has hitherto lain 'under the radar', so to speak:

On 25 February 2022, Astra's Managing Director, S Gurunatha Reddy, said in an investors' meet that they are in the execution phase of a pilot order from DRDO, for a fighter jet radar. This is the Gallium Arsenide-based Uttam radar developed by DRDO which is set to end India's crippling dependency on imports of such critical systems.

In September 2022, Swarajya reported that DRDO had handed over the Uttam radar's technology for manufacturing to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. It will be installed on the Tejas and the Sukhoi-30 MKI, with bulk production scheduled to begin in 2024.

On 10 February 2023, Astra announced that they are now ready to manufacture Gallium Nitride-based Uttam radars for, hold your breath, the upcoming Tejas Mk2, and the Sukhoi-30 MKI. Note: the first prototype of the Tejas Mk2, a truly substantial improvement on earlier variants, is expected to roll out by the end of this year, and its first flight is scheduled for the end of 2024.

This is a staggering announcement, and its implications are tremendous.

First, fighter jets of the Indian Air Force will be equipped with cutting-edge radars by 2026-27, which will make them far more lethal than they already are. To put it in some perspective, the Sukhoi-30 MKI, which has been screaming for an upgrade for ages, will carry a radar which is far, far more advanced than the one our Rafales have.

Second, a GaN radar will exponentially increase the Indian Air Force's offensive and defensive capabilities in multiple domains, including detection, electronic warfare, electronic countermeasures, and, perhaps most importantly, in electronic counter-countermeasures (a tactic by which the enemy's countermeasures are neutralized).

Third, it will extend the life and utility of a Sukhoi-30 MKI, which presently constitutes the backbone of the Indian Air Force, well into the next decade.

Fourth, and there is no polite way to put it, these new radars (both the Gallium Arsenide and Gallium Nitride ones) will let our jets burn through any electronic system which Pakistan has, or is planning to obtain this decade. Again, to put it in perspective, if the Indian Air Force could execute a flawless, unimpeded strike on Balakot in 2019, using aged jets with ageing electronics, imagine what they will be capable of once our new jets with new radars growl menacingly into the skies?

Fifth, India's silent revolution in radar technology closes the gap with China. Simply put, our northern neighbour's current advantages in numbers and stealth technology will count for much less, as will their electronic warfare tactics, against these radical new developments.

Sixth, and this is something which tends to be overlooked, the application of these advances in semiconductor technology is not restricted to fighter jet radars alone. Instead, they will greatly boost the performance of a number of systems which, too, are dependent on an AESA. These include air defence systems, land-based tracking units, and, most pertinently, missiles. They will all be able to probe farther, detect more accurately, disrupt more devastatingly, and lock on targets more effectively.

The Astra Mk1 air-to-air missile, for example, has already been upgraded with an AESA seeker by DRDO. It is, thus, inevitable that the Mk2 and the far more potent Mk3 versions will be guided by the same technology which a Sukhoi-30 MKI or a Tejas will receive in a few short years.

In conclusion, we see once again, as with the Navy's new radar, that India is gradually building less to catch up, and building more for the future.

As India sheds an unenviable legacy of import dependency, bridges the technology gap in critical areas, and procurement costs decline, the cost of belligerence is rising for unfriendly nations in exponential proportions. <https://swarajyamag.com/defence/is-india-edging-ahead-in-a-global-radar-race>

18. 9 years of PM's Jan Dhan scheme: Government says total deposits have reached Rs 2.03 lakh crore (zeebiz.com) Updated: August 27, 2023

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), a government scheme aimed at ensuring easy access to banking services for all citizens, will complete nine years on August 28, 2023. Launched on August 28, 2014, the Jan Dhan scheme has crossed a host of milestones already.

The Jan Dhan scheme has achieved significant success over the past years, with the total number of accounts growing to 50.09 crore from 14.72 crore in March 2015, said Vivek Joshi, the Secretary of the Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance, citing data till August 16, 2023.

The secretary said that the value of total deposits under the PMJDY scheme has reached Rs 2.03 lakh crore, from Rs 15,670 crore in March 2015, he said.

Joshi also highlighted that the average deposit has increased to Rs 4,063 per Jan Dhan account from Rs 1,065 in March 2015.

The official, however, pointed out that the number of the zero-balance Jan Dhan accounts has fallen significantly, from 58 per cent to 8 per cent of total accounts.

His remarks come days after the Jan Dhan scheme crossed the milestone of 50 crore accounts, with 67 per cent of them opened in the rural and semi-urban areas of the country.

What is the PM Jan Dhan scheme?

The Union government's Jan Dhan scheme is a national mission for financial inclusion to ensure access to financial services, such as banking, savings and deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance and pension, in an affordable manner.

The primary objective of the PMJDY scheme is to ensure access to financial products and services at an affordable cost, with the use of technology to lower costs and widen its reach.

The scheme operates on three basic tenets: banking the unbanked, securing the unsecured, and funding the unfunded.

The PM Jan Dhan scheme has been the foundation stone for people-centric economic initiatives, including direct benefit transfers, the dissemination of financial assistance to battle COVID-19, and the PM Kisan drive. <https://www.zeebiz.com/personal-finance/banking/news-9-years-of-pmjdy-jan-dhan-scheme-key-highlights-250761>

19. Embezzlement of Rs 1.09-cr govt funds (*indianexpress.com*) Updated: August 27, 2023

The Chandigarh District Court has framed charges against six people, including a Haryana Roadways workshop clerk, in an alleged case of embezzlement of government funds to the tune of Rs 1.09 crore using forged bills.

The court of Rajeev K Beri said, "Finding sufficient evidence against the accused for framing of charge under Sections 120-B, 420, 467, 468, 471 and 409 of IPC read with Section 120-B of IPC and Sections 7 and 13 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, they jointly have been chargesheeted accordingly."

The trial of the case will begin on August 28. The FIR was registered in 2018 on the complaint of R K Goyal, General Manager, Haryana Roadways workshop, Phase-I, Industrial Area, Chandigarh.

As per the complaint, Sanjay Kumar was working as clerk/accountant in a Haryana Roadways workshop. He had induced different persons to establish different fake firms, and taking advantage of being employed with Haryana Roadways, he transferred huge amounts to the said fake firms at different occasions and thereafter received the said amount from the proprietors of the said firms.

As per the prosecution, at the instance of the accused (Sanjay Kumar), six fake firms came into existence. Owner of these six firms received the money without supplying any item to the workshop on the basis of fake and forged bills prepared by the applicant accused (Sanjay Kumar). Accordingly, a sum of Rs 1,09,03,419 was transferred to these six fake firms and a substantial part of the said amount was received by the applicant accused from the proprietors of the said six firms. Sanjay Kumar took advantage of his position (clerk/accountant) in the Haryana Roadways workshop, forged different bills and transferred the amount on the basis of the said bills to these six fake firms.

As per the prosecution, Sanjay Kumar had induced Ankur Chitosisia, Parhlad Singh, Vinod Kumar, Rattan Singh, Raj Kumar, Late Sombir Singh to set up the fake firms.

The FIR was registered at Industrial Area police station and the accused were arrested in 2023, more than four years after the embezzlement first came to light. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/embezzlement-of-rs-1-09-cr-govt-funds-8911249/>

20. Maharashtra govt keen to restart stalled Pavana pipeline project despite rise in cost (*indianexpress.com*) Updated: August 28, 2023

With the Maharashtra government showing its readiness to implement the Pavana pipeline project that was stalled in 2011, officials of the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation on Sunday said the project cost has more than doubled in the last 12 years.

”The project, when planned in 2008, had estimated the cost to be around Rs 400 crore. In the last 13-14 years, the cost of inputs like steel and iron have increased three times. Besides, the digging work machinery, the manpower and other requirements will collectively shoot up the project cost to around Rs 1,000 crore,” PCMC joint city engineer Shrikant Savane told The Indian Express.

The Pavana pipeline project involves laying a direct 36-km closed pipeline from the Pavana dam in Maval taluka to Ravet in Pimpri-Chinchwad. ”There will be two parallel pipelines laid. Each of them will be 18 mm in diameter,” Savane said.

After three farmers were killed in police firing during a protest against the project in 2011, then chief minister Prithviraj Chavan put a stay on the project.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, while visiting Pimpri-Chinchwad Thursday, indicated that the project would be implemented. When The Indian Express sought to know whether the state government would drop the project, Pawar said, ”No...The project has not been implemented because of legal hassles and the stay put by the then chief minister. I will soon discuss the issue with Chief Minister Ekanth Shinde.”

Pawar also expressed concern over future water availability for the industrial city. ”As the population rises, we must look for new water sources. We will have to get drinking water from the Tata dam. Also, we will have to supply treated sewage water to Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation and get some of its share of drinking water for us,” he said.

Municipal Commissioner Shekhar Singh said efforts are being made on the political front to restart the project after taking all stakeholders into confidence. ”Similarly, we are also trying to restart the project from the administrative side. We are in touch with stakeholders and hope the project will start soon,” he said.

Singh said the Pavana pipeline project will help residents of Pimpri-Chinchwad get clean water. ”Currently, our drinking water supply flows from the Pavana dam to Pimpri-Chinchwad. All kinds of pollutants merge with the water during a 40 km run. But once we get water through the closed pipeline, pollutants will have no space, and we will have to spend little on water filtration. Healthwise, residents of Pimpri-Chinchwad will gain as they get clean water,” he said.

Savane said after the PCMC lays the pipeline, the irrigation department will increase the water supply by 100 million litres per day (MLD). “Currently, for releasing an everyday quota of 510 MLD, they have to release additional water so that it reaches Pimpri-Chinchwad. Once the direct pipeline is laid, the irrigation department will not be required to release additional water. As a result, we will get an additional water supply of 100 MLD,” he said.

When the Pavana pipeline project stopped in 2011, the contractor had laid a 4 km pipeline. “The contractor is ready to carry forward the project. But it will all depend on whether the state government wants re-tendering for the project or the same contractor to continue,” Savane said.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Pimpri-Chinchwad chief Ajit Gavahane said the deputy chief minister, during a meeting with the civic administration on Thursday, emphasised getting additional water. ”The Deputy CM told the administration that we need to plan for the future so that the city does not suffer on the water front. He was keen on getting the existing projects completed. And asked the administration to get in touch with all stakeholders and take them into confidence so that the Pavana pipeline project could be restarted,” he said.
<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/maharashtra-govt-stalled-pavana-pipeline-project-rise-in-cost-8911671/>