

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS

1. Indian Railways: A Decade of Challenges and the Way Forward (*scrilnow.com*) 26 Dec 2023

A decade on from the 2010 Budget announcement, the Indian Railways (IR) continues to grapple with project delays and safety concerns. Despite the introduction of Vande Bharat trains, which have notably reduced travel times, recent mishaps have highlighted alarming safety gaps. India saw 25 consequential train accidents between April and October, leading to approximately 400 fatalities and 1,000 injuries.

Slow Rollout of Kavach

The slow implementation of 'Kavach,' the indigenous collision avoidance system, has raised eyebrows. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) reported that 69% of accidents were due to derailments from various causes, including track defects and operational errors.

Financial Struggles and Slow Asset Monetization

The IR is financially floundering with a high operating ratio—an indicator of efficiency—that has been steadily increasing since 2018-19. While the freight segment is profitable, passenger services are not, leading to a targeted operating ratio of 98.45% for 2023-24, indicating financial strain. Asset monetization by the IR has also been lackluster, with only Rs 18,000 crore raised against a target of Rs 1.52 lakh crore by March 2025.

Optimistic Procurement Plans

On a brighter note, contracts have been awarded for 800 electric freight locomotives, 400 Vande Bharat Trains, 60,000 wagons, and 15.4 lakh wheels, with plans to invest in thousands of new trains in the next few years. The eastern and western Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC) have been partially commissioned, a move expected to significantly enhance freight transportation in India. To meet its freight traffic goals by 2030, experts suggest the IR needs to issue more locomotive procurement orders.

As India journeys forward, the rail system must overcome these challenges to ensure safety, efficiency, and progress. Only then can the nation's railways truly embody the spirit of Vande Bharat—'Hail India.' <https://www.scrilnow.com/thespotlight/indian-railways-a-decade-of-challenges-and-the-way-forward-21078.html>

2. Your integrity, hard work will play huge role in determining pace of development: Prez to babus (*dailypioneer.com, economictimes.indiatimes.com*) 26 December 2023

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday told a group of young civil servants that their integrity, hard work and sincerity will play a huge role in determining the pace of development of people.

"When you get posted in various departments, you should always remember that your actions and decisions will have an impact on the lives of all the citizens," she said.

Murmu was addressing the probationers of Indian Audit & Accounts Service, Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Indirect Taxes) and Indian Statistical Service, who had called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

"The integrity, hard work and sincerity that each of you puts in your work, will play a huge role in determining the pace of development of our people," the President said.

Addressing the probationers of Indian Audit & Accounts Service, Murmu said, "You are expected to function as the custodians of public trust and guardians of financial prudence" and that they should always adhere to the values of truth, transparency and fairness while making decisions and taking actions.

"The institution of the Comptroller and Auditor General is of utmost importance in ensuring accountability of government departments and organizations," she said.

The President said she was happy to note that "leveraging the technology, the institution of CAG is moving towards paperless audit, and is preparing all audit reports in online mode".

"I am glad to know that the organisation is getting ready to use Artificial Intelligence in its functioning. You should be proud to be part of such an institution which has strengthened its position in the governance system over the years. It is the duty of the young officers like you to carry forward this rich legacy," she said.

Addressing the probationers of Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Indirect Taxes), Murmu said they should bring to this service, "the highest standards of integrity".

"You will be required to function in different domains as administrators, investigators, lawyers and policy makers. You will also participate and contribute in negotiations of treaties of government of India in trade, customs and related areas.

"In order to perform these multifarious tasks with efficiency, you need to be updated about the latest advancements in all fields and also work hand-in-hand with officers of other services and departments," she said.

Addressing the probationers of the Indian Statistical Service, the President said that data or statistics forms a very important base for all activities ranging from formulation of policies to, analysing the outcome of the programmes and schemes.

"It is through statistics that the policy makers, experts and citizens get to know how the country is performing on key socio-economic parameters. These are the times when the world is keenly observing India's growth and performance. There is a need to generate accurate and high quality data sets using the latest techniques of international standards," she said.

With the increasing availability of information through numerous channels, Murmu said the significance of authentic and accurate statistics has increased manifold.

"You need to use the latest methods from fields like artificial intelligence, big data, data science and others for compiling official statistics and managing survey operations," the President said.

Murmu said the officers will play the role of change agents in the process of country's transformation into a developed nation.

"You should always remember Gandhiji's Antyodaya principle and work for the welfare of the last or the poorest person. You have to set new benchmarks during this Amrit Kaal," she told all the probationers. <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2023/top-stories/your-integrity--hard-work-will-play-huge-role-in-determining-pace-of-development--prez-to-babus.html>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

3. Audit findings: 46 ghost employees in Ludhiana MC, probe ordered (*hindustantimes.com*) Dec 27, 2023

Ludhiana: As per the findings in the audit, 45 ghost employees are within the health branch of the civic body, while there is one whose mention is nowhere in the municipal corporation records

Municipal corporation commissioner Sandeep Rishi has ordered a probe into the findings of the ongoing audit by the principal accountant general, revealing 46 ghost employees within the civic body.

As per the findings in the audit, 45 ghost employees are within the health branch of the civic body, while there is one whose mention is nowhere in the municipal corporation records.

Based on the revelations, the MC commissioner formed a four-member committee, headed by additional commissioner Paramdeep Singh, to conduct a thorough probe into the matter.

"I have formed the committee, and this matter will be investigated properly as all the persons involved in this will not be spared," Rishi said.

The audit, which is a routine examination of MC records, found that funds were transferred to the accounts of as many as 46 individuals, raising suspicions about their existence as legitimate employees of the civic body.

Officials of the audit team have asked the civic body to provide service books, step up order, recast of pay order, ECR registers and statement.

"We have started investigating the matter as names of around 46 employees are under the scanner, and records are still not with MC. We are still verifying, and I have also asked the accounts department how much funds have been transferred to these accounts in the past," additional commissioner Paramdeep Singh, who is heading the committee, said.

This isn't the first time the MC has faced allegations of ghost employees. In 2018, a similar issue involving around 70 alleged ghost employees came to light, prompting demands for a vigilance inquiry. However, the Municipal Employees Sangharsh Committee opposed the inquiry, and the matter did not progress further.

The recent revelation of alleged ghost employees has raised concerns about transparency and human resource management within the municipal corporation. The committee's investigation aims to establish the validity of these appointments and address any discrepancies found in the records.

According to an MC official, these names of ghost employees are majorly on the post of safai karamchari or at junior level position. A senior MC official claimed that a case will be registered against the individuals involved in this scam and strict action will be taken against them. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/audit-findings-46-ghost-employees-in-ludhiana-mc-probe-ordered-101703617012993.html>

4. After concerns raised by CAG, civic body starts probe (tribuneindia.com) Dec 27, 2023

Presence of 46 'ghost employees' in Municipal Corporation

Ludhiana: Following an examination of records of the Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana, by auditing staff from CAG, a revelation has emerged concerning the alleged presence of 46 'ghost employees' within the MC. Payments worth lakhs of rupees have reportedly been disbursed to these persons, though their required document records have not been located so far. Of these, 45 persons have been listed as employees of the health branch of the MC.

After the matter came to the notice of MC Commissioner Sandeep Rishi, he ordered a probe. The role of a few clerks and officials in the civic body was reportedly being scrutinised in connection with the matter which could be a scam, sources said.

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As per information, the CAG team recently came to conduct an audit of the Municipal Corporation's records spanning from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. The Principal Accountant General (Audit), Punjab, then submitted a list with the names of 46 employees to the Municipal Corporation Commissioner, seeking the supply of information and records pertaining to arrear payments made to them. The requested documents include service books, step-up orders, recast of pay orders, ECR registers and bank statements related to these employees for the audit.

But required records for 46 persons (shown as MC employees in a list) were not found so far as per the information. An official from the Municipal Corporation said: "CAG staff had requested records for 46 persons, and so far, we have been unable to locate these records. We are actively investigating to determine the recipients of the payments. Preliminary findings also suggest the possibility of the ghost employees. On completion of the inquiry, appropriate legal action will be taken."

MC Commissioner Sandeep Rishi confirmed that an inquiry has been marked into the matter. Emphasising the financial nature of the issue, he said the investigation was ongoing and, if any violations were uncovered, legal action, including the filing of an FIR, will be taken against responsible persons.

It is noteworthy that this is not the first instance of alleged ghost employees in the Municipal Corporation. In 2018, a complaint was made to the Vigilance Bureau about the alleged ghost employees, prompting a probe into the working details of sewer men and safai karamcharis. But the Municipal Employees Sangharsh Committee had then opposed the Vigilance Bureau's inquiry.

A similar matter resurfaced in a General House meeting of the MC held in 2022 when some councillors alleged the existence of fake names in the lists of contractual sewer men and safai karamcharis slated for regularisation. Subsequently, a committee was formed by the MC's House to verify these lists. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/ludhiana/after-concerns-raised-by-cag-civic-body-starts-probe-575803>

5. बिहार सरकार 9 जिलों में लोगों से वसूलेगी करोड़ों रुपये! CAG की रिपोर्ट में खुलासे के बाद केंद्र सरकार ने कहा- पैसे लौटाओ (*jagran.com*)

December 26, 2023

बिहार में कैग की रिपोर्ट में करोड़ों रुपये की गड़बड़ी का खुलासा हुआ है। इसे लेकर केंद्र सरकार ने सख्त रुख अपनाया है। केंद्र की ओर से बिहार सरकार को कहा गया है कि संबंधित रकम को वसूलकर वापस लौटाए। अब ऐसे में बिहार सरकार ने योजनाओं में हुए खर्च का लेखा-जोखा तलब कर लिया है। ऐसे में सरकार अपात्र लोगों को दी गई रकम को वसूल सकती है।

राष्ट्रीय सामाजिक सहायता कार्यक्रम (एनएसएपी) के तहत उपलब्ध कराई गई राशि में देश के कई राज्यों में करोड़ों की गड़बड़ी की गई। वित्तीय वर्ष 2017 से 2021 तक करीब डेढ़ सौ करोड़ की गड़बड़ी की बात महालेखाकार की रिपोर्ट में आई है।

इसमें करीब 80 करोड़ रुपये ऐसे लोगों में वितरित कर दिए गए जो इसके पात्र नहीं थे। रिपोर्ट के बाद राशि का लेखा-जोखा मांगा जा रहा है। इसमें मुजफ्फरपुर समेत बिहार के भी नौ जिले शामिल हैं।

केंद्र सरकार ने लिखा पत्र

केंद्रीय ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय की आर्थिक सलाहकार कल्याणी मिश्रा ने बिहार के सामाजिक सुरक्षा कल्याण विभाग के सचिव को पत्र लिखकर राशि की वसूली का आग्रह किया है।

इसके आलोक में सामाजिक सुरक्षा निदेशक प्रशांत कुमार सीएच ने नौ जिलों के सहायक निदेशक से योजनावार अनधिकृत व्यय राशि जमा कराने को कहा है।

कैग की रिपोर्ट में क्या है?

महालेखाकार की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, उक्त वित्तीय वर्षों में 57,394 ऐसे लोगों को वृद्धावस्था पेंशन दी गई, जिनकी उम्र 60 वर्ष से कम थी। इसमें 30.47 करोड़ की गड़बड़ी हुई।

यही नहीं 38,540 महिलाओं को इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय विधवा पेंशन (आइजीएनडब्ल्यूपीएस) योजनाओं का गलत तरीके से लाभ दिया गया। इनकी उम्र 40 वर्ष से कम थी।

इस तरह 26.45 करोड़ रुपये की गड़बड़ी की गई। इसी तरह दिव्यांगों की पेंशन में भी लगभग 20 करोड़ की गड़बड़ी पकड़ी गई।

80 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक की गड़बड़ी

26 हजार से अधिक अपात्र लोगों में इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय विकलांगता पेंशन योजना की राशि वितरित कर दी गई। इसके अलावा एक ही व्यक्ति को दो योजनाओं की पेंशन में करीब 3.55 करोड़ रुपये की गड़बड़ी पकड़ी गई।

इस तरह 80 करोड़ से अधिक की गड़बड़ी इन योजनाओं में की गई। महालेखाकार की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार छह राज्यों में एनएसएपी मद की बड़ी राशि का दूसरी योजना में विचलन कर दिया गया।

इन जिलों से मांगी गई रिपोर्ट

मुजफ्फरपुर, दरभंगा, सीतामढ़ी, भागलपुर, रोहतास, सहरसा, कटिहार, नवादा एवं कैमूर।

<https://www.jagran.com/bihar/muzaffarpur-cag-report-reveals-crores-of-rupees-given-to-ineligible-people-in-nine-districts-bihar-government-will-recover-23614268.html>

6. स्कॉलरशिप के नाम पर 2.79 करोड़ का स्कैम (jantaserishta.com)

Dec 26, 2023

रांची। ई-कल्याण पोर्टल के माध्यम से छात्रों को छात्रवृत्ति जारी करने में अनियमितता पायी गयी है। सीएजी की जांच रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि ई-कल्याण डेटाबेस के अनुसार, रांची, पलामू और चतरा में छात्रवृत्ति के 2126 मामलों में आवेदक का नाम और बैंक खाता लाभार्थी के नाम और बैंक खाते और उसके बैंक खाते से मेल नहीं खाता है. रिपोर्ट में फर्जी लाभ के लिए 2.79 करोड़ रुपये के गलत भुगतान की पुष्टि हुई। कुल 188 मामलों में, एक ही आधार नंबर का उपयोग करके कई लाभों के बीच राशि वितरित की गई। 2017-20 के दौरान, उपरोक्त तीन जिलों में एक ही आधार संख्या वाले दो अलग-अलग लाभार्थियों को 28.07 लाख रुपये की छात्रवृत्ति प्रदान की गई। 2017-2021 के ई-कल्याण डेटाबेस के विश्लेषण से पता चला कि पिछड़े वर्ग समुदाय के अपात्रों को छात्रवृत्ति का लाभ दिया गया। उन लाभार्थियों को भी छात्रवृत्ति प्रदान की गई है जिनकी वार्षिक पारिवारिक आय 1 लाख रुपये की निर्धारित सीमा से अधिक है। 2018-19 में, पिछड़े वर्ग के छात्रों को उनकी पारिवारिक आय निर्धारित सीमा से अधिक होने के बावजूद 36.33 लाख रुपये की छात्रवृत्ति प्रदान की गई। इसके अलावा, उन छात्रों को छात्रवृत्ति का भुगतान अनियमित रूप से किया गया, जिन्होंने आवश्यक प्रतिशत से कम अंक प्राप्त किए और लगातार दो वर्षों तक एक ही कक्षा में अध्ययन नहीं किया।

अनुचित आवेदनों की स्वीकृति को रोकने के लिए कोई व्यवस्था नहीं है। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि चूंकि ई-कल्याण एप्लिकेशन सॉफ्टवेयर में छात्रवृत्ति नियम ठीक से प्रतिबिंबित नहीं थे, इसलिए अयोग्य आवेदनों की स्वीकृति को रोकने के लिए एक प्रणाली विकसित नहीं की जा सकी। एक त्रुटि के कारण, उम्मीदवार चयन मानदंड को ठीक से सत्यापित नहीं किया जा सका। आरएएसएफ सॉफ्टवेयर मॉड्यूल काम नहीं किया। यूआईडीआई झारखंड डेटाबेस में छात्रों का विवरण सत्यापित नहीं किया गया है। आवेदकों के बैंक खाते भी उनके आधार नंबर से लिंक नहीं थे। डीबीटी योजना के तहत, लाभ के वित्तीय पते के सटीक विवरण की भी गारंटी नहीं दी जा सकती है। चूंकि ई-कल्याण पोर्टल का उपयोग करने से पहले शैक्षणिक संस्थानों को कोई प्रशिक्षण या निर्देश नहीं दिए गए थे, इसलिए

काम प्रभावित हुआ और विभिन्न अनियमितताएं हुईं। <https://jantaserishta.com/national/scam-of-rs-2-79-crore-in-the-name-of-scholarship-909437>

7. नोएडा प्राधिकरण सीएजी के रिटायर्ड अधिकारियों से सुझाव लेगा (*samacharnama.com*) Dec 26, 2023

उत्तरप्रदेश: नोएडा प्राधिकरण अब एक-एक पैसा पूरी जांच-पड़ताल के बाद ही खर्च करेगा. यही नहीं, सीएजी की आपत्तियों का सटीक जबाव देने की भी तैयारी प्राधिकरण ने कर ली है.

इसके लिए प्राधिकरण ने रिटायर्ड तीन सीनियर ऑडिटर को प्राधिकरण ने अपनी सेवा में रखने का निर्णय लिया है. पहली बार प्राधिकरण ने यह कदम उठाया है. इसके लिए आरएफपी (रिक्रेस्ट फॉर प्रोजेक्ट) जारी कर दी गई. संबंधित अधिकारी तक आवेदन कर सकते हैं.

अधिकारियों ने बताया कि प्राधिकरण सीएजी, एजी, लोकल फंड ऑडिटर से रिटायर्ड अधिकारियों को ही सेवा का मौका देगा. उनको प्राधिकरण में नौकरी पाने के लिए प्रार्थना पत्र के साथ अपने अनुभव और जरूरी कागजात भी जमा करने होंगे. इस योजना से संबंधित पूरी जानकारी नोएडा प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट पर अपलोड कर दी गई है. इच्छुक अधिकारी तय समय में प्राधिकरण में आवेदन कर सकते हैं. प्राधिकरण अधिकारियों ने बताया कि सीएजी आजकल प्राधिकरण के हरकाकाज की जांच कर रही है. वर्ष 05 से 17 तक की जांच कर सीएजी विधानसभा में रिपोर्ट रख चुकी है. यह 300 पेज से अधिक है जिसमें प्राधिकरण में बीते सालों में 30 हजार करोड़ से अधिक घोटाला होना बताया है. विधानसभा में रिपोर्ट रखे जाने के बाद लोक लेखा समिति इन मामलों में सुनवाई कर रही है. सीएजी और अब पीएसी भी प्राधिकरण अधिकारियों की ओर से दी आपत्तियों के जबाव से संतुष्ट नहीं हैं. इसकी वजह यह है कि प्राधिकरण के बाबू और अधिकारी सीएजी के अधिकारियों के बराबर एक्सपर्ट नहीं हैं. इसके अलावा बजट का पैसा किन-किन मद में किस तरह और कितना खर्च किया जाए. इसके अलावा आय के स्रोत क्या हो, समेत कई बिंदुओं पर प्राधिकरण के आर्थिक स्तर बढ़ाने के लिए रिटायर्ड अधिकारियों को सेवा में रखने का निर्णय लिया है. प्राधिकरण अधिकारियों का कहना है कि सीएजी, एजी, लोकल फंड ऑडिटर के पद से रिटायर्ड हुए अधिकारियों के अनुभव का लाभ लिया जाएगा. इससे प्राधिकरण को काफी फायदा होने की उम्मीद है. पहली बार इस तरह के अधिकारियों को प्राधिकरण में रखे जाने का निर्णय लिया गया है.

गौरतलब है कि सीएजी ने प्राधिकरण में डेरा डाल दिया है. वह प्राधिकरण के सभी विभागों के कामकाज पर वित्तीय अनियमितता की बारीकी से जांच कर रही है. प्राधिकरण के अधिकांश काम में सीएजी द्वारा आपत्ति लगाई गई है कि अनावश्यक रूप से पैसा खर्च किया गया https://samacharnama.com/city/noida/noida-authority-to-see-suggestions-from-retired-cag/cid13117925.htm#google_vignette

8. बरेली: प्राइजमनी फुटबॉल टूर्नामेंट में सीएजी बना चैंपियन (*inextlive.com*) Updated: 27 Dec 2023

बरेली: स्टेडियम में चल रहे अखिल भारतीय आमंत्रण प्राइजमनी फुटबॉल टूर्नामेंट में मंगलवार को फाइनल मैच खेला गया। इस अवसर पर जालंधर की सीआरपीएफ और दिल्ली की सीएजी के बीच टक्कर का मुकाबला देखने को मिला। वहीं थर्ड पोजीशन के लिए दिल्ली की सीआईएसएफ और

वाराणसी की डीएफए में भी टफ फाइट रही। इस दौरान खिलाड़ियों ने जीत के लिए मैदान पर खूब पसीना बहाया।

फसूट प्राइज सीएजी के नाम

मैच की समाप्ति पर मुख्य अतिथि सांसद संतोष गंगवार, विशिष्ट अतिथि विधायक बिथरी चैनपुर डॉ। राघवेंद्र शर्मा ने विजेता टीम को दो लाख रुपए की धनराशि, ट्रॉफी और मेडल देकर सम्मानित किया। वहीं सेकेंड पोजीशन होल्ड करने वाली सीआरपीएफ टीम को एक लाख रुपए की धनराशि, ट्रॉफी और मेडल दिया गया। इसके अलावा थर्ड स्थान प्राप्त करने वाली डीएफए वाराणसी की टीम को 50 हजार रुपए की धनराशि, ट्रॉफी एवं मेडल देकर पुरस्कृत किया गया।

सीएजी ने दी टफ फाइट

फाइनल में दोनों ही टीम एक-दूसरे को कांटे की टक्कर देने के लिए मैदान में उतरी। जहां फाइनल मुकाबला सीएजी और सीआरपीएफ के बीच खेला गया। दोनों टीम अपना गोल सिक्वोर करने के लिए शुरुआत से ही लगी हुई थीं। टफ फाइट के चक्कर में दोनों टीम को वार्निंग और कार्ड देकर रोका गया। सभी प्लेयर एक-दूसरे को काउंटर करने में लगे हुए थे, जिसकी वजह से फसूट हाफ में कोई गोल नहीं हो पाया। वहीं सेकेंड हाफ में सीएजी के शाहनवाज ने 77वें मिनट में गेम के दौरान मिले पैनाल्टी किक के जरिए गोल किया, जहां सीएजी का स्कोर 1-0 रहा। इसके बाद सीएजी ने जीत की ट्रॉफी अपने नाम कर ली।

थर्ड पोजीशन पर डीएफए

मैच में थर्ड पोजीशन के लिए डीएफए और सीआईएफए के बीच भी कड़ा मुकाबला देखा गया। फसूट हाफ में दोनों ही टीम गोल के लिए जूझती रहीं, लेकिन एक भी गोल नहीं मिल पाया। वहीं सेकेंड हाफ में एक फ्रेश स्टार्ट के साथ दोबारा डंट कर एक-दूसरे के सामने आईं, जहां डीएफए के निरंजन ने 51वें और अमित ने 80 वें मिनट में गोल किया। इसके बाद डीएफए ने 2-0 जीत हासिल की और तीसरा स्थान प्राप्त किया।

इनके कंट्रोल में रहा मैच

टूर्नामेंट के दूसरे सेमीफाइनल में रेफरीज मनोज तिवारी, देवुजीत सिंह, महेश चंद, हॉजी मुन्नवर, अजय यादव, एसएस मिश्रा, नितार्ई सरदार, मेहरुद्दीन रहे। मैच के एसेसर केके पांडेय रहे। इसके अलावा मैच कमिश्नर की भूमिका भूपेंद्र यादव ने निभाई।

ये रहे उपस्थित

इस अवसर पर रुहेलखण्ड विश्वविद्यालय के अंतर्राष्ट्रीय शूटिंग खिलाड़ी कमल सेन, खेल प्रभारी आलोक श्रीवास्तव, सयुक्त विकास मण्डल आयुक्त प्रदीप कुमार, बीडीएफए अध्यक्ष अमरजीत सिंह बख्सी, आरएन ड्विवेदी, आरएसओ जितेंद्र यादव, जिला फुटबॉल संध के सचिव, मून रोबिनसन, पूर्व डिप्टी मेयर अतुल कपूर, फुटबॉल प्रशिक्षक इरफान जमा खान, मैनेजर एमएस बेग, फुटबॉल प्रशिक्षक कौशल कुमार सिंह, मैनेजर केएन आर्या, मैनेजर मोहम्मद बेजुद्दीन रहमानी, उपक्रीड़ाधिकारी शमीम अहमद, सुमित चौरसिया, पूर्व किकेट कोच ओपी कोहली, प्रशिक्षक संजीव मरिया, ओपी कोहली, हरिशंकर, सोनेंद्र श्रोतिया, राजेश यादव, अभिलाषा यादव, नितार्ई सरदार, अजय यादव, शशिमोहन मिश्रा, मेहरुद्दीन, मीनू पांडेय, आदर्श भारद्वाज, अविनाश कुमार आदि उपस्थित रहे।

हमारी टीम ने मैच जीता है। इस बात की बहुत खुशी है। ओवर ऑल की बात की जाए तो हमारी टीम और भी अच्छा कर सकती थी। यह भी कह सकते हैं कि हमें लगातार मैच खेलने पड़े इस वजह से भी प्लेयर्स थोड़ा सा थक गए थे और टायर्ड फील कर रहे थे, फिर भी हम जीते।

अमित रंजन, सीएजी कोच

हमें बहुत ही बुरा लगा की हम हार गए है। रेफरी ने पूरी तरह से गलत फैसला था। यह फैसला पूरी तरह से विवादास्पक फैसला था। दूसरी टीम का गोल सिर्फ पैनाल्टी की वजह से ही हो पाया नहीं तो मैच पूरा कंट्रोल में था। -प्रेम थापा, मैनेजर, सीआरपीएफ

हमारे सभी प्लेयर्स बहुत ही अच्छा खेले हैं। कल बैड लक बोला जाए या फिर ऑफ डे की हम सेमीफाइनल हार गए। इसके अलावा हमारे टीम में कई प्लेयर्स ऐसे भी हैं, जो नेशनल खेल कर आए हैं और देश का नाम भी रोशन किया है। यह सभी फ्यूचर है यूपी का।
इरफान जमा खान, डीएफए

आज हमारी टीम अच्छा खेली। वहीं कल भी हमारी टीम अच्छा खेली थी। यह हमारा बैड लक बोले की कल फाइनल के लिए हम हार गए। इसी का नतीजा है की हम 2-0 से जीत गए।
एमएस बेग, डीएफए, मैनेजर

फुटबॉल खेल की अखिल भारतीय प्रतियोगिता में सभी प्रतिभागी टीमों ने बेहतर खेल का प्रदर्शन किया। फाइनल की विजेता सीएजी टीम को बधाई, उपविजेताओं को भी बधाई। वहीं प्रतियोगिता बिना किसी ब्यावधान के सम्पन्न हुई। इसमें निर्णायक, रेफरी ऐसेसर की भूमिका भी सराहनीय रही। इसके अलावा आयोजक मंडल भी बधाई के पात्र हैं।
भूपेंद्र सिंह, मैच कमिश्नर

टूर्नामेंट का समापन बहुत ही रोमांचक तरह से हो गया। सभी प्लेयर्स ने जी जान से मेहनत करके जीत को अपने नाम किया। मैच के दौरान रेफरीज पर पार्शियल होने के नाम लगते रहते हैं, लेकिन ऐसा नहीं होता है। हीट ऑफ द मूवमेंट को कंट्रोल करना हमारा काम होता है। -मनोज तिवारी, रेफरी <https://www.inextlive.com/uttar-pradesh/bareilly/bareilly-cag-becomes-champion-in-prizemoney-football-tournament-1703619168>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

9. Road spending is on track, road building isn't (*livemint.com*) Dec 27, 2023

It's highly unlikely that the road-addition target for the current fiscal will be achieved, as India gears up for the 2024 national elections.

NEW DELHI: India has built only 38% of roads planned for the fiscal year in the eight months so far despite spending two-thirds of the allocated money, official data showed.

The government had set aside little more than ₹2.58 trillion to build 13,800 km of highways this year. Yet, the Union ministry of road transport and highways has been able to construct just 5,248 km until November, after having spent about ₹1.7 trillion, a ministry report said. A substantial sum was allotted to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the nodal agency under the ministry of road transport that's responsible for development and maintenance of national highways.

At this tardy pace, it's highly unlikely that the road-addition target for the current fiscal will be achieved, as India gears up for the 2024 national elections. Large infrastructure projects in India continue to be bedevilled by land-acquisition challenges. In the case of road projects, the government hasn't been able to decide the project-delivery model that it wants to adopt, leading to a delay in award of contracts.

"Highway construction may not have kept pace this year, but it is still higher than the 4,766 km constructed in the year-ago period. This should help overall construction to remain well above the 10,000 km mark in 2023-24, but still the targets will be missed," said a person aware of the matter on the condition of anonymity.

Between April and November, road project awards declined significantly, plummeting to 2,815 km from 2022-23's 5,382 km. This drop of about 48% suggests a thinning pipeline for future projects, whose impact will be felt over an extended period, starting 2024-25, experts said.

India constructed 10,331 km of highways in 2022-23, and 10,457 the year prior.

"While there is no single reason for this slowdown in award of highway projects, reasons include the extensive deliberations on which project development model should be adopted, with the Centre keen to revive the build-operate-transfer (BOT, or toll) model, and it has led to delays in the award process," said Ashish Suman, partner, JSA Advocates and Solicitors. "It also appears that the government has been more cautious in awarding projects where land acquisition and associated permits are not in place. Also, there have been delays in award of the Bharatmala Phase I programme that led to a bottleneck, and a shortfall in roads awarded."

Bharatmala is the government's flagship highway development project, and the first phase was announced in 2017 to be completed by 2022. The project has run into delays due to a sharp cost escalation.

Queries sent to the ministry did not elicit a response till press time.

The government continues to prioritize infrastructure development in the country, evident in the substantial budgetary capex allocation of over ₹2.58 trillion for the road ministry this year. Besides, the Centre is ensuring full funding for the NHAI's capex from its own budget to prevent the road developer's high debt from impeding infrastructure development.

According to the latest data from the ministry, highway construction decelerated to a mere 774 km in November, averaging 26 km per day. To build even 10,000 km of highways, over 50 km per day will need to be developed.

"There may have been a slowdown in overall highways construction kilometers, but if one sees the pace of construction in respect with higher number of lanes that are being added, it would justify higher capex spending by the ministry this year," said Crisil research director Aniket Dani.

According to a report by Iera, highway awards typically slow down in the last quarter of a fiscal year just before the general elections, when the model code of conduct comes into force. If this scenario plays out, constructing over 50 km of highways in the last four months would be difficult, and the 13,800 km target for 2023-24 would be difficult to attain. <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/road-spending-is-on-track-road-building-isnt-11703613402287.html>

10. MGNREGA spend spike, subsidies to lead to fiscal slippage in FY24: Report (*business-standard.com*) Dec 26 2023

Despite the handsome growth in tax collections, there is a possibility of a fiscal slippage in FY24 because of higher spends on employment guarantee scheme and subsidies, a domestic rating agency said on Tuesday.

India Ratings and Research, which is a unit of international rating agency Fitch Ratings, said the fiscal deficit for FY24 will come at 6 per cent, as against the budgetary target of 5.9 per cent.

"Higher-than-budgeted revenue expenditure triggered through the first and likely second supplementary demand for grants in combination with lower-than-budgeted nominal GDP will push the fiscal deficit," the agency said in a note.

It said the fiscal slippage will happen despite higher tax and non-tax revenue collections, and also added that these will be more than sufficient to offset the lower-than-budgeted divestment proceeds.

In the first supplementary demand, the union government will spend more on prioritised areas/sectors such as food, fertiliser and LPG subsidy and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, it said, giving out details of the overruns.

As against the budgeted nutrient-based fertiliser subsidy of Rs 44,000 crore, the union government has now increased the fertiliser subsidy to Rs 57,360 crore, as the budgeted amount was almost over by end-October 2023, it said.

Similarly, realising the sustained demand for employment under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), whereby a sum of Rs 79,770 crore has already been spent till December 19, 2023, as against the budgeted Rs 60,000 crore, an additional sum of Rs 14,520 crore has been allocated through the first supplementary demand for grants, it added.

The agency said it expects tax revenue collections growth to exceed the budgeted projection at 11.7 per cent in FY24 due to the widening of tax base, better enforcement of compliance and use of technology in the tax collection process, and added that the amount collected in the April-October period is nearly 60 per cent of the budget estimate.

"We expect it to reach Rs 24.5 lakh crore in FY24, as against the budgeted Rs 23.3 lakh crore, clocking a growth rate of 17.2 per cent and helping tax/GDP ratio to reach 8.81 per cent, as against budgeted 7.72 per cent," its chief economist and head of public finance Devendra Pant said.

However, capital receipts are lagging at Rs 22,990 crore during April-October 2023, which is only 27.4 per cent of the FY24 budgeted amount, the agency said, adding that the government is struggling this year too for achieving the disinvestment target despite being modest in budgeting it at Rs 51,000 crore and has collected only Rs 8,000 crore till October.

On the expenditure front, the agency said the first supplementary demand for grants involving an additional cash outgo of Rs 58,380 crore will result in the revenue expenditure to grow at 2.8 per cent, as against the budgeted target of 1.2 per cent.

The agency said it believes the government will make a second supplementary demand for grants, as a result of which the revenue expenditure is expected to increase to Rs 37.1 lakh crore in FY24, which is Rs 2.0 lakh crore higher than the budgeted amount.

"Major reason for the increased expenditure is higher expenditure by a few select ministries/ departments and recouping of Rs 28,140 crore to the Contingency Fund of India which was drawn by 30 departments/ ministries as an advance in the past," it said. https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/mgnrega-spend-spike-subsidies-to-lead-to-fiscal-slippage-in-fy24-report-123122600538_1.html

11. Ministry seeks extra Rs 5,000-crore for Fasal Bima this fiscal (*financialexpress.com*) December 27, 2023

With an increase in coverage of crop insurance amongst the farmers, expenditure under the Prashan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) is projected to increase by 28% in current fiscal to Rs 17, 500 crore compared to budget estimate (BE), official sources said.

Against a BE for FY24 at Rs 13,625 crore, the finance ministry has released Rs 12,500 crore under PMFBY to the agriculture ministry so far.

“Looking at expenditure trends in the current fiscal because of higher enrollment of farmers, we expect an additional Rs 5,000 crore from the finance ministry in the last quarter for the crop insurance scheme,” an official told FE.

Sources said that the number of farmers enrolled under PMFBY is projected to touch a record 40 million in 2023-24, a 27% increase from the 31.5 million enrolled in FY23. An official said about 40% of farmers who would enroll under the crop insurance are those who had not availed loans from the banks.

In 2022-23, out of 31.5 million farmers enrolled, 39% were non-loanee farmers. “The crop insurance scheme is gradually moving towards a subscription-based model rather than a loan-based scheme,” Ritesh Chauhan, CEO, PMFBY recently said.

In terms of area, coverage of heavily subsidised crop insurance scheme is likely to touch 60 million hectare in 2023-24, which is an increase of around 21% from the 2022-23.

The official said many states Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Meghalaya and Puducherry have opted for universalisation of crop insurance scheme which implies that the state government bears the cost farmers’ premium.

Under the PMFBY which is currently being implemented in 22 states and union territories, the premium to be paid by farmers is fixed at just 1.5% of the sum insured for rabi crops and 2% for kharif crops, while it is 5% for cash crops.

It is optional for the farmers to opt for PMFBY. The balance premium is equally shared amongst the Centre and states and in case of North-Eastern states, the premium is split between the Centre and states in a 9:1 ratio.

The claim-premium ratio which was 99% in 2018-19 has declined to 68.2% in 2021-22; the claims for FY23 are still being settled.

Since the launch of the PMFBY in Kharif 2016, the gross premium collected has been Rs 2.01 trillion so far, against reported claims of Rs 1.52 trillion. The farmers' share in premium so far has been Rs 29,235 crore.

Several insurance companies both the public and private sectors, are implementing crop insurance launched in 2016.

Officials said that several states Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar had exited the scheme, because of 'higher cost of premium subsidy' to be borne by them.

Subsequently Andhra Pradesh has rejoined the scheme and sources said that Jharkhand has shown willingness to come on board of PMFBY. <https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-ministry-seeks-extra-rs-5000-crore-for-fasal-bima-this-fiscal-3348161/>

12. Governments must not rush into policing AI (*livemint.com*) 27 Dec 2023

Will artificial intelligence kill us all? Some technologists sincerely believe the answer is yes. In one nightmarish scenario, AI eventually outsmarts humanity and goes rogue, taking over computers and factories and filling the sky with killer drones. In another, large language models (LLMs) of the sort that power generative AIs like ChatGPT give bad guys the know-how to create devastating cyberweapons and deadly new pathogens.

It is time to think hard about these doomsday scenarios. Not because they have become more probable—no one knows how likely they are—but because policymakers around the world are mulling measures to guard against them. The European Union is finalising an expansive AI act; the White House is expected soon to issue an executive order aimed at llms; and on November 1st and 2nd the British government will convene world leaders and tech bosses for an "AI Safety Summit" to discuss the extreme risks that AI models may pose.

Governments cannot ignore a technology that could change the world profoundly, and any credible threat to humanity should be taken seriously. Regulators have been too slow in the past. Many wish they had acted faster to police social media in the 2010s, and are keen to be on the front foot this time. But there is danger, too, in acting hastily. If they go too fast, policymakers could create global rules and institutions that are aimed at the wrong problems, are ineffective against the real ones and which stifle innovation.

The idea that AI could drive humanity to extinction is still entirely speculative. No one yet knows how such a threat might materialise. No common methods exist to establish what counts as risky, much less to evaluate models against a benchmark for danger. Plenty of research needs to be done before standards and rules can be set. This is why a growing number of tech executives say the world needs a body to study AI much like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which tracks and explains global warming.

A rush to regulate away tail risks could distract policymakers from less apocalyptic but more pressing problems. New laws may be needed to govern the use of copyrighted

materials when training LLMs, or to define privacy rights as models guzzle personal data. And ai will make it much easier to produce disinformation, a thorny problem for every society.

Hasty regulation could also stifle competition and innovation. Because of the computing resources and technical skills required, only a handful of companies have so far developed powerful “frontier” models. New regulation could easily entrench the incumbents and block out competitors, not least because the biggest model-makers are working closely with governments on writing the rule book. A focus on extreme risks is likely to make regulators wary of open-source models, which are freely available and can easily be modified; until recently the White House was rumoured to be considering banning firms from releasing frontier open-source models. Yet if those risks do not materialise, restraining open-source models would serve only to limit an important source of competition.

Regulators must be prepared to react quickly if needed, but should not be rushed into setting rules or building institutions that turn out to be unnecessary or harmful. Too little is known about the direction of generative AI to understand the risks associated with it, let alone manage them.

The best that governments can do now is to set up the infrastructure to study the technology and its potential perils, and ensure that those working on the problem have adequate resources. In today’s fractious world, it will be hard to establish an IPCC-like body, and for it to thrive. But bodies that already work on AI-related questions, such as the OECD and Britain’s newish Frontier AI Taskforce, which aims to gain access to models’ nuts and bolts, could work closely together.

It would help if governments agreed to a code of conduct for model-makers, much like the “voluntary commitments” negotiated by the White House and to which 15 makers of proprietary models have already signed up. These oblige model-makers, among other things, to share information about how they are managing AI risk. Though the commitments are not binding, they may help avoid a dangerous free-for-all. Makers of open-source models, too, should be urged to join up.

As AI develops further, regulators will have a far better idea of what risks they are guarding against, and consequently what the rule book should look like. A fully fledged regime could eventually look rather like those for other technologies of world-changing import, such as nuclear power or bioengineering. But creating it will take time—and deliberation. <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/governments-must-not-rush-into-policing-ai-11703666701314.html>

13. Of Money Received for Organic Farming Scheme, Haryana, Gujarat Spent Nothing: Govt (*thewire.in*) 26 Dec 2023

The states' low funding comes even as India has promoted organic and natural farming as part of an effort to support minor farmers and make farming more climate-friendly.

New Delhi: Haryana and Gujarat did not spend any of the Rs 15 lakh they received in total for organic farming over the last three years under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Union agriculture minister Arjun Munda said in parliament recently.

He said that Haryana and Gujarat received Rs 5.05 lakh and Rs 10.10 lakh respectively under the scheme in the last three years.

Goa received Rs 0 and Telangana received Rs 15.15 lakh in the same time period, while other eligible states received over Rs 4 crore.

Uttarakhand received the highest amount, at Rs 180 crore, and utilised Rs 143 crore.

States that did not spend any of the funds they received under the scheme over the last three years are Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Telangana. Of these, Punjab received the highest amount at Rs 18.03 crore, the information provided by Munda said.

Munda was responding to a question by BJP MP from Gujarat Rajeshbhai Chudasama and BRS MP from Telangana Nama Nageswara Rao on steps the government was taking to promote organic and natural farming.

The PKVY is one of two Union government schemes intended to promote organic farming and is implemented in all states other than those in the north-east, Munda's response said. The other scheme exclusively covers India's northeastern states.

They involve direct-benefit transfers to farmers for using organic inputs, including organic fertilisers.

"Both the schemes stress on end-to-end support to farmers engaged in organic farming, i.e. from production to processing, certification and marketing, and post-harvest management," Munda said, adding that they also focused on training and capacity building.

His response also said that the Union government was promoting natural farming – which differs from organic farming in avoiding purchased farm inputs – under a 'sub scheme' within the PKVY.

India has promoted organic and natural farming as part of an effort to support minor farmers and make farming more climate-friendly, according to news agency Reuters.

A parliamentary response provided earlier this year by Munda's predecessor as agriculture minister, Narendra Singh Tomar, said that Haryana had been allocated Rs 20.5 lakh under the PKVY between 2020 and 2022, but that it ultimately received Rs 5.05 lakh.

Gujarat was allocated Rs 41.01 lakh under the scheme in that time period but received Rs 10.10 lakh. It did not spend this amount.

Tomar's response also provided the number of farmers across many states and Union territories who benefited from the PKVY between 2019 and 2022. However, Gujarat was missing from this list.

"Funds could not be released to remaining states due to slow progress of the implementation/non-utilisation of funds," his response read.

Gujarat did receive Rs 1.87 crore under the scheme during the financial year 2023-24, a different response by Munda from earlier this month said. <https://thewire.in/agriculture/haryana-gujarat-organic-farming-pkvy-scheme>

14. 72 fake farmers benefit under PM Fasal Bima scheme in Odisha's Balasore (*newindianexpress.com*) 27 December 2023

According to the audit report, 15 farmers from various villages in the block received only Rs 5,02,327 out of the allocated Rs 11,22,042. The remaining Rs 6,19,714 is yet to reach these farmers.

BALASORE: Irregularities in the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima (PMFB) Yojana in Balasore district's Khaira block came to light after the 2021-2022 audit report flagged that 72 fake beneficiaries received the benefit.

Following the report, audit officials issued a letter to the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) seeking an investigation into the irregularities. In response, the CRCS has directed the assistant registrar of cooperative societies (ARCS) Laxmidhar Rout to conduct a thorough probe.

The report exposed a large-scale discrepancy, indicating that insurance funds meant for legitimate farmers were instead distributed to over 72 fictitious beneficiaries. In Khaira block, Antara Cooperative Society registered 565 farmers under the PMFB for the 2021-2022 period. Shockingly, the cooperative society officials allegedly added an extra 72 individuals to the list, submitting fabricated documents to claim benefits on behalf of non-existent farmers.

The alleged irregularities were discovered when the audit report raised concerns about the disbursement of Rs 1,65,93,566 by the Central government towards insurance. According to the audit report, 15 farmers from various villages in the block received only Rs 5,02,327 out of the allocated Rs 11,22,042. The remaining Rs 6,19,714 is yet to reach these farmers, and the cooperative society officials reportedly failed to provide valid documents to justify the distribution, alleged farmers Ajay Nath, Pupun Kumar Nath and Narayan Biswal.

Concerned farmers like Krushna Chandra Biswal and Ratnakar Panda, emphasised that despite the registration of 566 farmers by the cooperative society, it is questionable how an additional 72 names were included. Allegations have also been made against the cooperative society officials over their complicity in the disbursement of the insurance amounts. ARCS Laxmidhar Rout said, "A thorough probe will be conducted into the matter and the findings submitted to the CRCS."

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2023/dec/27/72-fake-farmers-benefit-under-pm-fasal-bima-scheme-in-odishas-balasore-2645366.html>