

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS

1. CAG-ICAI initiative to create pool of certified accountants for local bodies: G C Murmu (*ptinews.com*) Feb 28, 2024

CAG Girish Chandra Murmu on Wednesday said that skill development initiative being taken by the apex auditor in association with ICAI will help create a pool of certified accountants in rural areas whose services can be availed by local bodies, and also small businesses for filing GST returns.

Supreme Audit Institution of India or CAG has partnered with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), to develop a set of online courses, pitched at the required level of knowledge and skills for maintaining the accounts of different categories of local governments.

This would help create a pool of certified accountants whose services can be used by local governments in maintaining complete and standardised accounts.

Talking to reporters, CAG Murmu said those who have passed the Senior Secondary School Examination under the 10 + 2 scheme of recognised board can undertake the diploma certificate course of ICAI.

"It is a certificate course. It is professionally done by ICAI and has a lot of value. In fact my idea was that if these people learn accounting, they will have lot of jobs outside also. In the GST regime they can also help small businesses," Murmu said.

Efforts will be made to upgrade the courses in due course of time, he said adding right now the courses are only for the government accounting.

"We can add some courses. This is like a parallel skill development -- the accounting skill," the CAG said.

He also informed that a vertical for local bodies audit has been created in the CAG office, and efforts are on to strengthen it.

India has large number of urban and rural local bodies, particularly at rural level, 2,62,000 such bodies exist. The third tier of governance is dealing with many schemes and projects concerning Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Earlier in the day Murmu addressed the International Conference on Strengthening of Grassroots Democracy.

"Grassroots democracy is the cornerstone of a vibrant and inclusive society. It is at this level that the aspirations, concerns, and needs of the people are most acutely felt and addressed. It is here that local level planning of developmental programmes should be undertaken ensuring increased participation in activities," he said in the inaugural address.

Recognizing that governance challenges at the grassroots may be unique to contiguous geographic areas, Murmu said SAI India has embarked on audit of local governments focusing on districts - administrative divisions encompassing multiple villages and cities.

"As the third tier of the government touches peoples' lives like no other does, the primary focus of District Centric Audit is on service delivery - the last mile connecting government with its people," he said.

The objective of the audit is to assess how well local governments are discharging the functions which have been devolved as per the Constitution and legislations, he said.

"As we dwell upon accountability frameworks of local governments around the globe and audit interventions to improve local governance, I urge you to explore innovation and technology as catalysts for change," the CAG said.

In an increasingly interconnected world, audit methodologies must evolve to keep pace with the complexities of modern governance.

"By harnessing the power of data analytics, artificial intelligence, and digital platforms, we can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our audit processes, ultimately delivering greater value to society," Murmu said.

The 3-day conference is being attended by SAIs of 10 countries -- Georgia, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Poland, South Africa, and Uganda. India is the host country. <https://www.ptinews.com/story/business/CAG-ICAI-initiative-to-create-pool-of-certified-accountants-for-local-bodies--G-C-Murmu/1322202>

2. SAI India committed to strengthen local governments audits, says CAG Murmu (*aninews.in*) 28 Feb 2024

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (/topic/comptroller-and-auditor-general-of-india) (CAG), Girish Chandra Murmu (/topic/girish-chandra-murmu), inaugurated a three-day international conference on 'Strengthening Grassroots Democracy and Accountability' at CAG headquarters in Delhi on Wednesday.

This conference which will be held from February 28 to March 1, 2024, brings together representatives from Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of ten countries: Georgia, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Poland, South Africa, and Uganda, with India hosting.

During his address, CAG Girish Chandra Murmu (/topic/girish-chandramurmu) emphasized, "Grassroots democracy is the cornerstone of a vibrant and inclusive society. It is at this level that the aspirations, concerns, and needs of the people are most acutely felt and addressed. Local-level planning of developmental programs should be undertaken here, ensuring increased participation. In fact, the committees at this level are the first respondents to calamities and pandemics as local governments are the most important link in the governance spectrum."

The CAG also mentioned that India has a substantial number of urban and rural local bodies, with approximately 2,62,000 such bodies at the rural level. These entities at the third tier of governance are actively involved in managing various schemes and projects related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"It is in this context, that SAI India is committed to strengthening the audit of local governments. From our experience, we find the functioning of local governments different from that of the Federal and Provincial Governments in India, in terms of their dependence on the two higher tiers for functions, funds, and functionaries. This reality calls for an 'out-of-the-box' audit approach," he said.

CAG stressed the importance of transparency and accountability, stating, "These bodies are also vital for implementation of SDGs etc. For this vital form of governance to thrive, transparency and accountability are inextricably intertwined with it, ensuring the voices of the people are heeded at the very foundation of governance."

"Although auditing of local bodies is carried out differently, audit operations at local levels, in many countries, are carried out by SAIs of the country. As a supreme audit institution, we can contribute through robust audit mechanisms within our respective mandates to foster oversight and accountability at the local government level," he said.

He further emphasized the purpose of the conference to enhance the well-being of ordinary citizens and proposed regular exchanges between SAIs to strengthen local governance audit systems and contribute to effective and accountable local governance processes.

"Every audit finding, every recommendation is the potential for positive, tangible difference in the lives of people an imperative for the advancement of society. We have come together to share our ideas, experiences and knowledge, in this realm. Our exchanges and collaborations, will undoubtedly serve as a force multiplier in strengthening local governance, thus amplifying the voice of the citizenry and strengthening grassroots democracy," he said.

"Regular exchanges between SAIs to share experiences, lessons learned, and best practices in local governance auditing through regional forums, conferences, and virtual platforms, will go a long way in strengthening grass root democracy," he said.

He also said that these measures will help us all strengthen our local governance audit systems and contribute to more effective and accountable local governance processes.

"The work we do here goes beyond the confines of this conference hall. It ripples out into the communities we serve, leaving an indelible mark on the democratic fabric of our societies. By fostering transparency, upholding integrity, embracing innovation, and prioritizing the needs of the people, we can build a future where governance truly serves the common good," he added. <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/sai-india-committed-to-strengthen-local-governments-audits-says-cag-murmu20240228151304/>

3. CAG-ICAI initiative to create pool of certified accountants for local bodies: G C Murmu (*devdiscourse.com*) Feb 28, 2024

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"Every audit finding, every recommendation is the potential for positive, tangible difference in the lives of people an imperative for the advancement of society. We have come together to share our ideas, experiences and knowledge, in this realm. Our exchanges and collaborations, will undoubtedly serve as a force multiplier in strengthening local governance, thus amplifying the voice of the citizenry and strengthening grassroots democracy," he said. "Regular exchanges between SAIs to share experiences, lessons learned, and best practices in local governance auditing through regional forums, conferences, and virtual platforms, will go a long way in strengthening grass root democracy," he said.

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<https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/headlines/2842935-sai-india-committed-to-strengthen-local-governments-audits-says-cag-murmu>

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6. SAI India Committed to Strengthen Local Governments Audits, Says CAG Murmu (*latestly.com*) 28 Feb 2024

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7. Fin Secy Somanathan bats for change in CAG's performance audit culture (*moneycontrol.com*) FEBRUARY 27, 2024

Given the current approach of the CAG around performance audits, there is great reluctance to take risks among bureaucrats and that is one of the reasons why things are slow in government, the finance secretary said.

In a bid to restore confidence in decision-making among bureaucrats, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan advocated for a change in the performance audit culture of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

Mandated by the Constitution of India, CAG conducts auditing and accounting of a government's balance sheet to provide information to the legislature, the public and the executive on whether public funds are being collected and used effectively and efficiently.

"In performance audit, the auditor has the benefit of hindsight, which the executor of the project did not have. This is a source of a lot of internal second-guessing in government because people do not want their names to appear in that CAG report. We need to change our audit approach so that whether a thing was done properly or not must be evaluated against the information, technology, the knowledge available to the decision maker at the time of taking the decision. With that knowledge, with that information was the decision reasonable or unreasonable?" he said at an event on February 27.

The finance secretary said, If through such a process, a decision is found to be unreasonable, it should certainly be criticised, but if it was reasonable in the facts and circumstances then probably that should not figure as a criticism of a decision taken.

Given the current approach of the CAG around performance audits, there is great reluctance to take risks among bureaucrats and that is one of the reasons why things are slow in government, "it is because people are afraid to actually take decisions they are empowered to take," he said.

"Move to a situation where this loose term vigilance is not misused to cover every kind of administrative lapse or possible lapse and must be confined to issues where corruption is involved. Every other issue becomes a vigilance issue, this needs to stop if we want officers to exercise the discretion rested in them," Somanathan added.

Somanathan said that performance audits could be more about lessons learnt rather than faults found.

"Everybody tends to defend themselves against future audits and this builds a defensive culture (among bureaucrats) discouraging even proper pro-public decisions," the finance secretary said. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/fin-secy-somanathan-bats-for-change-in-cags-performance-audit-culture-12364421.html>

8. Performance audit a learning tool: Somanathan (*financialexpress.com*) February 28, 2024

The CAG does a comprehensive performance review of central government schemes to probe if there are any fund leakages, diversion, mismanagement and corruption.

Performance audits must focus on lessons learned rather than faults found, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan said on Tuesday suggesting changes in such audits by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

"Evaluation must be taken considering the technology, and knowledge available to the officer at the time of the decision," Somanathan said speaking at an event here.

Defensive culture in officers discourages risk-taking even for pro-public policies, he said, stressing centralised monitoring of decisions and the need for focus on accountability for delays.

The CAG does a comprehensive performance review of central government schemes to probe if there are any fund leakages, diversion, mismanagement and corruption.

Besides state-level schemes, CAG takes up two to three national schemes each year for performance audits.

The Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament has time and again expressed displeasure on the delayed submission of Action Taken Notes or ATNs on CAG's Reports. <https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-performance-audit-a-learning-tool-somanathan-3407049/>

9. Finance Secretary Advocates for Audit Culture Shift to Foster Bureaucratic Confidence and Efficiency (*bnnbreaking.com*) 27 Feb 2024

Finance Secretary TV Somanathan advocates for a paradigm shift in performance audits, emphasizing the need to focus on lessons learned rather than faults found. Discover how redefining vigilance and encouraging discretion can lead to more effective governance.

In the labyrinth of government operations where every decision is scrutinized, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan stands out by calling for a pivotal shift in the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India's performance audit culture. Highlighting concerns that the current audit practices foster a risk-averse mentality among bureaucrats, Somanathan's plea for change resonates with a broader need for efficiency and confidence in governmental decision-making processes.

Rethinking Performance Audits

The crux of Somanathan's argument lies in the nature of performance audits. Traditionally, these audits have been conducted with the benefit of hindsight, a luxury not available to the decision-makers at the time of action. According to the Finance Secretary, this retrospective analysis is a significant factor contributing to a government-wide reluctance to take risks. "In performance audit, the auditor has the benefit of hindsight, which the executor of the project did not have," Somanathan remarked, emphasizing the need for a paradigm shift that evaluates decisions based on the information and resources available at the time they were made. By doing so, the aim is to distinguish between decisions that were genuinely unreasonable and those that were reasonable under the circumstances, thereby encouraging a more dynamic and less defensive bureaucratic approach.

Encouraging Discretion and Redefining Vigilance

Another salient point in Somanathan's advocacy concerns the current interpretation of vigilance. He argues for a redefinition that distinguishes between administrative lapses and corruption, with the former often unfairly categorized under the umbrella of vigilance issues. This broad categorization, according to Somanathan, stifles discretionary power among officers, who, fearing repercussions, may choose inaction over action. "Move to a situation where this loose term vigilance is not misused," he suggests, proposing a more nuanced understanding that could liberate officers to exercise their discretion more freely, ultimately leading to more effective governance.

Lessons Learned Versus Faults Found

At the heart of Somanathan's message is the belief that performance audits should focus more on drawing lessons learned rather than pinpointing faults. This perspective not only aims to cultivate a learning environment within governmental departments but also

seeks to mitigate the defensive culture that currently dominates. "Everybody tends to defend themselves against future audits," Somanathan observed, pointing out the detrimental effect this has on taking risks, even when they are in the public interest. By shifting the focus towards learning and improvement, Somanathan believes that government operations can become more dynamic and less hindered by the fear of audit repercussions.

In a landscape where bureaucratic efficiency and innovation are paramount, Somanathan's call for a shift in audit culture represents a beacon of hope. It's a hope for a government that not only learns from its past but also embraces the potential of its future decisions with confidence and discretion. As this narrative unfolds, it invites us to reconsider not just the role of audits within government but also the broader implications for administrative practices and public service. <https://bnnbreaking.com/finance-nav/finance-secretary-advocates-for-audit-culture-shift-to-foster-bureaucratic-confidence-and-efficiency>

10. Government Considers C&AG Audit for RTÉ Amid Financial Scrutiny: Political Maneuver or Accountability Move? (*bnnbreaking.com*) 27 Feb 2024

Dive into the debate sparked by the Government's proposal to audit RTÉ under the C&AG, weighing the balance between financial scrutiny and political influence.

The recent proposal by the Government to bring the national broadcaster RTÉ under the audit umbrella of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) has sparked a wide array of discussions. This move, aimed at enhancing financial scrutiny and transparency, raises questions about its effectiveness and underlying motivations.

Understanding the C&AG's Role

The C&AG is tasked with ensuring that public funds are used both lawfully and efficiently, primarily auditing Government departments and entities. The current debate stems from the Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) recommendation to extend this oversight to RTÉ, a commercial State body traditionally audited by external firms like Deloitte. This suggestion, while presented as a step towards greater accountability, resonates more with political interests, aiming to leverage the visibility and theatre of public hearings.

Financial Transparency vs. Political Interference

RTÉ's financial woes are no secret, with the broadcaster taking steps to rectify payment discrepancies through internal review. The notion that a C&AG audit would unearth new issues is met with skepticism. Critics argue that such a move could blur the lines between ensuring financial transparency and exerting political influence over the broadcaster's operations. While oversight by publicly-elected representatives could enhance accountability, there are concerns about the potential for political interference and the threat to RTÉ's editorial independence.

Comparative Analysis with Other Public Bodies

Examining the impact of C&AG audits on other public entities provides a nuanced perspective on the proposal. In cases outside the broadcasting sector, such audits have

not compromised operational autonomy, suggesting a potential blueprint for RTÉ. However, the unique commercial dynamics and the critical role of journalistic freedom at RTÉ necessitate a careful approach to implementing any changes in audit oversight.

The Government's consideration to involve the C&AG in auditing RTÉ reflects a complex interplay of accountability, political interests, and the safeguarding of editorial independence. While the aim of enhancing financial scrutiny is commendable, the effectiveness and implications of this move remain subjects of debate. As discussions unfold, the focus should remain on ensuring that any changes serve the public interest without undermining the broadcaster's autonomy or the critical role it plays in society. <https://bnnbreaking.com/finance-nav/government-considers-cag-audit-for-rt%C3%A9-amid-financial-scrutiny-political-maneuver-or-accountability-move>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

11. CAG blames non-release of state share by Punjab for delay in implementation of wetlands project (*hindustantimes.com*) Feb 28, 2024

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has flagged the massive delay in the implementation of a central project for the conservation of Harike, Kanjli, Ropar, Nangal and other wetlands in Punjab under the national plan of aquatic ecosystems.

The project sanctioned by the Union ministry of environment, forests, and climate change in 2016-17 could not achieve its objective due to the non-release of the state share by the Punjab government even five years after it had received the central funds, according to an annual review of the working of forest divisions carried out by the office of the principal accountant general (accounts) for the financial year 2022-23. The state government had refunded part of the central funds with interest to the central ministry.

The scheme objectives were to maintain and improve the hydrological regime for sustaining the aquatic biodiversity of the wetland, improve and maintain wetland habitat for sustaining the various life forms, and to build capacity and promote eco-tourism to position as a model and conservation.

The central and state governments were to jointly fund the ₹3.05-crore project on a 50:50 sharing basis for “conservation of wetlands of international importance” in the state. The delay took place mainly during the previous government in the state.

According to the annual review report, the Union environment and forests ministry sanctioned the central share of ₹1.52 crore in 2016-17, and the state government has not released its matching share to date.

While the Punjab state council for science and technology was responsible for the conservation and management of wetlands earlier, the state government, vide a notification issued on March 21, 2018, constituted the Punjab state wetlands authority. The department of forests and wildlife was designated as the nodal department.

The report said that a provision for state share was also made for this scheme in financial years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2020-21, but the same could not be utilised due to non-

release of funds by the state government. The department had also written time and again for the release of funds without any result.

Due to the non-utilisation of the state share, the utilisation certifications could not be submitted to the central government.

“Non-submission of utilisation certificates had resulted in non-release of further assistance by the Union government,” read the report sent to the state authorities last month, pointing out that the central share was also not utilised to the full extent.

It said the reply of state authorities was awaited.

The review report has also questioned the delay in the utilisation of funds under the National Programme for Green India Mission aimed at increasing tree cover, improving ecosystem services like carbon sequestration and storage, biodiversity and enhancing forest-based livelihood income. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/cag-blames-non-release-of-state-share-by-punjab-for-delay-in-implementation-of-wetlands-project-101709061516539.html>

12. Faridabad MC disbursed ₹184 crore to same contractor from 2015 to 2020: Govt in assembly (*hindustantimes.com*) Feb 28, 2024

Haryana urban local bodies minister Kamal Gupta on Tuesday informed the assembly that in its March 31, 2021, audit report, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) had detected nearly ₹24 crore loss to the Municipal Corporation (MC) Faridabad (MCF) as no works were executed against these payments.

Gupta was replying to a question of Congress MLA Neeraj Sharma (Faridabad NIT), who wanted to know the names of the officers who made the payment in this “ ₹200 crore scam without any work” of the Faridabad MC being carried out on the ground.

Responding to the pleas of Congress MLA, who stated that the government was not responding to the letter of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), which had sought prosecution sanction against more officials involved in this scam, chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar indicated that he would look into this issue the MLA was raising.

In a written reply, the local bodies minister said that ₹184 crore were disbursed to the same contractor from April 2015 to June 2020 by the MC Faridabad officials.

“Out of this, payment vouchers of ₹104 crore were made available to audit, whereas payment vouchers of ₹80 crore were not made available to audit by accounts branch of the MC, Faridabad. Thereby, indicating weak internal and financial control mechanism of the MC, Faridabad,” Gupta said.

The minister stated that the chief secretary, Haryana, (vide memo dated 7.2.2023) has granted permission to the ACB to investigate against the officers/officials under Section 17 A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, (in FIR No. 13 dated 19.4.2022).

The officers against whom prosecution sanction have been granted are Sonal Goel, IAS (then commissioner, MC, Faridabad); Naveen Yadav (then resident Sr auditor); Satish

Kumar (accounts branch); Vishal Kaushik (accounts branch); and Shashi Arya (superintendent, accounts branch).

The ACB is holding an investigation into this scam in which the ACB had registered five FIRs against 41 officials of the MC Faridabad, including the IAS officers.

The minister said 27 officers and officials then posted in MC Faridabad and who recommended/made payments for the works as pointed out in CAG report and inquiry report of ACB are Tasleem (clerk), Naveen Ratra (clerk), Deepak Kumar (junior engineer), Rajan Tewatia (junior engineer), Sher Singh (assistant engineer), Seema Bhatia, Vinod Gulati, Ved Gaur, Sashi Arya, Deepa Pabbi (all superintendents), Vishal Kaushik (accounts officer), Rajeev Sharma (OIA), Satish Sharma (OIA), Krishan Yadav (financial controller), Anand Swaroop Verma (financial controller), Sunita Verma (corporation secretary), Amardeep Singh (joint commissioner), Narhari Banger (joint commissioner), Ashima Sangwan (joint commissioner), Raman Sharma (executive engineer), Prem Raj (executive engineer), DR Bhaskar (chief engineer), Mohammad Shayin, IAS, Atul Diwiedi, IAS, Sonal Goel, IAS, Anita Yadav, IAS, and Yash Garg, IAS. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/himachal-six-congress-mlas-who-cross-voted-in-rs-polls-return-to-shimla-101709108029980.html>

13. Noida to lift ban on registration of apartments in sports city project (*hindustantimes.com*) Feb 28, 2024

Noida authority had banned sub-lease (registry) of plot or flat sale in Sector 150 because the comptroller and auditor general of India had started the probe

NOIDA: The Noida authority is likely to lift the three-year long ban imposed on apartment registration in the Sports City housing project located in Sector 150, said officials on Tuesday.

The move will benefit thousands of homebuyers who are suffering for the last three to four years after the authority, in 2021, had imposed the ban in view of the comptroller and auditor general (CAG) audit.

The state's highest body -- public accounts committee (PAC) consisting of senior MLAs -- following a probe has finally recommended to remove the ban, and approve the revised layout of Sports City project having Luxury housing projects in Sector 150, located along Noida-Greater Expressway.

“Since we have got the recommendations to lift the ban on registry and also approve the revised layout submitted by the developer, we have decided to take the matter up in the upcoming board meeting that will be organised soon after the chairman gives time for the same,” said Noida authority's chief executive officer (CEO) Lokesh M.

After discussing the matter, the authority board will take a call on starting apartment registration, issuance of occupancy certificate and also approving the revised layout of this housing project, he added.

The Noida Authority aims to organise the board meeting any time before the model code of conduct comes into effect ahead of the 2024 general elections, if the UP additional chief secretary Manoj Kumar Singh who is also chairman of the Noida authority gives time for the same, the CEO further added.

Under Singh's chairmanship, the board will discuss the Sports City issues on merit basis and decide the fate of this project where huge investment is at stake.

“The authority had banned sub-lease (registry) of plot or flat sale in Sector 150 because the comptroller and auditor general of India had started the probe. Now the CAG observations were looked into and resolved by the PAC. Also, the PAC asked the Noida authority to remove the ban imposed on sublease deed and approve the revised layout of Sports City so that the stuck realty projects can take off,” said a Noida authority official aware of the matter.

The Noida authority's 201st board meeting had on January 18, 2021 banned the approval of building map revisions and also the registry of the apartment owners in the city's Sector 150, located along Noida-Greater Noida Expressway causing distress to the homebuyers who are living in their respective apartments without registry.

Under the sports city project, the consortium of developers led by Lotus Greens constructions private limited are developing ultra luxury housing projects on 30 percent of land and remaining 70 percent is reserved for recreational green with world-class sports facilities as per the terms of the scheme, said officials.

In master developer Lotus Greens' sports city the Tata, Godrej, ACE, Prestige Group, Home Kraft, Eldeco and Samridhi Group among others are developing realty projects, and the Birla Estates has also shown interest to take up land in this project, they added.

In 2014-15, the Noida authority had allotted 12 lakh square metres of the sports city land in sector 150. However, the Noida authority is yet to hand over the possession of at least 300,000 square metres of sports city land due to farmers' dispute prompting a group of realtors to approach the Allahabad high court.

At least 10,000 homebuyers will get immediate relief as they will be able to execute their registries, if the authority implements the court order.

According to Dinesh Gupta, secretary, Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI), Western UP chapter, and managing director of Samridhi Group, they are happy to learn that the Noida authority will remove the ban on registry and also approve the revised layout of building maps following the PAC directions.

“The move will benefit the homebuyers, who are waiting for their registries for a long time,” he said, adding: “Also, the move will boost sentiment in this sector 150 that is home to the luxury realty projects and the most sought after destination for those who want to own a dream home.” <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/noida-news/noida-to-lift-ban-on-registration-of-apartments-in-sports-city-project-101709056953123.html>

14. Noida Authority to Lift Ban on Sports City Apartment Registrations, Benefiting 10,000 Homebuyers (*bnnbreaking.com*) 27 Feb 2024

Discover how the Noida Authority's decision to lift the registration ban and approve a revised layout for the Sports City project in Sector 150 is set to benefit thousands of homebuyers and developers, revitalizing the real estate sector.

Relief is on the horizon for thousands of homebuyers in Noida's Sector 150 as the Noida Authority announces plans to lift the registration ban and approve a revised layout for the Sports City project. This decision, influenced by recommendations from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), aims to resolve issues stemming from a 2021 comptroller and auditor general (CAG) audit. The upcoming authority board meeting is set to further discuss these developments, promising a positive shift for at least 10,000 awaiting their registries.

Background and Ban Implications

In 2021, the Noida Authority placed a ban on the sub-lease and registry of apartments in the Sports City project due to a CAG probe, significantly affecting homebuyers and developers alike. The project, led by Lotus Greens Constructions Private Limited, was designed to offer ultra-luxury housing and world-class sports facilities. However, disputes and the subsequent ban delayed the project, leaving homebuyers in limbo.

Recommendations and Relief Measures

Following an extensive review, the PAC recommended lifting the ban and approving the revised project layout, signaling a major breakthrough for the embattled development. Noida Authority's CEO confirmed the board's intention to address these recommendations promptly, aiming to facilitate the resumption of apartment registrations and the issuance of occupancy certificates. This move is eagerly anticipated by developers and is expected to rejuvenate the real estate sector in Sector 150.

Impact on Homebuyers and Real Estate Sector

The decision to lift the ban and approve the revised layout is poised to benefit thousands of homebuyers, enabling them to finally proceed with their apartment registries. Industry experts, including representatives from CREDAI, have lauded the authority's decision, recognizing its potential to boost market sentiment and affirm Sector 150's status as a premier housing destination. With the authority's actions, a long-standing barrier to project completion and homebuyer satisfaction appears to be coming to an end.

The lifting of the ban and approval of the revised layout for the Sports City project mark a significant turning point for the Noida real estate sector. As developers and homebuyers alike await the official implementation of these changes, the promise of resolution brings a sense of optimism. This development not only underscores the authority's responsiveness to sectoral challenges but also highlights the importance of collaboration between regulatory bodies and the real estate industry to overcome hurdles and fulfill the aspirations of thousands of homeowners.

<https://bnnbreaking.com/world/india/noida-authority-to-lift-ban-on-sports-city-apartment-registrations-benefiting-10000-homebuyers>

15. CAG finds excess spending of Rs 3439 cr in 2022-23 (*highlandpost.com*)
February 28, 2024

Maximum Govt expenditure was to pay debt

The Meghalaya government has reported an excess expenditure of Rs 3,439.41 crore over the authorisation given by the State Assembly under seven grants and one non-grant.

This was revealed by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in its report on the Finance Accounts and Appropriation Accounts for the year 2022-23, relating to the State government which was tabled in the State Assembly today.

As far as the Appropriation Accounts are concerned, the CAG said that the excess expenditure was mainly under grants relating to Power (Rs 382.57 crore), Pension (Rs 203.62 crore), Sports (Rs 49.03 crore) and non-grant Public Debt (Rs 2,786.56 crore).

Further, there was an expenditure of Rs 804.75 crore (Revenue Rs 24.40 crore, Capital Rs 780.36 crore) incurred without original provisions/supplementary/re-appropriation in 12 sub-heads, five grants and one non-grant.

The Appropriation Accounts depict the expenditure of the State government against amounts 'Charged' on the Consolidated Fund or 'Voted' by the State Assembly. There are four combined grants of both charged and voted, six charged appropriations and 56 voted grants.

At the end of the year 2022-23, the actual expenditure of the Government of Meghalaya against the budget approved by the Assembly showed a net saving of Rs 532 crore (2.43 per cent of Revised Estimate of Rs 21,926 crore).

Certain grants, like those relating to Administration of Medical and Public Health and Family Welfare Services, Administration of Agriculture and allied services, Administration of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department showed substantial savings.

As far as the Finance Accounts is concerned, out of Rs 17,641 crore receipts reported in the Finance Accounts for the year 2022-23 the major components received by Meghalaya were Rs 9,937 crore as tax revenue, Rs 4,426 crore as grants in aid and Rs 2,796 crore as borrowings and other liabilities.

The bulk of the expenditure for the year 2022-23 consisted of revenue expenditure of Rs 14,864 crore followed by capital expenditure of Rs 2,742 crore.

Finance Accounts depict the receipts and disbursements of the State government for the year, together with the financial results disclosed by the revenue and capital accounts, public debt and public account balances recorded in the accounts.

The Finance Accounts have been issued in two volumes, to make them more comprehensive and informative. Volume I of the Finance Accounts contains the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, summarised statements of overall receipts and disbursements and 'Notes to Finance Accounts' containing a summary of significant accounting policies, quality of accounts and other items. Volume II contains detailed statements (Part-I) and appendices (Part -II). <https://highlandpost.com/cag-finds-excess-spending-of-rs-3439-cr-in-2022-23/>

16. CAG doubts expenditure of Rs. 3,436.01 crores by Meghalaya Govt for actual purpose (*syllad.com*) 28 Feb 2024

The office of the Comptroller and Auditor General has reported the non submission of 454 utilisation certificates amounting to Rs 3,436.01 crore by the Meghalaya Government at the end of the financial year 2022-23.

The CAG remarked, "there is no assurance that the expenditure of Rs 3,436.01 crore was actually incurred for the purpose for which it was authorised."

According to the CAG report, a total of 53 Abstract Contingent (AC) Bills amounting to Rs.98.25 crore remained outstanding at the end of 31 March 2023 for want of relevant Detailed Countersigned Contingent (DCC) bills.

Again the CAG observed there is no assurance that the expenditure of Rs 98.25 crore has been incurred for the purpose for which it was authorised by the Legislature.

The total investments as share capital in Government companies, statutory corporations, Joint Stock Companies and Co-operative Institutions stood at Rs 3,240 crore at the end of 2022-23, out of which Rs. 2,745.32 crore had been made in Power Companies.

On the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), the CAG observes out of the total fund account of Rs 182.43 crore, the Meghalaya Government disbursed Rs. 51.58 crore during the year, leaving a balance of Rs.130.85 crore unutilized at the end of the year 2022- 23. <https://www.syllad.com/cag-doubts-expenditure-of-rs-3436-01-crores-by-meghalaya-govt-for-actual-purpose/>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

17. India's Military Capability Enhancement and Defence Procurements (*financialexpress.com*) February 27, 2024

Over the years, the percentage of indigenisation component in platforms acquired through the capital acquisition route has constantly moved upwards on a steep gradient.

An increasing convergence is being seen between the Services and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) towards the two concurrent goals of modernisation and indigenisation of the Indian Armed Forces. This is reflected in the simplification of policies and regulations for acquisition of technologies and platforms, according primacy to

indigenous defence startups & MSMEs and fast tracking of existing procurement processes.

The recently concluded meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) under the chairmanship of the Raksha Mantri gave approval for acceptance of necessity (AoN) for capital acquisitions of close to Rs One Lakh Crores, one of the biggest in MoD's recent history with special focus on the Indigenisation. Platforms such as new generation anti-tank mines with seismic sensors and remote deactivation, tactical control Air Defence radars for the Army; active towed array sonar and medium range maritime reconnaissance and multi-mission aircraft for the Navy and; flight refueller aircraft for the Air Force were the main highlights of this DAC.

Apart from these sophisticated platforms, the DAC also strengthened rules for expediting the acquisition of advanced technologies from Indian startups and MSMEs, especially those who qualify under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and Technology Development Fund (TDF) competitions. The amendments made to the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020, which has undergone multiple revisions to promote fast tracking of defence procurements and incentivise indigenous development of defence technologies since 2020, further simplify procedures related to payment schedule, procurement quantity and cost computation. This will help indigenous industries to scale and increase their competitiveness in the global market, again demonstrating the close link between national security and economic growth, each feeding into the other.

Over the years, the percentage of indigenisation component in platforms acquired through the capital acquisition route has constantly moved upwards on a steep gradient. This was a deliberate step taken to ensure that the stigma attached to India being one of the world's largest arms importers is replaced with one that redesignated the country as a defence exporter as well as a net security provider in the region.

Many steps were taken under the current government to facilitate this transition. Arrangements such as joint ventures, transfer of technology, enabling of defence startups and MSMEs through iDEX & TDF and promulgation of back-to-back positive indigenisation lists started showing results and India, for the first time in its history, emerged as a major exporter of defence systems and subsystems to significant number of nations, the last count being 85. One can only reminisce on the pride and exuberance felt when an agreement was reached between India and the Philippines for a \$375 million deal to export the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile to the latter in 2022. The LCA Tejas is also being considered by at least three countries to form the mainstay of their respective air forces.

However, some of India's neighbours that have revisionist powers ignore and actively disregard international norms of acceptable state behaviour. A delicate territorial understanding between India and China along the Line of Actual Control was broken unilaterally by the latter in May 2020 when soldiers of the People's Liberation Army transgressed into Indian territory and clashed with Indian soldiers, resulting in deaths on both sides.

As a result of the developments along our northern borders, a massive counter-mobilisation was ordered to stop further Chinese incursions and all the three services

quickly went into action. Under these circumstances, duly aggravated with large supply chain disruptions due to ongoing Covid pandemic, to ensure that the country stands up to the regional bully and Indian forces are equipped with the best available products, a series of emergency powers (EPs) were allocated to the three Services. These EPs, gave revenue procurement powers of up to Rs 500 crores (per case) to each of the three Services, through their respective Vice Chiefs.

EPs focused on three broad areas i.e. spares, stores and limited niche capabilities. So far EPs have been allocated in four tranches, with the last expiring in June 2023. Under the first three tranches, restrictions on importing equipment from abroad were lifted and items were procured from both indigenous sources and foreign vendors. In the last tranche of EP, from January to June 2023, procurement was allowed only from indigenous sources. The change in terms and conditions of the EPs also mirror the relative stabilisation of the situation along the LAC which has been termed 'sensitive yet stable'. The termination of the EP, along with further easing of DAP 2020 also brings attention back to the twin process of indigenisation and modernisation of the forces.

Taking a deeper look, one can gauge that EPs had a threefold aim: meet urgent operational requirements, early insertion of equipment to address capability voids and cater for the sustenance of requirement of the Armed Forces. What the EPs ensured was that the procurement process was put on steroids for a short term and enhanced capability was achieved. This was under the understanding that the EP route was for emerging crises and situations warranting a concentrated and immediate response.

After the EPs, the receipt of the equipment had to be within one year of signing the contract. Some of the equipment contracted under the first three tranches of EP include ammunition of various calibres, radio sets, night sights for the Army; repair of platforms like KH-35E, Shtil, Barak and provision of spares for torpedoes and Sea Kings for the Navy and repair and overhaul of aero engines for Su 30, MiG 29 and Mirage 2000s for the Air Force. The last tranche which featured only Indian manufacturers had the Army procuring equipment like ballistic helmets, quick reaction light and heavy vehicles, remotely piloted aerial vehicles and very short-range Air Defence systems, depth charges and repair of certain UAVs for the Navy. Acknowledging that the provision of EP did not exist in the just released DAP 2020, the MoD inserted a clause of Fast-Track Procedure (FTP) for capital procurement cases, under which the services received autonomy over procurement of capital equipment up to Rs 300 Crores.

There are some very valid caveats in the FTP procedure, given that it pertains to items that can be made available in the short term. So, obviously items with long lead times are automatically out of the purview of FTP, since they form part of the regular procurement route. The evolution of the FTP, extension of the EPs till June 2023 also reflects a matured and converging thought process within the MoD which couples increasing autonomy to the services with the impetus to indigenisation and also reflects the growing capability of the Indian defence industry.

Also, one has to be very careful when attempting to routinise EP for a longer time horizon since there is a huge difference between EP and an established procurement cycle. While the former implies ensuring adequacy of spares, overhauls and niche yet limited capabilities and is focused more on plugging operational gaps, the latter has a

more long-term horizon. A quicker and efficient procurement cycle has to be mirrored in an increased technological absorptive capacity of the organisation. It is prudent to amend, modify and in place, adopt new doctrinal concepts, organisational structures and related tactics to absorb any new technology or platform fully in order to leverage them for maximum military effectiveness on the battlefield.

The sharpening of the DAP 2020 is a welcome step since it provides a scaffolding where processes and regulations regarding defence procurement and acquisition can be debated and modified based on a shared understanding. It is hoped that Indian defence procurement reaches a point where the concept of EP itself becomes redundant. The emerging convergence between the Services and the MoD reflects the integrated approach of warfighting from a 'Whole of Nation' approach. With the synchronised efforts of the MoD, the integration amongst the three services has resulted in better coordination to deal with every challenge together. Defence procurements are an integral part of such reforms and India is moving in the right direction to reduce its dependence on arms imports and become a net exporter, with defence exports expected to reach 50,000 Crores by 2028. <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/indias-military-capability-enhancement-and-defence-procurements/3406891/>

18. Indian Army Boosts Bridging Capability with DRDO-L&T Modular Bridge, Orders 41 for Over ₹ 2500 Crore (*republicworld.com*)

28 Feb 2024

The Indian Army introduced the 46-metre Modular Bridge, jointly manufactured and produced by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Larsen & Toubro (L&T). The Ministry of Defence claims that with the induction of the new pontoon bridge, it has 'bolstered its (Army's) bridging capability'.

The induction ceremony was held at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi, where General Manoj Pande, Chief of the Army Staff, presided over the handover of this new bridging system. Over the next four years, the Indian Army plans to induct a total of 41 sets of these Modular Bridges for ₹2,585 Crores.

These bridges, as per MoD, are specially designed to provide a 'versatile' solution for overcoming obstacles like canals and ditches with ease. The system also comes with a mechanically launched single-span design, measures 46 metres in length, and ensures quick and rapid deployment and retrieval, which is necessary for the fast-paced nature of mechanised operations of the infantry.

Each Modular Bridge set has seven carrier vehicles based on 8x8 Heavy Mobility Vehicles and two launcher vehicles based on 10x10 Heavy Mobility Vehicles. According to MoD, this setup enables quick launching and retrieval, making the equipment highly mobile and adaptable to various terrains.

Replacement for Older Pontoon Bridges

Moreover, the bridges will replace the existing manually launched Medium Girder Bridges (MGB) and offer several advantages such as increased span, reduced construction time, and improved mechanical launching capabilities.

The induction of these Modular Bridges not only ‘bolsters’ the Indian Army's operational effectiveness but also underlines India as a nation that has grown in defence technology and manufacturing. This procurement falls under the indigenous design and production category referred to as Buy Indian-IDD. Thus, affirming its commitment to 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) in defence production. <https://www.republicworld.com/defence/defence-technology/indian-army-boosts-bridging-capability-with-drdo-lt-modular-bridge-orders-41-for-over-2500-crore/?amp=1>

19. Poverty sees drastic fall, could be around 4.5-5%, says SBI report (*financialexpress.com*) February 28, 2024

“Based on recent fractile distribution, the sample proportion for poverty in rural areas is 7.15% and 4.62% in urban areas,” Ghosh said.

Poverty levels in India have witnessed a significant decline in the past decade and at an aggregate level it could now be in the range of 4.5-5%, State Bank of India said in a report on Tuesday.

The report has based its assessment on the recently released Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2022-23 factsheet by the statistics ministry.

The rural households MPCE has risen to Rs 3,773 in 2022-23 from Rs 1,430 in 2011-12, and urban households MPCE has grown to Rs 6,459 from Rs 2,630, as per the survey.

“The new estimates of fractile distribution of MPCE allows for estimating possible levels of poverty,” said Somya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser, SBI.

Starting with 2011-12 (Based on MRP consumption) poverty line estimate of Rs 816 in rural area and Rs 1000 in urban area, the new poverty line was adjusted for decadal inflation and imputation factor derived from NSSO report, the SBI report said. New estimated poverty line is Rs 1,622 in rural areas and Rs 1,929 in urban areas.

“Based on recent fractile distribution, the sample proportion for poverty in rural areas is 7.15% and 4.62% in urban areas,” Ghosh said.

Rural poverty has thus witnessed a significant 440-basis points (bps) decline since 2018-19 and urban poverty a 170-basis point decline. “This indicates that many government programmes currently for those at the bottom of the pyramid are having a significant salutary impact on rural livelihood.”

According to the World Bank estimates, poverty in rural India was at 11.6% in 2018-19 and in urban India, it was at 6.3%. In 2011-12, the Suresh Tendulkar committee had estimated rural India’s poverty at 25.7% and urban India at 13.7%. <https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-poverty-sees-drastic-fall-could-be-around-4-5-5-says-sbi-report-3407121/>

20. Fraudsters use handpumps to evade GST (*thehindubusinessline.com*) Updated: February 28, 2024

A scam has been unearthed in Uttar Pradesh with fraudsters using hand pumps for claiming fake refunds using Inverted Duty Structure (IDS) under GST mechanism.

Taxes on inputs can be deducted from tax on final product and net is deposited with the government. However, this is not possible under IDS, where inputs attract tax at higher rates while it is lower for final product. So, under IDS, taxpayer gets refund. Very few goods under GST fall into IDS category and hand pump is one of them.

According to Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Custom (CBIC), Lucknow Zonal Unit of Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) booked a case after officers gathered that three Agra based taxpayers were availing fake Input Tax Credit (ITC) on the raw material allegedly for manufacturing hand pumps. “The fake ITC on raw materials (attracting GST at 18 per cent) was further used to issue fake invoices of hand pumps (attracting GST at five per cent) to non-existent entities without any actual manufacturer and supply,” he said in a communication to all the officers and staff of CBIC.

Further, he said that adopting this modus, the taxpayers were obtaining fraudulent refunds under IDS with evasion amounting to ₹15.27 crore so far. “The mastermind of the whole operation, who has been placed under judicial custody, accepted the fraud committed and voluntarily deposited ₹5.21 crore,” Agrawal said without disclosing the identity of accused.

This is just one example of using fake firms for evasion. Earlier, Finance Ministry reported that over 29,000 fake firms were identified and over 44000 crores of GST tax evasion detected in a nationwide drive between May and December of 2023. All Central and State tax administrations launched a special All-India Drive on May 16, 2023, to detect suspicious/fake GSTINs, conduct requisite verification, and take further remedial action to weed out fake billers from the GST ecosystem and safeguard government revenue. Based on detailed data analytics and risk parameters, GSTN identified fraudulent GSTINs for State and Central Tax authorities in the drive.

It was planned that details of such identified suspicious GSTINs, jurisdiction-wise, would be shared with the concerned State/Central Tax administration to initiate a verification drive and conduct necessary action. If, after detailed verification, it is found that the taxpayer is non-existent and fictitious, action will be initiated for suspension and cancellation of the taxpayer’s registration. Further, the matter may be examined for blocking the ITC in the Electronic Credit Ledger. Efforts will also be taken to identify the recipients to whom such non-existing taxpayers have passed the input tax credit and to identify the mastermind and act.

Fake invoice means no real supply of goods or services but simply invoice issuance, which is used fraudulently to avail input tax credit (ITC). Unscrupulous elements misuse the identity of other persons to obtain fake/ bogus registration under GST to defraud the Government. Such fake/non-genuine registrations are used to fraudulently pass on input tax credits to unscrupulous recipients by issuing invoices without any underlying supply of goods or services or both. Fake registrations and issuance of bogus

invoices for passing off fake ITC have become a serious problem, as fraudulent people engage in dubious and complex transactions, causing revenue loss to the Government. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/fraudsters-use-handpumps-to-evade-gst/article67891919.ece>

21. Delhi PWD Cracks Down on Audit Irregularities with New Guidelines (*oneindia.com*) Feb 28, 2024

The Public Works Department (PWD) of the Delhi government has formulated a comprehensive set of guidelines to address commonly detected irregularities during audits and ensure their prevention in the future. These guidelines, outlined in an official circular, aim to enhance financial discipline and transparency within the department.

Cashbook Management

One of the key areas addressed in the circular is the proper maintenance of cashbooks. It emphasizes the importance of recording daily cash transactions in the cashbook and depositing cash into the government account on the same day or the next working day. Additionally, the cashbook should be maintained as per the instructions provided in the government receipt and payment rules and the CPWD Manual.

Procurement of Goods and Services

The circular reiterates the need to strictly adhere to the procedures prescribed in the General Finance Rules of 2017 and the Manual of Procurement of Goods of 2017 for the procurement of goods and services. It mandates the procurement of goods and services available on the government e-marketplace (GEM) as per Rule 149 of the General Finance Rules. All zones and divisions are advised to procure common goods and services from GEM to ensure transparency and efficiency.

Stock Register and Inventory Management

The guidelines emphasize the importance of maintaining separate stock registers for consumables and non-consumables. Upon receiving materials, immediate entries should be made in the stock register, and the invoice or voucher page number should be marked. Regular physical verification of consumables and non-consumables should be conducted as per the General Finance Rules. Timely condemnation and disposal of unserviceable articles should be carried out with proper approval.

Financial Registers and Records

The circular instructs the maintenance of various financial registers, including those for contingent charges, LTC, medical, rent, electricity, telephone, water, property, dead stock, children's education allowance, short- and long-term advances, valuable register, and pay bill register. These registers should be maintained in accordance with the rules and procedures prescribed in the FRSR, General Finance Rules, receipt and payment rules, and other relevant guidelines.

Tax Deductions and Staff Claims

The guidelines highlight the significance of deducting TDS on account of Income Tax and GST from vendors. The circular also emphasizes the timely processing of personal claims of staff and the settlement of advances within the stipulated time frame. Income

Tax and education cess should be deducted on a proportionate basis and deposited with the concerned authority within the specified time, ensuring timely filing of returns.

Expenditure Control and Financial Powers

The circular cautions against exceeding delegated financial powers and incurring expenditure beyond authorized limits. It directs all divisions, circles, and zones to ensure that their expenditures are within their delegated powers, as specified in the Compendium of Financial Powers delegated to PWD officers.

Timely Execution of Works

The guidelines emphasize the importance of avoiding delays in the execution of works. Authorities are advised to maintain close coordination with all concerned parties and take timely decisions to ensure efficient project completion. Contractual provisions should be followed diligently to prevent undue benefits to contractors. Market surveys should be conducted to ascertain prevailing market prices, and prescribed procedures should be strictly adhered to.

Payment of Final Bills

The circular addresses the issue of delayed payments of final bills due to pending approvals for extra or substitute items, deviation/extra items statements, and extension of time cases. To mitigate this, the payment of final bill schedules should be strictly followed. The engineer-in-charge is responsible for ensuring the availability of architectural and structural drawings before the commencement of work. The final bill should be paid within the time frame specified in the General Conditions of Contract (GCC) provisions, and the procedure outlined in para 5.18 of the CPWD Works Manual must be strictly followed.

The Delhi PWD's comprehensive guidelines aim to enhance financial discipline, transparency, and efficiency within the department. By addressing commonly detected irregularities and providing clear instructions on various financial procedures, the department seeks to ensure the proper utilization of public funds and the timely execution of projects. <https://www.oneindia.com/india/delhi-pwd-formulates-guidelines-prevent-audit-irregularities-gen-3761477.html?story=3>

22. Telangana agriculture officer arrested for Rs 2 crore fraud in government schemes (*indiatoday.in*) Feb 27, 2024

The police have arrested an agriculture officer and his accomplice for misappropriating funds meant for Telangana government welfare schemes.

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Cyberabad has arrested two individuals for diverting funds allocated for Telangana government's Rythu Bima and Rythu Bandu schemes. The accused, Goreti Srisailam and his aide Odela Veera Swamy, were caught after an investigation into the misappropriation of approximately Rs 2 crores.

Goreti Srisailam, who worked as an Agriculture Extension Officer (AEO) in the Agiryal cluster of Kondurg Mandal, RR District, misused his position to manipulate the system. He made fake claims under the Rythu Bima scheme, enrolling ineligible individuals and forging documents to embezzle Rs 1 crore.

Srisailam also falsely claimed benefits under the Rythu Bandu scheme for 130 non-claimants and pattadars, diverting an additional Rs 1 crore.

According to the police, the accused used fake names and Aadhaar numbers to register individuals for the schemes. Afterwards, he submitted fake death certificates and forged documents to claim insurance amounts, which were then deposited into multiple bank accounts controlled by him and his accomplice.

During the investigation, authorities found incriminating evidence, including mobile phones, bank cards, fake certificates, and insurance documents at the accused's residence. Further enquiries revealed that the unlawfully acquired funds were used to buy properties in various villages, all registered under the name of Srisailam's wife.

The police have arrested Srisailam and his accomplice for misappropriating the funds meant for government schemes. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/telangana-agriculture-officer-arrested-for-rs-2-crore-fraud-rythu-bima-rythu-bandu-scheme-2507923-2024-02-27>