

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS

1. CAG Murmu: Data integrity essential for fair audit of nation's climate plan (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) March 27, 2024

NEW DELHI: The Comptroller and Auditor General on Tuesday said there is lack of transparency in sharing climate related data by govts leading to difficulties in auditing and assessing data gaps and building a robust mechanism to fight climate issues.

He said political and governance issues also pose obstacles to effective measurement, reporting and verification.

“Some countries may even lack the political will to transparently report their emissions data due to concerns about economic competitiveness or national security,” Murmu said.

Speaking at a UN seminar on climate change issues in New York, CAG GC Murmu said data integrity is essential for a fair audit assessment of any national climate action plan, an absence of which may result in biases in climate data and misguided policy decisions.

“The supreme audit institutions face several obstacles while assessing national climate action, including data gaps, incomplete records and limited number of climate stations,” Murmu told the conference attended by supreme auditors of several countries.

Lack of standardized methodologies and reporting frameworks and different countries deploying different approaches to measure emissions make the task of comparing and aggregating data globally challenging. This requires sustained efforts at capacity building and hand holding amongst SAI members, he said.

The two-day event at the UN headquarters was organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Brazil. The seminar: ClimateScanner, is an initiative of Brazil to develop a comprehensive audit tool for assessing government efforts in alleviating climate change issues.

While urging other countries to collaborate on climate actions, Murmu highlighted India’s action plan where the country had its national action plan on climate change ready as early as 2008. The CAG said India has achieved success in eight national missions, including declining greenhouse gas emissions since 2005 and meeting 42% cumulative installed capacity from non-fossil fuel sources against a target of 50% by 2030.

Murmu said that anthropogenic activities have an undisputed role in climate change and underlined the need for a data bank on critical environmental parameters. “Climate change and principle-based taxonomy, especially, green taxonomy, helps economic activities to meet climate objectives and promote transition to a low-carbon economy,” he said. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/cag-murmu-data-integrity-essential-for-fair-audit-of-nations-climate-plan/articleshow/108826403.cms>

2. India highlights need for data integrity at UN meet on climate change (*thehansindia.com*) 27 March 2024

Data integrity is essential for a fair audit assessment of any national climate action plan, an absence of which may result in biases in climate data and misguided policy decisions, the Comptroller & Auditor General of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, said at a panel discussion at the UN headquarters in New York.

The two-day event on ClimateScanner Global Call: Engaging Supreme Audit Institutions in Assessing National Climate Action, Accounts – Brazil (TCU) on March 25 and 26, according to a statement issued by the CAG's office on Wednesday.

The ClimateScanner is an initiative led by the Supreme Audit Institution of Brazil to develop a comprehensive audit tool for assessing government efforts in alleviating climate change issues.

Murmu said that the Supreme Audit Institutions face several obstacles while assessing national climate action, including data gaps, incomplete records and a limited number of climate stations.

The lack of standardised methodologies and reporting frameworks and different countries deploying different approaches to measure emissions make the task of comparing and aggregating data globally challenging.

This requires sustained efforts at capacity building and hand-holding amongst SAI members, he added. At the session, Murmu shared India's climate action journey beginning with the setting up of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in 2008.

He said India has achieved success in eight national missions, including declining greenhouse gas emissions since 2005 and meeting 42 per cent cumulative installed capacity from nonfossil fuel sources against a target of 50 per cent by 2030.”

He urged SAI members to undertake collaborative action. “By developing recommendations from insights gleaned from audits of climate change initiatives, we can pave the way for SAIs to become pivotal players in the fight against climate change,” he said.

At a separate event, the CAG of India formally handed over the 2024 Chairmanship of SAI 20 Engagement Group to the President of the Federal Court of Accounts-Brazil, Minister Bruno Dantas. <https://www.thehansindia.com/news/national/india-highlights-need-for-data-integrity-at-un-meet-on-climate-change-868329>

3. Data integrity essential for fair audit assessment of national climate action: CAG Murmu (*aninews.in*) March 27, 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, said data integrity is essential for a fair audit assessment of any national climate action plan, an absence of which may result in biases in climate data and misguided policy decisions.

During a panel discussion on 'ClimateScanner Global Call: Engaging Supreme Audit Institutions in Assessing National Climate Action', in New York, Murmu said that the Supreme Audit Institutions face several obstacles while assessing national climate action, including data gaps, incomplete records and limited number of climate stations.

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"Climate change issues are always interdisciplinary, involving a fine understanding of scientific, economic and policy aspects, apart from a robust reporting and monitoring system at the union and provincial level," Murmu said.

"Another significant challenge is the capacity constraints faced by many developing SAIs. Adequate infrastructure, technical expertise, and financial resources are crucial for implementing robust evaluation systems,"

Murmu added. Murmu added political and governance issues also pose obstacles to effective measurement, reporting and verification of data.

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CAG Murmu stressed that anthropogenic activities have an undisputed role in climate change and underlined the need for an authoritative and comprehensive data bank on critical environmental parameters.

"Climate change and principle-based taxonomy, especially, green taxonomy, helps economic activities to meet climate objectives and promote transition to a low-carbon economy," he said.

He urged SAI members to undertake collaborative action.

"By developing recommendations from insights gleaned from audits of climate change initiatives, we can pave the way for SAI s to become pivotal players in the fight against climate change," he said. "In this, SAI s must also realise that efficiency is passe, today's imperative is eco efficiency."

At a separate event, the CAG of India formally handed over the 2024 Chairmanship of SAI 20 Engagement Group to the President of the Federal Court of Accounts-Brazil, Minister Bruno Dantas.

At the handover function. Murmu congratulated SAI Brazil for their focus on two relevant themes during its chairmanship - climate finance and fight against hunger and poverty. "Both themes are linked with sustainability, equity and scarcity. Both issues pose threats to mother earth.

Both themes raise ethical issues of opportunity costs of resources that often lead to detrimental decision making, I am confident that under your capable leadership, the SAI 20 will grow from strength to strength, promoting efficiency, accountability, and transparency in public administration."

Murmu also emphasized SAIIndia's recent initiatives to take forward auditing Artificial Intelligence systems and employing AI as an auditing tool. <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/data-integrity-essential-for-fair-audit-assessment-of-national-climate-action-cag-murmu20240327213607/>

4. India highlights need for data integrity at UN meet on climate change (*daijiworld.com*) Mar 27 2024

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<https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=1178989>

5. Data Integrity Essential for Fair Audit Assessment of National Climate Action: CAG Murmu (*latestly.com*) March 27, 2024

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<https://www.latestly.com/agency-news/india-news-data-integrity-essential-for-fair-audit-assessment-of-national-climate-action-cag-murmu-5850925.html>

6. India highlights need for data integrity at UN meet on climate change (*morungexpress.com*) March 27, 2024

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7. India Highlights Need For Data Integrity At UN Meet On Climate Change (*argusenglish.in*) March 27, 2024

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8. भारत ने जलवायु परिवर्तन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र की बैठक में डेटा इंटिग्रिटी की जरूरत पर रोशनी डाली (newsnationtv.com) March 27, 2024

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक, गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू ने न्यूयॉर्क स्थित संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय में एक पैनल चर्चा के दौरान कहा कि किसी भी राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्य योजना के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट मूल्यांकन के लिए डेटा इंटिग्रिटी जरूरी है। इसके अभाव के कारण जलवायु डेटा में पक्षपात और नीतिगत निर्णय गलत हो सकते हैं।

सीएजी कार्यालय द्वारा बुधवार को जारी एक बयान के अनुसार, 25 और 26 मार्च को क्लाइमेटस्कैनर ग्लोबल कॉल : एंगेजिंग सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशंस इन असेसिंग नेशनल क्लाइमेट एक्शन, अकाउंट्स - ब्राजील (टीसीयू) पर दो दिवसीय कार्यक्रम होगा।

क्लाइमेटस्कैनर जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दों को कम करने में सरकारी प्रयासों का आकलन करने के लिए एक व्यापक ऑडिट टूल विकसित करने के लिए ब्राजील के सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशन के नेतृत्व में एक पहल है।

मुर्मू ने कहा कि सुप्रीम ऑडिट संस्थानों को राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई का आकलन करते समय कई बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ता है, जिसमें डेटा अंतराल, अधूरे रिकॉर्ड और सीमित संख्या में जलवायु स्टेशन शामिल हैं।

मानकीकृत कार्यप्रणाली और रिपोर्टिंग ढांचे की कमी और उत्सर्जन को मापने के लिए विभिन्न देशों द्वारा अलग-अलग तरीकों को अपनाने से डेटा की तुलना और एकत्रीकरण का कार्य विश्व स्तर पर चुनौतीपूर्ण हो जाता है।

उन्होंने कहा कि इसके लिए एसएआई सदस्यों के बीच क्षमता निर्माण और सहयोग के लिए निरंतर प्रयासों की जरूरत है।

सत्र में मुर्मू ने 2008 में जलवायु परिवर्तन पर राष्ट्रीय कार्य योजना (एनएपीसीसी) की स्थापना के साथ शुरू हुई भारत की जलवायु कार्रवाई यात्रा को साझा किया।

उन्होंने कहा कि भारत ने आठ राष्ट्रीय मिशनों में सफलता हासिल की है, जिसमें 2005 के बाद से ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन में गिरावट और 2030 तक 50 फीसदी के लक्ष्य के मुकाबले गैर-जीवाश्म ईंधन स्रोतों से 42 फीसदी संचयी स्थापित क्षमता को पूरा करना शामिल है।

उन्होंने एसएआई सदस्यों से सहयोगात्मक कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया। उन्होंने कहा, जलवायु परिवर्तन पहल के ऑडिट से प्राप्त अंतर्दृष्टि से सिफारिशें विकसित करके हम एसएआई के लिए जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई में महत्वपूर्ण खिलाड़ी बनने का मार्ग प्रशस्त कर सकते हैं।

भारत के सीएजी ने एक अलग कार्यक्रम में औपचारिक रूप से एसएआई 20 एंगेजमेंट ग्रुप की 2024 की अध्यक्षता ब्राजील के संघीय लेखा न्यायालय के अध्यक्ष, मंत्री ब्रूनो दांतास को सौंपी।

डिस्कलेमर: यह आईएनएस न्यूज फीड से सीधे पब्लिश हुई खबर है। इसके साथ न्यूज नेशन टीम ने किसी तरह की कोई एडिटिंग नहीं की है। ऐसे में संबंधित खबर को लेकर कोई भी जिम्मेदारी न्यूज एजेंसी की ही होगी। <https://www.newsnationtv.com/india/hindi-india-highlight-need-for-data-integrity-at-un-meet-on-climate-change-20240327180105-20240327182424-454209.html>

9. राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट आकलन के लिए डेटा अखंडता जरूरी: सीएजी करना (*epapervirarjun.com*) 28 March 2024

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू ने एक पैनल चर्चा के दौरान कहा, किसी भी राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्य योजना के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट मूल्यांकन के लिए डेटा अखंडता आवश्यक है, जिसके अभाव के परिणामस्वरूप जलवायु डेटा में पक्षपात और गलत नीतिगत निर्णय हो सकते हैं।

दो दिवसीय कार्यक्रम का आयोजन 25 और 26 मार्च को संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय में संयुक्त राष्ट्र के आर्थिक और सामाजिक मामलों के विभाग (यूएन डीईएसए) और संघीय लेखा न्यायालय - ब्राजील (टीसीयू) द्वारा किया गया था। इस अवसर पर श्री मुर्मू ने कहा कि सर्वोच्च लेखा परीक्षा संस्थानों को राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई का आकलन करते समय कई बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ता है, जिसमें डेटा अंतराल, अधूरे रिकॉर्ड और सीमित संख्या में जलवायु स्टेशन शामिल हैं। मानकीकृत कार्यप्रणाली और रिपोर्टिंग ढाँचे की कमी और उत्सर्जन को मापने के लिए अलग-अलग देशों द्वारा अलग-अलग तरीकों को अपनाने से डेटा की तुलना और एकत्रीकरण का कार्य विश्व स्तर पर चुनौतीपूर्ण हो जाता है। उन्होंने कहा कि इसके लिए क्षमता निर्माण और एसएआई सदस्यों के बीच सहयोग के निरंतर प्रयासों की आवश्यकता है। उन्होंने कहा, जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दे हमेशा अंतःविषय होते हैं, जिसमें संघ और प्रांतीय स्तर पर एक मजबूत रिपोर्टिंग और निगरानी प्रणाली के अलावा वैज्ञानिक, आर्थिक और नीतिगत पहलुओं की अच्छी समझ शामिल होती है। एक और महत्वपूर्ण चुनौती कई विकासशील एसएआई द्वारा सामना की जाने वाली क्षमता की कमी है। मजबूत मूल्यांकन प्रणालियों को लागू करने के लिए पर्याप्त बुनियादी ढाँचा, तकनीकी विशेषज्ञता और वित्तीय संसाधन महत्वपूर्ण हैं। मुर्मू ने कहा, राजनीतिक और शासन संबंधी मुद्दे भी प्रभावी माप, रिपोर्टिंग और सत्यापन में बाधा उत्पन्न करते हैं। कुछ देशों में आर्थिक प्रतिस्पर्धा या राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा के बारे में चिंताओं के कारण अपने उत्सर्जन डेटा को पारदर्शक रूप से रिपोर्ट करने के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति की कमी हो सकती है। एक अलग कार्यक्रम में, भारत के सीएजी ने औपचारिक रूप से एसएआई 20 एंगेजमेंट ग्रुप की 2024 की अध्यक्षता ब्राजील के संघीय लेखा न्यायालय के अध्यक्ष, मंत्री ब्रूनो दांतास को सौंपी।

हैंडओवर समारोह में, श्री मुर्मू ने एसएआई ब्राजील को उसकी अध्यक्षता के दौरान दो प्रासंगिक विषयों - जलवायु वित्त और भूख और गरीबी के खिलाफ लड़ाई - पर ध्यान वेदित करने के लिए बधाई दी। <https://epapervirarjun.com/epapermain.aspx>

10. पर्यावरण: भारत ने जलवायु परिवर्तन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र की बैठक में डेटा इंटीग्रिटी की जरूरत पर रोशनी (bhaskarhindi.com) 27 Mar 2024

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक, गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू ने न्यूयॉर्क स्थित संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय में एक पैनल चर्चा के दौरान कहा कि किसी भी राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्य योजना के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट मूल्यांकन के लिए डेटा इंटीग्रिटी जरूरी है। इसके अभाव के कारण जलवायु डेटा में पक्षपात और नीतिगत निर्णय गलत हो सकते हैं।

सीएजी कार्यालय द्वारा बुधवार को जारी एक बयान के अनुसार, 25 और 26 मार्च को 'क्लाइमेटस्कैनर ग्लोबल कॉल : एंगेजिंग सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशंस इन असेसिंग नेशनल क्लाइमेट एक्शन, अकाउंट्स - ब्राजील (टीसीयू)' पर दो दिवसीय कार्यक्रम होगा।

क्लाइमेटस्कैनर जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दों को कम करने में सरकारी प्रयासों का आकलन करने के लिए एक व्यापक ऑडिट टूल विकसित करने के लिए ब्राजील के सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशन के नेतृत्व में एक पहल है।

मुर्मू ने कहा कि सुप्रीम ऑडिट संस्थानों को राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई का आकलन करते समय कई बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ता है, जिसमें डेटा अंतराल, अधूरे रिकॉर्ड और सीमित संख्या में जलवायु स्टेशन शामिल हैं।

मानकीकृत कार्यप्रणाली और रिपोर्टिंग ढाँचे की कमी और उत्सर्जन को मापने के लिए विभिन्न देशों द्वारा अलग-अलग तरीकों को अपनाने से डेटा की तुलना और एकत्रीकरण का कार्य विश्व स्तर पर चुनौतीपूर्ण हो जाता है।

उन्होंने कहा कि इसके लिए एसएआई सदस्यों के बीच क्षमता निर्माण और सहयोग के लिए निरंतर प्रयासों की जरूरत है।

सत्र में मुर्मू ने 2008 में जलवायु परिवर्तन पर राष्ट्रीय कार्य योजना (एनएपीसीसी) की स्थापना के साथ शुरू हुई भारत की जलवायु कार्रवाई यात्रा को साझा किया।

उन्होंने कहा कि भारत ने आठ राष्ट्रीय मिशनों में सफलता हासिल की है, जिसमें 2005 के बाद से ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन में गिरावट और 2030 तक 50 फीसदी के लक्ष्य के मुकाबले गैर-जीवाश्म ईंधन स्रोतों से 42 फीसदी संचयी स्थापित क्षमता को पूरा करना शामिल है।

उन्होंने एसएआई सदस्यों से सहयोगात्मक कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया। उन्होंने कहा, "जलवायु परिवर्तन पहल के ऑडिट से प्राप्त अंतर्दृष्टि से सिफारिशें विकसित करके हम एसएआई के लिए जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई में महत्वपूर्ण खिलाड़ी बनने का मार्ग प्रशस्त कर सकते हैं।"

भारत के सीएजी ने एक अलग कार्यक्रम में औपचारिक रूप से एसएआई 20 एंगेजमेंट ग्रुप की 2024 की अध्यक्षता ब्राजील के संघीय लेखा न्यायालय के अध्यक्ष, मंत्री ब्रूनो दांतास को सौंपी। <https://www.bhaskarhindi.com/other/india-highlights-need-for-data-integrity-at-un-meet-on-climate-change-1014793>

11. भारत ने जलवायु परिवर्तन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र की बैठक में डेटा अखंडता की आवश्यकता पर प्रकाश डाला (bhaskarlive.in) 27 March 2024

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक, गिरीश चंद्र ने कहा कि किसी भी राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्य योजना के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट मूल्यांकन के लिए डेटा अखंडता आवश्यक है, जिसके अभाव के परिणामस्वरूप जलवायु डेटा में पक्षपात और गलत नीतिगत निर्णय हो सकते हैं। मुर्मू ने न्यूयॉर्क में संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय में एक पैनल चर्चा में कहा।

सीएजी कार्यालय द्वारा बुधवार को जारी एक बयान के अनुसार, 25 और 26 मार्च को क्लाइमेटस्कैनर ग्लोबल कॉल: एंगेजिंग सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशंस इन असेसिंग नेशनल क्लाइमेट एक्शन, अकाउंट्स - ब्राजील (टीसीयू) पर दो दिवसीय कार्यक्रम होगा।

क्लाइमेटस्कैनर जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दों को कम करने में सरकारी प्रयासों का आकलन करने के लिए एक व्यापक ऑडिट टूल विकसित करने के लिए ब्राजील के सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशन के नेतृत्व में एक पहल है।

मुर्मू ने कहा कि सुप्रीम ऑडिट संस्थानों को राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई का आकलन करते समय कई बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ता है, जिसमें डेटा अंतराल, अधूरे रिकॉर्ड और सीमित संख्या में जलवायु स्टेशन शामिल हैं।

मानकीकृत कार्यप्रणाली और रिपोर्टिंग ढाँचे की कमी और उत्सर्जन को मापने के लिए विभिन्न देशों द्वारा अलग-अलग तरीकों को अपनाने से डेटा की तुलना और एकत्रीकरण का कार्य विश्व स्तर पर चुनौतीपूर्ण हो जाता है।

उन्होंने कहा कि इसके लिए एसएआई सदस्यों के बीच क्षमता निर्माण और सहयोग के लिए निरंतर प्रयासों की आवश्यकता है।

सत्र में, मुर्मू ने 2008 में जलवायु परिवर्तन पर राष्ट्रीय कार्य योजना (एनएपीसीसी) की स्थापना के साथ शुरू हुई भारत की जलवायु कार्रवाई यात्रा को साझा किया।

उन्होंने कहा कि भारत ने आठ राष्ट्रीय मिशनों में सफलता हासिल की है, जिसमें 2005 के बाद से ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन में गिरावट और 2030 तक 50 प्रतिशत के लक्ष्य के मुकाबले गैर-जीवाश्म ईंधन स्रोतों से 42 प्रतिशत संचयी स्थापित क्षमता को पूरा करना शामिल है।

उन्होंने एसएआई सदस्यों से सहयोगात्मक कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया। उन्होंने कहा, "जलवायु परिवर्तन पहल के ऑडिट से प्राप्त अंतर्दृष्टि से सिफारिशें विकसित करके, हम एसएआई के लिए जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई में महत्वपूर्ण खिलाड़ी बनने का मार्ग प्रशस्त कर सकते हैं।"

एक अलग कार्यक्रम में, भारत के सीएजी ने औपचारिक रूप से एसएआई 20 एंगेजमेंट ग्रुप की 2024 की अध्यक्षता ब्राजील के संघीय लेखा न्यायालय के अध्यक्ष, मंत्री ब्रूनो दांतास को सौंपी। <https://bhaskarlive.in/india-highlights-need-for-data-integrity-at-un-meet-on-climate-change/>

12. राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट मूल्यांकन के लिए डेटा अखंडता आवश्यक: सीएजी मुर्मू (*jantaserishta.com*) 27 Mar 2024

भारत के नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक, गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू ने कहा कि किसी भी राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्य योजना के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट मूल्यांकन के लिए डेटा अखंडता आवश्यक है, जिसके अभाव में जलवायु में पूर्वाग्रह हो सकता है। डेटा और गुमराह नीतिगत निर्णय। न्यूयॉर्क में 'क्लाइमेटस्कैनर ग्लोबल कॉल: नेशनल क्लाइमेट एक्शन का आकलन करने में सुप्रीम ऑडिट संस्थानों को शामिल करना' विषय पर एक पैनल चर्चा के दौरान, मुर्मू ने कहा कि सुप्रीम ऑडिट संस्थानों को राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई का आकलन करते समय कई बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ता है, जिसमें डेटा अंतराल, अधूरे रिकॉर्ड और सीमित संख्या शामिल हैं। जलवायु स्टेशनों की। उन्होंने कहा, "मानकीकृत पद्धतियों और रिपोर्टिंग ढांचे की कमी और उत्सर्जन को मापने के लिए अलग-अलग देशों द्वारा अलग-अलग दृष्टिकोण अपनाने से डेटा की तुलना और एकत्रीकरण का काम विश्व स्तर पर चुनौतीपूर्ण हो गया है। इसके लिए क्षमता निर्माण और एसएआई सदस्यों के बीच सहयोग के लिए निरंतर प्रयासों की आवश्यकता है।"

दो दिवसीय कार्यक्रम का आयोजन 25 और 26 मार्च को संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय में संयुक्त राष्ट्र के आर्थिक और सामाजिक मामलों के विभाग (यूएन डीईएसए) और संघीय लेखा न्यायालय - ब्राजील (टीसीयू) द्वारा किया गया था। क्लाइमेटस्कैनर के नेतृत्व में एक पहल है जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दों को कम करने में सरकारी प्रयासों का आकलन करने के लिए ब्राजील का सर्वोच्च लेखा परीक्षा संस्थान एक व्यापक लेखा परीक्षा उपकरण विकसित करेगा। मुर्मू ने कहा, "जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दे हमेशा अंतःविषय होते हैं, जिसमें संघ और प्रांतीय स्तर पर एक मजबूत रिपोर्टिंग और निगरानी प्रणाली के अलावा वैज्ञानिक, आर्थिक और नीतिगत पहलुओं की अच्छी समझ शामिल होती है।" मुर्मू ने कहा, "एक और महत्वपूर्ण चुनौती कई विकासशील एसएआई के सामने आने वाली क्षमता की कमी है। मजबूत मूल्यांकन प्रणालियों को लागू करने के लिए पर्याप्त बुनियादी ढांचा, तकनीकी विशेषज्ञता और वित्तीय संसाधन महत्वपूर्ण हैं।" मुर्मू ने कहा कि राजनीतिक और शासन संबंधी मुद्दे भी डेटा के प्रभावी माप, रिपोर्टिंग और सत्यापन में बाधा उत्पन्न करते हैं। "कुछ देशों में आर्थिक प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता या राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा के बारे में चिंताओं के कारण अपने उत्सर्जन डेटा को पारदर्शी रूप से रिपोर्ट करने के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति की कमी हो सकती है।"

सत्र में, मुर्मू ने 2008 में जलवायु परिवर्तन पर राष्ट्रीय कार्य योजना (एनएपीसीसी) की स्थापना के साथ शुरू हुई भारत की जलवायु कार्रवाई यात्रा को साझा किया। उन्होंने कहा कि भारत ने 2005 से ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन में गिरावट और 42 को पूरा करने सहित आठ राष्ट्रीय मिशनों में सफलता हासिल की है। 2030 तक 50 प्रतिशत के लक्ष्य के मुकाबले गैर-जीवाश्म ईंधन स्रोतों से प्रतिशत संचयी स्थापित क्षमता। सीएजी मुर्मू ने जोर देकर कहा कि जलवायु परिवर्तन में मानवजनित गतिविधियों की निर्विवाद भूमिका है और महत्वपूर्ण पर्यावरणीय मापदंडों पर एक आधिकारिक और व्यापक डेटा बैंक की आवश्यकता को रेखांकित किया।

उन्होंने कहा, "जलवायु परिवर्तन और सिद्धांत-आधारित वर्गीकरण, विशेष रूप से हरित वर्गीकरण, आर्थिक गतिविधियों को जलवायु उद्देश्यों को पूरा करने और कम कार्बन अर्थव्यवस्था में संक्रमण को बढ़ावा देने में मदद करता है।" उन्होंने एसएआई सदस्यों से सहयोगात्मक कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया। उन्होंने कहा, "जलवायु परिवर्तन पहल के ऑडिट से प्राप्त अंतर्दृष्टि से सिफारिशें विकसित करके, हम एसएआई के लिए जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई में महत्वपूर्ण खिलाड़ी बनने का मार्ग प्रशस्त कर सकते हैं।" "इसमें, SAI को यह भी महसूस करना चाहिए कि दक्षता पुरानी बात है, आज की अनिवार्यता पर्यावरण दक्षता है।"

एक अलग कार्यक्रम में, भारत के सीएजी ने औपचारिक रूप से एसएआई 20 एंगेजमेंट ग्रुप की 2024 की अध्यक्षता ब्राजील के संघीय लेखा न्यायालय के अध्यक्ष, मंत्री ब्रूनो दांतास को सौंपी। हैंडओवर समारोह में, मुर्मू ने एसएआई ब्राजील को उसकी अध्यक्षता के दौरान दो प्रासंगिक विषयों - जलवायु वित्त और भूख और गरीबी के खिलाफ लड़ाई - पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने के लिए बधाई दी। "दोनों विषय स्थिरता, समानता और कमी से जुड़े हुए हैं। दोनों मुद्दे धरती माता के लिए खतरा पैदा करते हैं। दोनों विषय संसाधनों की अवसर लागत के नैतिक मुद्दों को उठाते हैं जो अक्सर हानिकारक निर्णय लेने की ओर ले जाते हैं, मुझे विश्वास है कि आपके सक्षम नेतृत्व में, SAI 20 सार्वजनिक प्रशासन में दक्षता, जवाबदेही और पारदर्शिता को बढ़ावा देते हुए ताकत से ताकत बढ़ेगी।" मुर्मू ने आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस सिस्टम की ऑडिटिंग को आगे बढ़ाने और एआई को ऑडिटिंग टूल के रूप में नियोजित करने की एसएआई इंडिया की हालिया पहल पर भी जोर दिया। <https://jantaserishta.com/delhi-ncr/data-integrity-essential-for-unbiased-audit-assessment-of-national-climate-action-cag-murmu-3187729>

13. भारत ने जलवायु परिवर्तन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र की बैठक में डेटा अखंडता की आवश्यकता पर प्रकाश डाला (yespunjab.com) 27 March 2024

किसी भी राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्य योजना के निष्पक्ष ऑडिट मूल्यांकन के लिए डेटा अखंडता आवश्यक है, जिसके अभाव के परिणामस्वरूप जलवायु डेटा में पक्षपात और गलत नीतिगत निर्णय हो सकते हैं, भारत के नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक, गिरीश चंद्र मुर्मू, न्यूयॉर्क में संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय में एक पैनल चर्चा में कहा गया।

सीएजी कार्यालय द्वारा बुधवार को जारी एक बयान के अनुसार, 25 और 26 मार्च को क्लाइमेटस्कैनर ग्लोबल कॉल: एंगेजिंग सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशंस इन असेसिंग नेशनल क्लाइमेट एक्शन, अकाउंट्स - ब्राजील (टीसीयू) पर दो दिवसीय कार्यक्रम होगा।

क्लाइमेटस्कैनर जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दों को कम करने में सरकारी प्रयासों का आकलन करने के लिए एक व्यापक ऑडिट टूल विकसित करने के लिए ब्राजील के सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशन के नेतृत्व में एक पहल है।

मुर्मू ने कहा कि सुप्रीम ऑडिट संस्थानों को राष्ट्रीय जलवायु कार्रवाई का आकलन करते समय कई बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ता है, जिसमें डेटा अंतराल, अधूरे रिकॉर्ड और सीमित संख्या में जलवायु स्टेशन शामिल हैं।

मानकीकृत कार्यप्रणाली और रिपोर्टिंग ढाँचे की कमी और उत्सर्जन को मापने के लिए विभिन्न देशों द्वारा अलग-अलग तरीकों को अपनाने से डेटा की तुलना और एकत्रीकरण का कार्य विश्व स्तर पर चुनौतीपूर्ण हो जाता है।

उन्होंने कहा कि इसके लिए एसएआई सदस्यों के बीच क्षमता निर्माण और सहयोग के लिए निरंतर प्रयासों की आवश्यकता है।

सत्र में, मुर्मू ने 2008 में जलवायु परिवर्तन पर राष्ट्रीय कार्य योजना (एनएपीसीसी) की स्थापना के साथ शुरू हुई भारत की जलवायु कार्रवाई यात्रा को साझा किया।

उन्होंने कहा कि भारत ने आठ राष्ट्रीय मिशनों में सफलता हासिल की है, जिसमें 2005 के बाद से ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन में गिरावट और 2030 तक 50 प्रतिशत के लक्ष्य के मुकाबले गैर-जीवाश्म ईंधन स्रोतों से 42 प्रतिशत संचयी स्थापित क्षमता को पूरा करना शामिल है।

उन्होंने एसएआई सदस्यों से सहयोगात्मक कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया। उन्होंने कहा, "जलवायु परिवर्तन पहल के ऑडिट से प्राप्त अंतर्दृष्टि से सिफारिशें विकसित करके, हम एसएआई के लिए जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई में महत्वपूर्ण खिलाड़ी बनने का मार्ग प्रशस्त कर सकते हैं।"

एक अलग कार्यक्रम में, भारत के सीएजी ने औपचारिक रूप से एसएआई 20 एंगेजमेंट ग्रुप की 2024 की अध्यक्षता ब्राजील के संघीय लेखा न्यायालय के अध्यक्ष, मंत्री ब्रूनो दांतास को सौंप दी।

<https://yespunjab.com/india-highlights-need-for-data-integrity-at-un-meet-on-climate-change/>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

14. Telangana's fiscal challenge (*thehindu.com*) March 28, 2024

The government is facing an arduous task in fulfilling its six guarantees

The Telangana government is facing an arduous task in fulfilling the six guarantees that the Congress promised before being voted to power, thanks to the slow pace of growth in revenue receipts.

The government has been struggling to raise resources for meeting its immediate commitments including payment of salaries, pensions, and interests. The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the fact that close to half the revenue receipts are being spent on these three heads alone, according to the provisional figures released by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

Telangana continues to register slow pace of growth in revenue receipts at the end of January

While tax revenue for the current fiscal is projected at ₹1.52 lakh crore in the budget estimates, expenditure on account of salaries/wages (₹38,627 crore), pensions (₹13,024 crore), and interest payments (₹22,407 crore) account for ₹74,058 crore. This is in

addition to subsidies, which amount to ₹12,958 crore. The CAG figures show that the State's overall revenue receipts at the end of February stood at ₹1.51 lakh crore, 70.16% of ₹2.16 lakh crore of the budget estimates, with just a month left for the conclusion of the financial year.

In this backdrop, the implementation of the six guarantees is likely to be a Herculean task for the new government. The guarantees announced in the run-up to the Assembly elections include free bus travel for women across the State, enhancement of health coverage under YSR Aarogya Sri from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh, supply of LPG cylinder at ₹500, free power up to 200 units to eligible households under the Gruha Jyoti scheme, houses to the poor under the Indiramma scheme, and a sustenance allowance for women.

The State started implementing free bus travel for which it needs to reimburse more than ₹300 crore a month to the State Road Transport Corporation. It has started enhancing the health coverage limit as well. The government made a provision of ₹53,196 crore in the ₹2.75 lakh crore vote-on-account budget for 2024-25, for the implementation of the six guarantees. The budget saw no hikes in taxes and duties in any form. The government made a provision of ₹2,418 crore for Gruha Jyoti for the next fiscal. This takes the total allocation to Transco and distribution companies to ₹16,825 crore as the government affirmed its commitment to implement 24X7 free power supply to farmers. The government allocated ₹7,740 crore for the Indiramma housing scheme. It decided to sanction 3,500 houses to each of the 119 Assembly constituencies in the State. The actual burden on the exchequer on account of implementation of the six guarantees is yet to be ascertained.

Though the government is keen to implement its guarantees, the mismatch in the budget estimates and the actual estimates over consecutive years raises doubts over the availability of the resources towards this end. The overall revenue receipts till February end remained ₹1.51 lakh crore against the ₹2.16 lakh crore projected in 2023-24. Of this, ₹41,448 crore was in the form of borrowings and other liabilities.

Another area where excess projection is leading to shortfall in the actuals is grants in aid and contributions from the Central government. While the government estimated ₹41,259 crore revenue under the head for the fiscal, the actual realisation till the end of February remained at just ₹6,955 crore.

Govt. dispensed with wasteful expenditure to maintain fiscal discipline, says Telangana Finance Minister

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka admitted that the gap between the estimates and actuals for the current fiscal could be as high as ₹70,000 crore. Substantiating his claim is the huge difference between the budget estimates and actuals at the end of February.

Coupled with these are the restrictions imposed by the Union Finance Ministry on the State's market borrowings citing financial management. But these have been relaxed to some extent after Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Mr. Bhatti Vikramarka met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in January.

The State needs to explore new avenues to augment its resources and not just depend on revenue through excise and sale land parcels. In addition, it should also focus on areas where there are said to be leakages. These cause dents to the government revenue and need to be fixed so that Telangana can deal with challenges on the financial front. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/telanganas-fiscal-challenge/article67998869.ece>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

15. Time and cost overrun in infra projects can impact GDP growth, efficacy of capital deployed, says report (*businesstoday.in*) Updated Mar 28, 2024

Even as the government focuses on capital expenditure and infrastructure creation to maintain the economic momentum, a new report by India Ratings and Research has highlighted that time and cost overrun in central sector projects can have a serious implication for not only GDP growth but also the efficacy and efficiency of the investment and capital deployed.

According to government data, as many as 780 out of the 1,821 central sector projects were delayed as on January 2024, leading to a cost overrun of Rs 4.8 lakh crore or 1.6% of GDP.

In percentage terms, 42.83% of central projects were delayed from their original schedule as of January 2024, which was marginally lower than 49.84% of projects delayed in April 2023.

Sunil Kumar Sinha, Senior Director and Principal Economist noted that cost overruns in investment-heavy sectors were pronounced in railways, followed by power and petroleum. “Together, they accounted for 42.9% of the total investment and 20% of the total cost overruns in January 2024,” he said. In comparison, government projects in road, coal and urban development are more efficient as together they accounted for 46.9% of the total investments, but had only 5.7% cost overruns.

Although there are specific reasons for delays in case of each project, there are also sector specific reasons, the report found. For instance, in the case of railways, some of the reasons for delays were delay in land acquisition, agitation by land losers, approval of revised design and estimate, geo-mining conditions, law and order situation. Meanwhile, in road projects, delays were due to delay in utility shifting, forest permission and wildlife clearance, approval of revised estimate, receiving construction material and steel, design flaw, right of use release.

The report also highlighted that the evolving nature of central projects not only shows the government’s continued commitment to infrastructure development but also the centre’s agility to respond to evolving sector-specific circumstances.

“As the build operate-transfer road model under public-private partnership was facing numerous challenges in 2014 and private investments had dried up, the government adopted the engineering, procurement and construction route to build and expand the

road network,” it said, noting that subsequently, not only the number but also the investments in road projects rose manifold.

While the number of road projects jumped to 1027 in January 2024 from 130 in April 2014, the investment rose to Rs 7.52 lakh crore from Rs 1.01 lakh crore.

Railways and petroleum, however, remained a government play in the absence of private investments. However, the number and investment in central power projects are broadly at the same level in April 2014 and January 2024 due to significant private sector investments in renewable energy.
<https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/economy/story/time-and-cost-overrun-in-infra-projects-can-impact-gdp-growth-efficacy-of-capital-deployed-says-report-423242-2024-03-28>

16. We must not let poverty of thought stop India from tracking deprivation (*livemint.com*) Surjit S. Bhalla | 27 Mar 2024

So long as we can define a cut-off for poverty, we can measure it, and its validity does not require data trackers to be kept frozen.

There is a rumour going around. That senior economists in India feel that the method of measuring consumption affects the construction of the poverty line. This is the Great Indian Poverty Debate III—that a comparison of the levels of living (and hence derivation of the headcount ratio of poverty, or simply poverty) between India’s two official Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys (HCESs) in 2011-12 and 2022-23 cannot be done. And so one cannot conclude that extreme poverty (based on the purchasing power parity or PPP-linked \$1.9 poverty line) in India has been eliminated, as Bhalla-Bhasin have done (bit.ly/3Vz9Hc2). In the Telegraph, online on 2 March 2024, (bit.ly/3ISoHuj), former acting member and chairman of the National Statistical Commission P.C. Mohanan and retired Indian Economic Service officer K.L. Datta, author of Growth and Development Planning in India, said “Tendulkar’s parameters cannot be applied to the findings of the HCES 2022-23 to arrive at a poverty figure.” Why? “Because the Mixed Reference Period (MRP) methodology of the old HCES, whose findings provided the base for Tendulkar’s poverty cut-offs, was different from the Modified Mixed Reference Period (MMRP) methodology employed during HCES 2022-23”.

Its translation: We cannot arrive at any poverty estimate for 2022-23 comparable to the poverty estimate for 2011-12 because the consumption estimates of the two surveys are not comparable. How valid an objection is that? Never in world-poverty history has anybody asserted that a poverty line (poverty cut-off) is a function of how one measures per capita consumption. A reading of poverty literature in India and abroad for the last 80-plus years would suggest that the Mohanan-Datta view borders on defying logic.

The universally accepted accounting procedure for measuring poverty is to define (even imagine) a cut-off level of per capita expenditure (or income). Those above the cut-off are not-poor; those below are poor. The first poverty line was constructed by a working group of nine experts in the Planning Commission in July 1962. These experts noted that “on the basis of available data on distribution of population according to per capita

expenditure, nearly half the Indian population in 1960-61 was below this national minimum level of ₹20 per capita per month," and the commission called them poor.

In their classic study, Dandekar-Rath defined the poor in terms of an average consumption of 2,250 calories per capita per day, equivalent to ₹15 for rural areas and ₹22.50 for urban areas, both in 1960-61 prices. This became the poverty line for academic studies in India and around the world. At around the same time, in the early 1960s, US president Lyndon Johnson launched a war on poverty in the US. The identification of the poor, for policy purposes, was constructed to be equal to the money equivalent of families of three or more whose food expenditure was more than one-third of their total spending. Using this method, poverty in the US was estimated as 20% in the early 1960s, and then dropped rapidly to 12% by 1968. It has hovered in the low-teens since then.

In the early 1970s, the World Bank entered the poverty arena in a big way. In a paper published in 1979 titled 'Growth and poverty in developing countries,' authors Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Nick Carter and Hollis Chenery laid much of the groundwork for the poverty research that followed. Issues pertaining to definition, measurement and forecasts were discussed in detail. The authors explicitly rejected a calorie consumption approach and opted for a monetary poverty line; and lack of consumption-survey data for several developing countries made them reluctantly opt for an income rather than a consumption-derived poverty line. The poverty line chosen under the International Comparison Program (or ICP, later to be named PPP) was \$200 per capita per year in 1970 prices. The authors tagged this poverty line to be the income of the 45th percentile of the Indian income distribution for 1975.

The circle was complete. Paraphrasing T.S. Eliot, the profession came back to where it started and knew how to measure poverty for the first time. Again, not an iota of discussion took place on whether the different methods or surveys were comparable. The profession, statisticians, economists and policymakers have not really cared about how the poverty cut-off line is derived, so long as it is known and defined in a recognizable manner. Calculation of the level of poverty, once a poverty line has been agreed upon and consumer expenditure (or income) survey data is available, is no more than a simple accounting exercise. Indeed, until the World Bank prevailed on India's Planning Commission, the practice in the country was to arrive at a best estimate of survey consumption and then blow up all per-capita consumption by the ratio of mean consumption in national accounts and mean consumption in the survey.

Consider this. The World Bank estimates poverty for over 100 countries across 60 years for the same and different poverty lines. None of these calculations involves the method of measurement or number of questions asked, or the methods of collecting data (one visit or 'n' number of visits to a household).

In each country, the method of collection of data on per capita consumption has varied from one survey to another. More items are included and some are dropped. Think of consumer durables like typewriters, gramophones, tape decks, etc. The list is endless.

Note that this is a mix of several methods of measurement, all geared to arrive at a best estimate of consumption. Like the Invisible Hand, the Mohanan-Datta model of estimation is nowhere to be seen. How does one interpret their supposed findings and

those who agree with their conclusion that the HCES surveys of 2011-12 and 2022-23 are not comparable? It is political, let's face it.

<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/we-must-not-let-poverty-of-thought-stop-india-from-tracking-deprivation-11711542595629.html>

17. Central government seeks to mobilise Rs 7.5 lakh crore (trillion) through market borrowing (*telegraphindia.com*) March 28, 2024

Plans to hold 26-weekly auctions over first half comprising dated securities spread over 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 30, 40 and 50 years, with Rs 12,000 crore to be raised through sovereign green bonds

The central government seeks to mobilise Rs 7.5 lakh crore (trillion) through market borrowing in the first half of the next fiscal year. The government plans to borrow Rs 14.13 lakh crore in 2024-25 against Rs 15.43 lakh crore a year ago.

A finance ministry statement said the government will issue 15-year paper for the first time.

It plans to hold 26-weekly auctions over the first half comprising dated securities spread over 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 30, 40 and 50 years, with Rs 12,000 crore to be raised through sovereign green bonds.

The Centre introduced the 50-year security in the second half of the current fiscal, which received a good response from insurers. It had sold Rs 30,000 crore of these bonds.

The borrowing calendar announced by the RBI showed that Rs 1.52 lakh crore will be raised between April and early May.

A year ago it raised Rs 8.88 lakh crore in the first half.

“The sharp 15.5 per cent fall in the Government of India’s gross supply in the first half of the fiscal, along with the bond index inclusion starting end-June 2024, is expected to augur well for G-sec yields. Icra expects the 10-year yield to trade between 6.8 per cent and 7 per cent in the first half of the fiscal,” Aditi Nayar, chief economist, Icra, said.

The Centre will issue 4.80 per cent dated securities of three-year tenure, 9.60 per cent of five years, 8.80 per cent of seven years, 25.60 per cent of 10 years, 13.87 per cent of 15 years, 8.93 per cent of 30 years, 19.47 per cent of 40 years and 8.93 per cent of 50-year tenure.

Further, the weekly borrowing through the issue of treasury bills (a short-term instrument) in the first quarter 2024-25 is expected to be Rs 27,000 crore for the first seven auctions and Rs 22,000 crore for the subsequent six auctions.

The government will continue to reserve the right to exercise the greenshoe option to retain an additional subscription of up to Rs 2,000 crore against each of the securities indicated in the auction notifications.

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/central-government-seeks-to-mobilise-rs-7-5-lakh-crore-trillion-through-market-borrowing/cid/2009545>

18. Low wheat stocks manageable; paddy surplus a concern (*thehindubusinessline.com*) Updated: March 27, 2024

A good north Indian winter has raised the prospects of wheat crop

There is no cause for panic over the fact that wheat stocks with the Food Corporation of India, at 9.7 million tonnes (MT) earlier this month, are at a seven-year low (9.4 MT in March 2017). They are set to improve sharply after the next few months. This is because north India has had a good winter, which has lifted the prospects of the wheat crop. An output of at least 112 MT, a record, is expected, with the Food Corporation of India likely to procure well above 30 MT.

A procurement level of over 30 MT provides the government with the comfort to conduct market intervention operations if required, besides meeting its commitments under National Food Security Act. It was precisely this comfort level that was missing for perhaps more than a year. A wheat stock level of 11.7 MT in March 2023, well below the average of 25 MT over the preceding four years during the month of March, could have led to market actors driving up prices this fiscal. The low stock situation came about because only 18.8 MT was procured in 2022-23, against an average of 36 MT procured in the five preceding marketing years. It is also known that the Centre needs 25 MT of wheat for its NFSA obligations. As prices rose through 2023, the Centre pushed 10 MT into the market, which brought down its stocks to the current levels. Seven years back, it was a similar story, as procurement dipped. Since then FCI has been trying to procure well over 30 MT since (excluding 18.8 MT in 2022-23).

The FCI is expected to procure 21 MT from Punjab and Haryana this time. While procurement in Madhya Pradesh is underway, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar pose challenges owing to poor mandi infrastructure and delayed payments. It is believed that the FCI is on a drive to address these issues. Meanwhile, the Centre has raised the minimum support price for wheat by 7 per cent to ₹2,275 per quintal, not least because of firm global prices. Wheat prices have been disconcertingly firm since the onset of the Ukraine war in February 2022. Unless the buffer situation reaches the trend level and global prices cool off, any lifting of a ban on wheat exports can be ruled out. Cereals inflation at 7.6 per cent is way above the comfort level, even if it is less than the 13 per cent that prevailed in this period last year. Things could cool off, at least on the wheat front.

This brings up the issue of diversification of procurement in terms of crops and geographies. While wheat procurement is expected to stabilise at 30-35 MT over time, rice procurement is on the rise. The latter, at 58-60 MT, has nearly doubled over 2013-14 levels, whereas wheat procurement has risen from 25 MT in 2013-14 to an average of 36 MT in recent years, ignoring the aberration of the last marketing season. The task of making rainfed paddy farmers diversify into millets assumes significance across States. The hyphenation of wheat and rice is perhaps overdone.
<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/editorial/low-wheat-stocks-manageable-paddy-surplus-a-concern/article67998511.ece>

19. A shrunken world of schools will impact India's future leadership (*livemint.com*) 28 Mar 2024

While the number of elite schools and their resources have expanded, too many of these schools have shrunk.

While the number of schools and their resources have expanded, the physical and social world around them has shrunk. The exposure afforded even by elite schooling in India must widen to inspire optimism on outcomes.

From the windows of our classroom, we could see trains passing. The railway line was more than a kilometre away, but down on a slope, with nothing to obstruct our view. Spotting the Tamil Nadu Express (it was the fastest on the route) was the high point, and its distinctive red colour a giveaway. We could also make out the Grand Trunk Express. Even in 1978, that was one of the busiest train routes, connecting the north with the south. There were too many passenger and goods trains to be identified, but we would try to count the number of wagons and coaches.

Our imaginations would fly with the trains. To Madras, as it was known then, to Delhi, Agra, Hyderabad and Bombay. And places like Wardha, Itarsi, Warangal, and many more. In 1978, those places were accessible to most of us only in our imaginations. The window of our classroom inadvertently became a kaleidoscope of the world.

There was no other building within a kilometre's radius. Most of that open expanse was huge igneous rock with nooks and crannies, as also small and big crater-like formations that became tiny ponds after the monsoon rains. We called them *chhattaan* (boulders), and *chhattaan kudna* (jumping across those boulders) was a game of utmost courage and athletic prowess.

There were clear champions. In my memory, Rahul, Juby, Ish Kumar, Deepak and a few others left us in awe, as they fearlessly leapt across what seemed like impossible gulfs between two boulders, risking falling 6-10 feet on to the hard rock below. I can recollect closing my eyes in fear as one of them would sprint to jump. Rarely did they fall and rarer was a serious injury. After the monsoons, catching fish or tadpoles was the favourite pastime. As we grew older, we used the excuse of collecting these creatures for our biology lab.

Even in the blazing sun of April, we would often walk back home; over those smouldering boulders up the Arera hill and then down. Other kids would go their own way. Some to sprawling bungalows, and some to congested quarters. Differences that we were unconscious of in school.

You can't see passing trains from those windows anymore. The boulders have vanished and buildings are all you see. There are no tadpoles after the monsoon. Since I drive around there once every few months, I know it won't be easy to walk back home from there.

So, what if a child's imagination cannot get pulled along with a Tamil Nadu Express from the window? Is that good or bad? Is that even a relevant question?

When I was in that school, it was just called Kendriya Vidyalaya Bhopal. Today, it is called Kendriya Vidyalaya Number 1, Bhopal, because now there are five Kendriya Vidyalayas in the city. It's good that there are so many more of them. Today, much like back then, these schools are sort of the 'elite' public schools, as they are well resourced. All our public schools should be like them, but till we get there, the more of these schools we have, the better it is.

We moved to Delhi in 1977. I joined Kendriya Vidyalaya, R.K. Puram Sector Eight, which stands today much the way it was. In its vicinity, a few private schools have sprung up. Each of these seems to serve a certain category of the population. So, kids come from different kinds of homes and go to different schools designed for those homes.

The Kendriya Vidyalayas I studied in were definitely some of the better resourced schools, even in big cities. Even today, these schools are better resourced than most in the country, and there are many more private schools even better resourced than them.

But while the number of such elite schools and their resources have expanded, too many of these schools have shrunk. The physical world of the schools, which integrated them with nature and the city, has shrunk. Windows don't open to the diverse world anymore, students can't collect tadpoles, nor do they walk home. The social world of these schools has shrunk even more, with more students coming from more similar backgrounds. Even the Kendriya Vidyalayas have shrunk in both ways. The kids of officers of elite government services rarely go to Kendriya Vidyalayas, they go to even-more-elite private schools.

What effects do such a shrinking have on us as a people? Definitive answers would be foolhardy. But we can conjecture the slow burn shaping the populace going to such schools, leading to a shrinking of fraternity and capacity for empathy, and thus to the exclusion of different people and even nature. Not 'intellectually,' but in their innermost beings, bereft of the experience of real people in the real world. So, perhaps even the shrinking of a sense of our shared destiny as humanity.

Most of the 260 million children of our country do not go to these elite schools. The schools that they go to need urgent improvement and transformation on most fronts. Rightly so, our policies and actions are focused on that.

However, this kind of shrinking of our elite schools is bound to affect our country. Given the way that societal dynamics operate, a disproportionate number of our leaders in all walks of life will continue to come from these schools. Whither our country if the minds and hearts of our leaders have shrunk?
<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/a-shrunken-world-of-schools-will-impact-india-s-future-leadership-11711552690859.html>

20. How to tackle the water crisis (*thehindubusinessline.com*) Updated - March 27, 2024

Adopt micro-irrigation extensively, curtail area under water-guzzling crops, revive small water bodies

India has been facing water crises for many years now. The unprecedented water crisis in Bengaluru now is a case in point. The NITI Aayog's report, 'Composite Water Management Index (2018)', has underlined that currently 600 million people face high to extreme water stress, about two lakh die every year due to inadequate access to safe water, about three-fourths of the households do not get drinking water at their premises and about 70 per cent of water is contaminated.

A joint report by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF on 'Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water' estimates that about 97 million Indians lack access to safe drinking water. Water riots continue to take place in many rural pockets of India regularly. Due to the increased water crisis, an estimated 150 million women's days and ₹10 billion are lost annually in fetching water alone.

The Central Water Commission (CWC) estimates that the average annual utilisable water (surface and groundwater) of the country is only about 1,123 billion cubic meters (bcm), whereas the water demand is expected to reach 1,447 bcm/year by 2025, suggesting a huge supply-demand gap. Not only has the total availability of water resources in the country been declining but also the per capita availability. For instance, the per capita availability of water was 1,816 cubic metres in 2001, but declined to 1,544 cubic metres in 2011. It is projected to fall further to 1,140 cubic metres by 2050. Since areas with water availability of less than 1,700 m³ per capita/annum are treated water stressed globally, most regions/population in India will experience severe water stress by 2050, CWC has projected (see Table). How to overcome this situation?

The way out

CWC data show the agriculture sector alone consumes close to 85 per cent of water, most of which is groundwater. But the groundwater is fast depleting. Of the 6,965 blocks assessed by the Central Groundwater Board in 2020, about 35 per cent of the blocks (2,441) have been classified as semi-critical, critical or over-exploited with the situation deteriorating rapidly. With the total water potential of the country reducing fast, strict measures need to be introduced to save water and reduce overall water stress.

One of the important and readily available options is micro-irrigation (drip and sprinkler), which has proved to be effective in conserving water and power. Quite a few field-level studies carried out in different regions including Tamil Nadu showed that drip and sprinkler irrigation saves about 50 per cent of water and electricity per acre, while increasing the productivity of crops substantially. The MS Swaminathan Committee Report, 'More Crop and Income Per Drop of Water (2006)', has also underlined the importance of micro-irrigation. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have been seriously promoting drip irrigation among different crops including sugarcane. Large-scale adoption of this method can reduce the reckless exploitation of groundwater. Drip irrigation should be made mandatory for cultivating sugarcane.

The area under water-guzzling crops such as paddy, wheat, sugarcane, banana, vegetables, etc., has been increasing, which is not desirable. Appropriate minimum support price (MSP) policies are needed to control the area under such crops. Canals irrigate about 19 million hectares in India, but its water use efficiency is only 35-40 per cent. Area-based supply of water in canal irrigated areas is one of the main reasons for such poor efficiency. Therefore, as recommended by the Vaidyanathan Committee

Report on 'Pricing of Irrigation Water (1992)', volumetric pricing of irrigation water may be implemented in full scale in canal areas to increase the efficient use of water.

States like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana cannot tackle water scarcity without rejuvenating tanks; all these States have a large number of tanks. The 'Minor Irrigation Census' shows that there are a total of 6.42 lakh tanks, lakes and ponds in India. However, most of the small water bodies are encroached upon by government and private bodies. The 'First Census of Water Bodies', published by the Ministry of Water Resources in 2023, has found that 38,486 water bodies have been encroached upon in India. Tough measures are needed to remove the encroachments.

Due to poor maintenance, sediment formation has increased in most reservoirs which reduces the water storage capacity. The government should take immediate steps to repair, restore and renovate all the water bodies in a phased manner. Climate change is resulting in unprecedented variations in the quantum of rainfall and the number of rainy days, which may dampen water availability in the future. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/how-to-tackle-the-water-crisis/article67999131.ece>