

PRESS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI
16th NOVEMBER, 2022**

CAG STARTS WEEK LONG AUDIT DAY CELEBRATIONS

FOLLOWING ARE THE TEXT OF SPEECHES OF THE CAG OF INDIA

SHRI G C MURMU AND DEPUTY CAG MS. PARVEEN MEHTA

TEXT OF CAG SPEECH

1. Honourable Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankar ji, distinguished guests, officers and staff of the Indian Audit and Accounts Organisation.
2. On the occasion of Audit Diwas, it is an immense honour and privilege to have with us the Honourable Vice President of India.
3. Sir, for all of us here, your presence at this event is not only inspiring, but also an acknowledgment of the key role the institution of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India plays in our nation. Our profound gratitude to you, Sir, for joining us today.

4. Audit Diwas commemorates the day the first auditor general took charge of this office in 1860. Over time, the role of the CAG has evolved to assume wider responsibilities to strengthening democracy and governance of our country. This day is a reminder to every member of this institution to follow our motto of लोकहितार्थ सत्यनिष्ठा - the path of truth for the larger public good. This is a day to reaffirm our commitment to good practices, personal integrity, and high professional standards. It also affords a chance to each of us - officers and staff of the institution - to engage with our stakeholders and communicate to the citizens of this country our dedicated service to them as a public audit authority.

5. This year, in our effort to expand our reach to the youth of this country, we organized a National Online Essay Writing Competition for university students. The bi-lingual competition in Hindi and English elicited encouraging responses. More than a thousand entries have been received from students pursuing their studies in premier institutes and universities. The theme of this year's essay focused on the CAG's role in 2047, the year India completes 100 years of independence, and what it can do to address global challenges like climate change. Seven students won the awards for their originality, creativity and style of writing. A

three-member evaluation committee had selected the final list of awardees. The winning essays reflected a deep sense of understanding of the constitutional visions of the CAG, and I'm happy to note that the young awardees are present at our gathering today to receive the awards from the Hon'ble Vice President of India.

6. Beginning today, several events are being organized to mark Audit Diwas across our offices in the country. The celebrations will continue for a week, and I am happy to inform you that we shall later, also announce the awards for innovations in the fields of public auditing and accounting, and for the noteworthy improvements in individual offices. These awards acknowledge the creative collaborations among officers and staff, whose contributions have made incremental, yet valuable difference to our constant attempt to change and improve how we work.

7. One of the core responsibilities of the CAG is to assist the Parliament and state legislatures in ensuring executive accountability and transparency. We have been able to perform our tasks with a sense of purpose and duty despite the challenges of newer priorities of governance and changing dynamics of work culture in terms of emerging financial accounting systems and new technologies. In recent years, the volume of work and activities has

also increased manifold. We need to, therefore, constantly innovate to stay relevant.

8. To strengthen executive accountability, we have introduced various innovative audit products for focused engagement such as Departmental Appreciation Notes, Management Letters and Study Reports. These products will be useful for the Executive to keep track of our audit findings. We believe that this initiative, along with the CAG's Audit Reports, will bring tangible benefits in the day-to-day working of the executive. An impactful audit and a responsive executive can improve efficiency to a large extent, which will ultimately impact the lives of ordinary citizens in the spirit of 'minimum government and maximum governance'. It is heartening to note that the Government has taken cognizance of our efforts and paid renewed attention to our Reports.

9. It is in this context that we have put together a volume of *The Compendium on Catalysts in Pursuit of Good Governance*. The idea is to promote good practices in all our audit and accounts departmental offices. These efforts, we believe, will yield rich dividends in terms of improving the quality of professional skills and audit products.

10. This year, we have also taken steps to improve the internal functioning of our institution. We have introduced a new system of Technical Inspection for implementation in all our audit offices. We have also framed the Peer Review Guidelines for our audit offices in alignment with the best international practices. Another pioneering effort of the CAG has been the development of a guidance framework for utilising technology tools such as Remote Sensing, Geographic Information System and Global Positioning System for audit planning, implementation and evidence gathering. This will have far reaching implications in audit of land and dependent physical resources like forest, water bodies, land use, agriculture, irrigation and mining, among others.

11. In another ground-breaking move, the Government Accounting Standards Advisory Board (GASAB), which is the inter-governmental body under CAG, recently released the first-ever publication of Asset Accounts of Natural Resources. This data was prepared in line with the UN system of Environmental and Economic Accounts and covers all the 28 states and one Union Territory. We are proud that this specialised handbook is one of the few examples of Natural Resource Accounting anywhere in the world. The first such account was formally released in the presence of Honourable Minister of Coal & Mines, Shri Pralhad Joshi ji in October this year, and we are hopeful that it will enable

the government to take decisions on optimal utilisation of natural resources while being mindful of issues of sustainability.

12. I am happy to note that we have been able to take advantage of emerging technological trends for improving auditing and accounting processes. We are currently implementing an integrated IT system called the OIOS system or (One IAAD One System). It is an end-to-end enterprise wide IT system for audit process automation and knowledge management. Once ready, it will become the primary source of record of all our audit activities, and would eventually replace all paper records. The vision is to create one single paperless audit system. I am also confident that we will become a fully data-driven organization in the near future.

13. Hon'ble Vice President Sir, even as we charter new territories, it is our firm belief that the ultimate test of governance is the impact our work would create on the lives of ordinary citizens. In the area of our work on local governance, therefore, we have introduced a new District Centric Audit to improve service delivery at the grassroots. We have also substantially increased our local audit coverage, and are now coordinating with state governments and local fund auditors to build capacity and improve audit practices.

14. In the international arena, over the years, the CAG of India has emerged as a frontrunner in strengthening the global public accountability framework. As external auditor for several international organizations, we have provided constructive recommendations to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the areas of governance. SAI India takes pride for its work in strengthening the standards of transparency and accountability in several organizations such as the World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and International Atomic Energy Agency.

15. This Audit Diwas, also gives us an opportunity to pause for a moment and reflect on what Mahatma Gandhi once said: “Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, recall the face of the poorest and the weakest, and ask yourself, if what you do is going to be of any use to him. Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? Then you will find your doubts melting away.”

16. Hence, in this 75th year of independence, as we celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, I take this opportunity, in the presence of our Honourable Vice President of India, to rededicate ourselves to the service of this nation. This will be our humble contribution

to nation building, in which public audits will serve as dependable aid for good governance, inclusive growth and sustainable development for the benefit of citizens of this country.

EXTRACT OF SPEECH OF DEPUTY CAG

“There is no better occasion than this to express sincere gratitude for the resolute march towards excellence – in terms of the significant increase in approved audit reports from 120 to 182 in the preceding 12 month interval marked by Audit Diwas, covering the gamut of financial, compliance and performance audits across all three tiers of governance. Our stature in the International arena where we continue to steer Knowledge sharing among the community of Supreme Audit Institutions, audit UN agencies and lead in various multilateral fora, as well as strengthen bilateral ties. Our commitment to sustainable development is evidenced by the first time preparation of the Compendium of Asset Accounts on Mineral and Energy Resources in States 2020-21.

Ours is a people intensive organisation. Efforts are ongoing to create a nurturing, caring environment that strives to facilitate professional opportunity and growth, and to balance manpower constraints with individual career prospects. Direct, freewheeling communication cutting across hierarchy is encouraged through Townhalls. Standing by each other in the face of tragedy is enabled through a centralised platform for compassionate appointments.

It is with an immense sense of pride and abiding gratitude that I thank everyone for enhancing this Institution and enabling it to grow from strength to strength.”
