



CAG slams DRDO for delays

Why in News?

Recently, the [CAG \(Comptroller and Auditor General of India\)](#) has released a report, which has flagged time and cost overrun of the **Mission Mode (MM) Projects** of the [DRDO \(Defence Research and Development Organisation\)](#).

- MM projects are taken up by the DRDO on high priority, based on **specific user requirements and with definite timeframes** for their completion.
 - These projects depend on technologies that are already available, proven and readily accessible within the DRDO or India, or from abroad at a short notice.

What are the Issues Highlighted by the Report?

- There have been inefficiencies in overall project management **that have resulted in several instances of cost overruns**, over-assessment of anticipated benefits of projects, and **delay in submission of closure reports**.
- There have been issues of delay in productionisation of successful projects, which defeats the **very purpose of taking up such projects**.
- Despite the fact that MM projects have a very high outcome certainty due to ready availability of underlying technology, there were **considerable delays in the initiation and sanction of such projects by the DRDO**.
- In 119 out of 178 projects, the original time schedules **could not be adhered to**.
 - **In 49 cases**, the additional time was in fact **more than 100 % of the original timeframe**.
- The delays ranged from **16 to 500% and that an extension was taken multiple times**.
- Out of **86 projects declared as successful during January 2010 and December 2019**, in 20 projects one or more key objective(s)/parameter(s) was/were not achieved.
 - Instead of seeking extension of time to achieve all the key objectives/parameters of the project proposal, **these projects were closed as successful**.
- There was also a **lack of synergy between the DRDO and the Services which resulted in divergent views on the Qualitative Requirements**, deliverables, and outcomes of User Trials. This affected the overall success rate of the MM Projects.

Who is the CAG?

- CAG is an **independent authority under the Constitution of India**.
- He is the **head of the Indian audit & account department** and chief Guardian of Public purse.
- It is the **institution through which the accountability of the government and other public authorities (all those who spend public funds) to Parliament and State Legislatures and through them to the people is ensured**.
- The Comptroller and Auditor-General **shall not be eligible for further office either under the Government of India or under the Government of any State** after he has ceased to hold his office.
- **Article 148 provides for an independent office of the CAG**.
 - Other Provisions Related to CAG include: Articles 149-151 (Duties & Powers, Form of Accounts of the Union and the States and Audit Reports), Article 279 (calculation of net

proceeds, etc.) and Third Schedule (Oath or Affirmation) and Sixth Schedule (Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram).

What is DRDO?

▪ About:

- DRDO is the **R&D (Research and Development) wing of the Ministry of Defence** with a vision to empower India with cutting-edge defence technologies.
- Its **pursuit of self-reliance** and successful indigenous development and production of strategic systems and platforms such as **Agni and Prithvi series of missiles, Light Combat Aircraft**, Tejas, multi-barrel rocket launcher, Pinaka, air defence system, Akash, a wide range of radars and electronic warfare systems, etc. have given quantum jump to India's military might, generating effective deterrence and providing crucial leverage.

▪ Various Programmes of DRDO:

- **Integrated Guided-Missile Development Programme (IGMDP):**
 - It was one of **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's** major works to make Indian defence forces self-sufficient in the field of missile technology.
 - The missiles developed under IGMDP are: Prithvi, Agni, Trishul, Akash, Nag.
- **Mobile Autonomous Robot System (MARS):**
 - MARS is a smart robust robot **to handle land mines and Inert Explosive Devices (IEDs)** which helps the Indian Armed Forces to disarm them from far distances despite hostile surroundings.
 - With some add-ons, this system can even be used to dig the ground for the object and defuse the Improvised Explosive Device by various methods.
- **Highest Terrestrial Centre in Ladakh:**
 - DRDO's centre in Ladakh is at 17,600 feet above sea level at Changla near Pangong lake which is intended to serve as a **natural cold storage unit for the preservation of natural and medicinal plants.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. In India, other than ensuring that public funds are used efficiently and for intended purpose, what is the importance of the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)? (2012)

1. CAG exercises exchequer control on behalf of the Parliament when the President of India declares national emergency/financial emergency
2. CAG reports on the execution of projects or programmes by the ministries are discussed by the Public Accounts Committee.
3. Information from CAG reports can be used by investigating agencies to press charges against those who have violated the law while managing public finances.
4. While dealing with the audit and accounting of government companies, CAG has certain judicial powers for prosecuting those who violate the law.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q1. “The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play.” Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise. **(2018)**

Q2. Exercise of CAG’s powers in relation to the accounts of the Union and the States is derived from Article 149 of the Indian Constitution. Discuss whether audit of the Government’s policy implementation could amount to overstepping its own (CAG) jurisdiction. **(2016)**

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