

PRESS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

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CAG Report on Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects Presented in Parliament

Report no. 13 of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects: Union Government, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy was presented in Parliament here today. This Report contains observations from the Performance Audit on Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects for the years 2017-2024.

‘Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects’ was one of the Schemes launched to achieve the targets of National Solar Mission. Phase I of the Solar Parks Scheme began in 2014 with a target of achieving 20,000 MW by 2018-19, while Phase II followed in 2017, aiming for an additional 20,000 MW by 2019-20. Though India has largely achieved its targets for Ground Mounted Solar Projects and Off-grid applications, overall achievement of establishment of Solar Parks and generation of solar energy under ‘Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects’ fell short of targets.

Key Audit Findings

The Scheme aimed to install 40,000 MW of solar power capacity by 2019-20. During Audit, substantial delays were found in submission of Detailed Project Reports, construction of internal and external transmission infrastructure, issues related to land acquisition and non-achievement of financial closure. Inadequate feasibility studies and identification of unsuitable land led to the cancellation/stalling of several projects. There were preventable delays in some cases where repeated revisions were carried out in Detailed Project Reports, which were not realistic in terms of availability of land, layout and technology, despite government financially supporting the exercise and delays in financial closure due to linking it up with generation of internal resources. Further, the lack of coordination at various levels, including delays in the constitution of State Level Committees and irregular monitoring, contributed to the non-resolution of various issues mentioned above. The milestones set in Phase I and Phase II were not achieved, despite the relaxation of timelines in Phase II. This indicates that either the

timelines were unrealistic or there was a lack of concerted effort on the part of MNRE, State Nodal Agencies and State Level Committees to proactively resolve issues that impeded the implementation of the Scheme and facilitation of timely achievement of targets, with only 28.60 per cent of the targeted 40,000 MW being installed as of March 2024. To address these issues, it is recommended that MNRE devise a well-defined framework for land identification and acquisition, set realistic timelines for various milestones and conduct robust monitoring in coordination with the State agencies for timely and effective implementation of the Scheme on the ground.

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