INDIAN AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT GENERAL (AUDIT), HIMACHAL PRADESH, SHIMLA-171003

PRESS BRIEF

on

THE REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MARCH 2024- GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

(COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT)

This Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Compliance Audit of the Departments of Animal Husbandry, Prisons and Correctional Services, Rural Development and Public Works Department for the period ended March 2024 - Government of Himachal Pradesh [Report No. 3 of 2026 (COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT)] has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Article 151 of the Constitution of India. The Report was forwarded to the Government of Himachal Pradesh on 11.06.2026. The Report has been laid on the table of the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha on 03.09.2026.

The Report contains three Subject Specific Compliance Audit (SSCAs) and one Individual Compliance Audit observation.

Key findings:

Department of Prisons and Correctional Services

Subject Specific Compliance Audit on Functioning of Himachal Pradesh Prisons

This Subject Specific Compliance Audit (SSCA) reviewed Governance, Finance and Welfare Services in Himachal Pradesh Prisons for the period 2021–24. The audit covered the office of the Director General of Prisons, one Model Central Jail, three District Jails and one Sub-Jail, selected through random sampling. The audit was conducted between October 2024 and January 2025, with findings discussed in the Exit Conference (September 2025), where the Government largely accepted the audit observations.

The constitution of statutory bodies mandated under the Model Prison Manual, including the State Advisory Board, Prison Development Board, and Boards of Visitors, has not been included in Himachal Pradesh Prison Manual 2021. No annual action plans or State plans for prisons were prepared during 2021–24, leaving reforms fragmented and without structured policy direction. Internal oversight mechanisms such as mandatory inspections, welfare committee meetings, and industry audits were either absent or irregular.

Against the required 1,281 guarding staff as per norms of Model Prison Manual 2016 (MHA, GoI), only 466 (36 *per cent*) were in position as of April 2024. Shortfalls ranged from 49 to 61 *per cent* in test-checked jails, forcing cancellation of rest days, *ad-hoc* redeployments and reliance on Home Guards. Vacancies were acute in essential posts such as Assistant

Superintendents (57 *per cent* vacant), dispensers (68 *per cent* vacant), teachers (100 *per cent* vacant), and social workers (100 *per cent* vacant). These gaps compromised both security and rehabilitation programmes.

Out of budget allotment of ₹ 180.50 crore (2021–24), savings of ₹ 3.95 crore (two *per cent*) were recorded. However, no dedicated budget line was created for reformation and rehabilitation. Revenue generation was weak, with only ₹ 0.57 crore realised against targets of ₹ 1.28 crore (shortfall: 55 *per cent*) during 2021-24. The Prisoners' Welfare Fund accumulated to ₹ 1.42 crore and *Himkaara Unnayan Samiti* funds to ₹ 1.29 crore as on 31 March 2024, but utilisation remained minimal.

Overcrowding persisted, as against a sanctioned capacity of 2,560, the actual inmate population stood at 2,921 during 2023–24, reflecting an excess of 14 *per cent*. No separate women's jail or reception centres existed, despite a consistent female inmate population (100–118). Healthcare services were inadequate: 40 *per cent* of referred cases (6,731 out of 16,723) could not be sent to hospitals due to police escort shortages; two major jails (Kanda and Dharamshala) lacked operational hospital beds. Audit scrutiny at five test-checked prisons showed that Only Model Central Jail, Kanda and District Jail, Dharamshala have a Medical Officer on site; the remaining three jails rely on Pharmacists, Dispensers or Warders trained as "medics" to hand out prescription drugs, with no documentary evidence that deputed doctors from civil hospitals visit on any fixed schedule. It was also noticed that essential equipment, including dental chairs, diagnostic devices and supportive medical devices, remained idle due to unavailability of qualified operators.

Education remained neglected: teachers were not posted and negligible inmate participation noticed in IGNOU/NIOS programmes despite over 50 *per cent* inmates being below higher-secondary level. Wages were irregular with delayed payments and inconsistent practices across jails. At times, prisoners' property accounts were used to cover departmental expenses, leaving ₹ 6.56 lakh payable to the prisoners as of March 2024.

The State introduced the "Jail Varta" platform, providing a regulated mechanism for inmates to communicate with their families through dedicated video links. District Jail, Solan has made higher use of this facility. However, the technology remained underutilised, with uneven implementation across facilities. After-care structures for released prisoners were absent, leaving 496 inmates discharged during the period without structured rehabilitation or support.

Internal-control mechanisms were deficient as management committees met sporadically, prison industries largely remained unaudited, and no jail received the mandated bi-annual inspections between 2021 and 2024.

The State Government may:

- *Adopt and implement the provisions of Model Prison Manual 2016 of Government of India, regarding constitution of the State Advisory Board and Prisons Development Board.*

- *Address the issue of staff shortage on priority, particularly guarding and medical staff.*
- *Explore the possibility of utilizing tele-consultation and pooled-escort facilities so as to reduce number of physical referrals and reduce security risks on the road.*

Department of Rural Development

Subject Specific Compliance Audit on Planning and Execution of Works under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

Audit of Planning and Execution of Works under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) revealed systemic weaknesses in registration of workers, planning and execution of works and wage payments. In test-checked Gram Panchayats (GPs), 36.46 *per cent* of Job Cards were issued with delays (median delay of 249 days) during 2019-25 and 88.72 *per cent* of those issued during February 2006 to September 2020 were pending renewal or updation as of September 2025. The delays were attributable to a 14 *per cent* shortfall of *Gram Rozgar Sahayaks* deployed in GPs and non-monitoring by the Block and District level officers.

Planning was deficient as neither Five-Year Perspective Plans at district level nor Development Plans at GP level were prepared. The works approved by the Gram Sabha were not assigned any order of priority in the Shelf of works in Solan and Sirmaur districts. In Kangra district, although priorities were indicated, works were not sanctioned in the prescribed order but were selected randomly. Further, District Level Technical Committees (DLTCs), mandated for scrutiny of Shelf of Works and preparation of district-specific Schedule of Rates, were not constituted in any of the three test-checked districts. Geographic Information System (GIS)/Remote Sensing (RS) based planning was also not adopted. Planning for skill development under the UNNATI project was inadequate, as against the target of 4,810 candidates, only 710 (15 *per cent*) were trained during 2021-22, resulting in underutilisation of GoI funds.

Labour budgets lacked proper demand assessment due to incorrect estimation methods, absence of door-to-door surveys, requisite Schedule of Rates, and weak monitoring. Of 193 selected works sanctioned for ₹ 3.08 crore taken for execution during 2019-24, only 127 with an expenditure of ₹ 1.45 crore were completed, of which 57 were delayed by 10 to 874 days. Further, 50 works with an estimated cost of ₹ 78.06 lakh were ongoing, on which ₹ 46.58 lakh had been spent as of September 2024; delays ranging from 153 to 884 days were noticed in 23 of these works.

Centralised procurement system was not adopted in any of the test-checked six blocks. Materials worth ₹ 108.99 crore were procured in a piecemeal manner; in 24 GPs, purchases of ₹ 8.67 crore were made through quotations at varied rates. In wage payments, 3.41 lakh transactions worth ₹ 77.47 crore were delayed, including 5,523 transactions that were held up for more than 90 days. "Panchavati Yojna" works were undertaken unauthorisedly at 180 sites at a cost of ₹ 15.75 crore, without approval of GoI as required for a new category of work. An inadmissible amount of ₹ 4.41 crore was spent on Panchavati-Park works which were not covered in the authorised list of MGNREGA works.

Issues were noticed such as non-payment of revised wage rates to 28 workers, irregular payment of ₹ 4.17 lakh without technical verification of works (in four out of 24 selected GPs), and payment of ₹ 0.67 lakh for 274 man-days despite no work at the site (in seven of 24 selected GPs). It was also observed that Muster rolls were irregular or lacked worker's signatures. Further, e-Measurement Books were not filled in NREGAsoft, and only physical Measurement Books were maintained thereby limiting monitoring by the higher authorities.

Attendance recorded through the NMMS application showed missing photographs and incomplete uploads, indicating weak compliance with NMMS application framework. Audit also observed instances where workers were absent despite being marked present in the NMMS application (six workers were found missing in GP Jerot), and payments were made without obtaining signatures on muster rolls to four workers in two out of selected 24 GPs.

The State Government may:

- *Ensure prescribed monitoring as per the Guidelines by the District Programme Coordinators and Programme Officers to prevent abnormal delays in issuing/updating job cards, in execution of works and in payment of wages.*
- *Ensure Shelf of works and Labour Budget are prepared as per the MGNREGA Guidelines.*

Department of Animal Husbandry

Subject Specific Compliance Audit on Veterinary Healthcare Services in Himachal Pradesh

The Department of Animal Husbandry is entrusted with the responsibility of improving livestock genetic potential, prevention and control of animal diseases through effective healthcare, provision of veterinary services at various levels, conservation of threatened breeds, and dissemination of extension services.

The Compliance Audit on "Veterinary Healthcare Services in Himachal Pradesh" was conducted to review planning for veterinary services for availability and utilisation of financial resources, human resources, medicines, equipment, infrastructure, monitoring and control mechanisms. The audit covered the period 2021–24 in four selected DDOs and the Directorate, supplemented by Joint Physical Inspections and a beneficiary survey.

During 2021–24, against a budget allotment of ₹ 1,562.78 crore, the Department incurred an expenditure of ₹ 1,493.92 crore, leaving an unspent balance of ₹ 68.86 crore. A major portion of the expenditure (68 to 77 *per cent*) was on salaries, while the share of expenditure on medicines and equipment declined from 3.11 *per cent* to 1.44 *per cent* of the total expenditure during the period.

Annual Action Plans were not prepared as mandated, and only district-wise physical targets were issued during 2021-24. This deficiency persisted despite a similar observation reported in the CAG's Audit Report for the year ended March 2016. Persistent vacancies of seven to

29 *per cent* in key posts such as Senior Veterinary Officers, Veterinary Officers and Veterinary Pharmacists further hampered service delivery.

Medicines and equipment worth ₹ 7.55 crore were procured without obtaining formal indents from respective field units. A total of 885 medicines (out of 1,906 medicines), valuing ₹ 3.08 crore were accepted without mandatory analytical test reports. Expired medicines (ranging from one month to 36 months) were administered to ailing animals in 70 institutions. Out of 364 medicine samples, 235 medicines were found of standard quality and 10 samples of medicines were found of substandard quality, whereas results of the remaining 119 samples were not received from the laboratory even after a lapse of 15 months to 42 months (as on July 2025). Substandard medicines worth ₹ 9.22 lakh were distributed and 78 *per cent* of these medicines were consumed in the State. The prescribed Online Inventory Application was not operationalised, which may aid in checking distribution of expired medicines and tracking status of idle equipment. Vaccination programmes also showed significant shortfalls ranging from nine to 75 *per cent*, undermining disease control. Veterinary equipment (487 equipment having cost of ₹ 0.91 crore) remained unutilised since purchase or remained non-functional due to lack of planning, infrastructure or trained staff etc.

In respect of infrastructure, out of 68 sanctioned works during 2021–24, only nine works with sanctioned cost of ₹ 1.82 crore were completed while 27 works were incomplete (ongoing) and remaining 32 works were not started as of March 2024. Further, prior to the audit period, 26 works costing ₹ 19.43 crore remained incomplete, while 40 works costing ₹ 11.77 crore had not been commenced by the executing agencies.

There was a shortfall of 43 to 86 *per cent* in achievement of the inspection targets in the State.

Joint Physical Inspection of 29 veterinary institutions revealed unutilised equipment, stock of expired medicine, staff shortage, dilapidated infrastructure and lack of electricity. The beneficiary survey indicated that 73 *per cent* of respondents were satisfied with treatment and staff responsiveness. However, 38 *per cent* reported staff shortages and 48 *per cent* reported shortage of injections. Further, only 11 *per cent* reported availability of diagnostic testing and only 35 *per cent* were aware of the grievance redressal mechanism.

The State Government may:

- *Ensure that the Department prepares comprehensive Annual Action Plans in January with realistic, district-wise targets aligned to livestock needs, resources, and financial allocations.*
- *Standardise procurement by mandating written indents from field units and operationalising an Online Inventory Management System to track stock levels, expiry, and distribution of medicines and equipment.*
- *Address human-resource and capacity gaps by filling key vacancies, training staff in equipment use, vaccine handling, and stock management.*

Individual Audit Observation

Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department

Inability of the Department to ensure an encumbrance-free site, to provide documented structural drawings, and to enforce contractual conditions of completing the work "Reinforced cement concrete (RCC) double-lane bridge over Combermere Nallah on the Motorable Round Road", resulted in unfruitful expenditure of ₹ 0.53 crore, an additional burden of ₹ 0.74 crore on the State exchequer on account of re-tendering, and non-completion of the bridge even after eight years of sanction, delaying the intended public benefits.