

Executive Summary



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The *Melas*, held at Allahabad in the month of *Magha* (eleventh month of the *Samvat* calendar, January-February), are graded in the order of religious significance (consequently, impacting the number of people visiting *Melas* at Allahabad) on the basis of periodicity. *Maha Kumbh Mela* is held every 144 years, *Purna Kumbh Mela* every twelve years, *Ardh Kumbh Mela* every six years and *Magh Mela* every year on the banks of river *Ganga* and its tributary *Yamuna*. *Maha Kumbh Mela* was organised in Allahabad from 14 January 2013 to 10 March 2013. For the organisation of *Maha Kumbh Mela*, various Government departments and agencies were engaged. Performance audit of *Maha Kumbh Mela* revealed deficiencies in planning, infrastructure arrangements, crowd management, monitoring, etc. Significant audit findings are discussed below:

Planning

We observed the absence of synergies, co-ordination and synchronisation among multiple agencies. There was lack of coordination in monitoring and real time response mechanisms for the projects executed and services delivered by multiple executing agencies. No scientific criterion/method was adopted for assessing the number of pilgrims/visitors during *Maha Kumbh Mela*. No specific arrangements for differently abled persons and their safety and security were put in place during *Maha Kumbh Mela*. Labour welfare was also not ensured. Instead of effecting correctives and lessons learnt from past *Melas-Kumbh Mela*, *Ardh Kumbh Mela* etc. the same/similar mistakes persisted.

It is recommended that a well thought out plan with a Detailed Project Report (DPR) containing assessment of required infrastructure, facilities and services for the *Mela* is prepared.

Financial Management

Against the released amount of ₹ 1,152.20 crore, ₹ 1,017.37 crore was spent leaving ₹ 134.83 crore unspent. The State Government instead of releasing the special grant of ₹ 800 crore for MKM works, received from GoI, utilised the same for recouping the expenditure incurred by the State Government as its share for *Maha Kumbh Mela*. Consequently, GoI's share for *Maha Kumbh Mela* became ₹ 1,141.63 crore (99 per cent) and the State Government's share was reduced to only ₹ 10.57 crore (one per cent). Funds were sanctioned in multiple tranches with different routing patterns which made capturing the holistic picture of *Maha Kumbh Mela* funds difficult, with no nodal authority

in place for monitoring the finances of *Mela*. There were delays ranging between 67 and 375 days in release of funds at various levels like from Urban Development Department to *Mela Adhikari*, from *Mela Adhikari* to the executing agencies and even within the executing agencies. Liability of ₹ eight crore was created by three departments during *Maha Kumbh Mela*. Out of the expenditure of ₹ 1,017.37 crore on *Maha Kumbh Mela*, utilisation certificates worth ₹ 969.17 crore were not submitted (July 2013) by the departments.

Audit recommends that the fund assessment should be based on realistic and reasonable assumptions. There should be a nodal authority for monitoring the finances of *Maha Kumbh Mela*.

Infrastructure arrangements for MKM

The milestones for completing works and procurements were not adhered to, as construction works to the extent of 59 *per cent* and supplies upto 19 *per cent* were not completed by the start of *Maha Kumbh Mela* i.e. 14 January 2013. Many of the works/supplies were not even started during MKM. Two works of ₹ 8.72 crore (bathing ghat: ₹ 3.61 crore; and police hostel: ₹ 5.11 crore) were executed though these were not related to MKM and thus were not utilised for *Maha Kumbh Mela*. In construction works, though made mandatory for preparation of estimates and execution of works, Indian Road Congress specifications were not always followed. This resulted in taking up 81 out of 111 works without technical sanction; widening (₹ 57.41 crore) and strengthening of roads (₹ 46.88 crore) without examining the required justification for these works; sub-standard works due to faulty preparation of estimates (₹ 27.56 crore) and use of lower grade bitumen (₹ 11.82 crore). Contract management was deficient as instances of inviting tenders before according technical sanctions to works; improper publication of notices for tenders (₹ 11.03 crore); deficient evaluation of technical bids were observed. Irregular expenditure on various temporary works and supplies without proper verification (₹ 3.17 crore) and allowance for extra rates (₹ 20.43 lakh) were made.

The material/equipment worth ₹ 9.01 crore were procured in excess of the requirement for *Maha Kumbh Mela* which resulted in blockade of funds. The unused (73 *per cent*) handcarts were lying with Allahabad Nagar Nigam as of March 2013 in open field rendering these vulnerable to deterioration, natural decay and rusting as these are made of iron.

It is recommended that there should be an effective and objective mechanism for assessing the requirements and all the extant laws and rules should be adhered to.

Crowd Management

Crowd management, which included safety, traffic regulations, security, facilities for health, hygiene, sanitation, food safety etc., was deficient. Human resource management was weak as there were shortfalls in deployments in almost every cadre ranging between 10 and 100 *per cent* of man power for traffic police, fire service and *Jal* police. The announcements made in the

Mela area by the Police Department did not indicate the routes and availability of transport system viz. timings and routes of trains & buses, parking etc. There was lack of co-ordination between the departments as no integrated plan for management of passengers was made. *Mela* control room also did not have any facility of live video feed sharing with other control rooms viz. city control room and railway control room. Fire services of Police department lacked availability of most of the key equipments including fire extinguishers (upto 77 per cent), ambulances (upto 60 per cent) and emergency lights (upto 100 per cent) related to fire safety. During MKM 67 fire incidents occurred, most of them caused due to electric short circuit and leakage of pressurised Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinder. Medical, Health & Family Welfare department did not establish *Mela* area as 'Infection Free Zone' as no filtering of those suffering from infectious/contagious diseases was done. Adequate arrangements were not made for prevention of adulterated, sub-standard and spurious food items in *Mela* area as the mobile laboratory proposed to be established for testing of samples, chemicals and equipments, required to conduct such testing, were not supplied. This adversely affected the testing of samples.

Audit recommends that the arrangements be put in place for ensuring safety and security of public by dissemination of information amongst the various agencies and ensuring coordination among them.

Environment and Ecology

Waste/pollution management during the *Mela* was dependent upon the waste management infrastructures/facilities available in Allahabad city. The infrastructure for waste management was not even sufficient for the regular population of the city. No additional arrangement in respect of waste management was planned/made for *Maha Kumbh Mela*. Biochemical Oxygen Demand level was above the permissible limit at all the four testing points in the river *Ganga* and two testing points at *Sangam* on the auspicious bathing dates. Air, water and soil pollution were not prevented and steps to prevent/mitigate damage to environment and ecology left much to be desired.

It is recommended that there should be effective and target oriented arrangements for minimising pollution and preventing/mitigating damage to environment & ecology which is likely to be caused by the large congregation of people during *Mela*.

Other significant issues

The Labour department did not ensure adherence to various labour legislations for providing legislated benefits like minimum wages, overtime, bonus etc. to labourers and their health and safety during the course of employment in *Maha Kumbh Mela*. No arrangements were planned or made for catering to the special needs of differently abled persons and women during *Maha Kumbh Mela*.

Quality Assurance

For ensuring fidelity and integrity *vis-a-vis* specifications like those of Indian Road Congress, of works/supplies, regular and required quality tests were not performed or performed improperly. Out of total 111 road works sanctioned for MKM, samples of non-bituminous works from only 22 roads (20 *per cent*) were sent to the departmental lab and none of the contractors established the required laboratories at the work sites for road works. Third party inspections by Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology also did not include non-bituminous works. Even the testing of bituminous works was not comprehensive. Frequency of samples collected for quality tests was also not as per norms of Indian Road Congress. Samples from only 53, out of total 111 roads, were taken and all the prescribed tests as per IRC specifications were not conducted. Only the content of bitumen and crust thickness of bituminous works were tested.

Audit recommends that all mandatory quality tests should be adhered to by the executing agencies through quality monitoring.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring mechanism was not effective. The State Government had constituted a committee to ensure quality at every stage and submit reports to *Mela Adhikari*/State Government. There was no record to show that any action was taken by this committee. Neither any meeting of this committee was held nor any report by it was sent to the State Government.

It is recommended that committees constituted for monitoring and ensuring quality of works should function as stipulated and proper documentation and evidencing for effective monitoring is ensured.