

CHAPTER-IV TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

4.1 Administration

The Commissioner of Transport, Assam is the wing under Transport Department, entrusted with the responsibility of providing an efficient public transport system, Registration of vehicles in Assam, issuance of Driving Licenses and various permits, collection of road tax, *etc.* Besides being one of the major revenue earning Department, this Commissionerate has been paying more emphasis for effective implementation of road safety measures through enforcement of the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules and promotion of awareness and educational programmes on road safety through the State Road Safety Council, lead Agency on State Road Safety and District Road Safety Committee under the monitoring of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety.

The Secretary to the Government of Assam (GoA), Transport Department is the Administrative Head of the Transport Department.

The Commissioner of Transport (CoT), Assam is the Head of the Commissionerate and assisted by one Additional Commissioner of Transport, two Joint Commissioners of Transport, three Deputy Commissioners of Transport and five Assistant Commissioners of Transport. There are thirty-four (34) Districts level offices headed by District Transport Officers (DTOs) who are assisted by Motor Vehicle Inspectors, Enforcement Inspectors and other officials in discharging their day-to-day functions. They are empowered to implement provisions under the Acts and Rules *i.e.*, the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, the Assam Motor Vehicle Rules, 2003, *etc.*

The Transport Department is also responsible for collection of taxes, fees and fines on motor vehicles registered in Assam. For commercial vehicles, motor vehicle tax is realised every year and the vehicle owner has the option to pay it quarterly or annually; while One Time tax for 15 years or five years and 10 years is realised from all private vehicles registered in the State. Besides, composite fee *in lieu of* motor vehicle tax is also collected from owners of commercial vehicles bearing national permit/tourist permit of other States plying in the State. Further, there is provision for levy and collection of fines for various offences which are imposed under the respective Acts and Rules.

4.2 Results of Audit

During test check of records of 20 Offices (out of total 61 Offices) of the Transport Department in 2023-24, Audit observed non/short realisation of motor vehicles taxes/ fine as detailed in **Table 4.1**:

Table 4.1: Results of Audit

Sl. No.	Category	No. of observations issued	Amount (₹ in crore)
1.	Fitness	16	191.16
2.	Road Tax and Fine	11	56.34
3.	Provision of trade certificate to financiers	8	0

Sl. No.	Category	No. of observations issued	Amount (₹ in crore)
4.	Plying of vehicles without valid permit	14	0.69
5.	Non realisation of final instalment of one-time tax	14	2.30
6.	Non realisation of Annual/ Quarterly motor vehicle tax from transport & non-transport vehicle	5	19.28
7.	Offence cases	8	15.36
8.	Others	70	0.72
Total		146	285.85

During the year, Department accepted deficiencies pointed out in Audit in seven cases involving ₹ 9.70 crore (including earlier years) and recovered an amount of ₹ 0.29 crore in respect of seven accepted cases.

4.3 Performance Audit on “Functioning of District Transport Offices”

4.3.1 Introduction

The functioning of the State Transport Authority (STA)/ District Transport Offices (DTOs), also referred as Regional Transport Offices (RTOs), is governed by the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936 (as amended from time to time) and Rules, 2003 and various administrative orders issued.

The Transport Department is the fourth largest revenue earning department under the Government of Assam (GoA). Taxes on Motor Vehicles contributed ₹5,556.22 crore during 2019-20 to 2023-24, which accounted for approximately five *per cent* of Own Tax Revenue of the State (₹1,05,875.54 crore) during the period. The main source of revenue from Transport Sector comprises motor vehicle taxes, fee for registration/ grant of driving licences and issue of road permits/ Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUCC)/ High Security Registration Plates (HSRP), apart from fines and penalty for default and violation of rules.

4.3.2 Major Initiatives of the Central/State Governments

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Government of India and the State Government launched several initiatives with the aim to streamline the functioning of DTOs/ RTOs and improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of Transport Sector. These initiatives collectively aim to modernise RTO operations, improve service quality, reduce scope of corruption, and enhance overall efficiency in the Sector. Some of the notable initiatives are described in the following paragraphs.

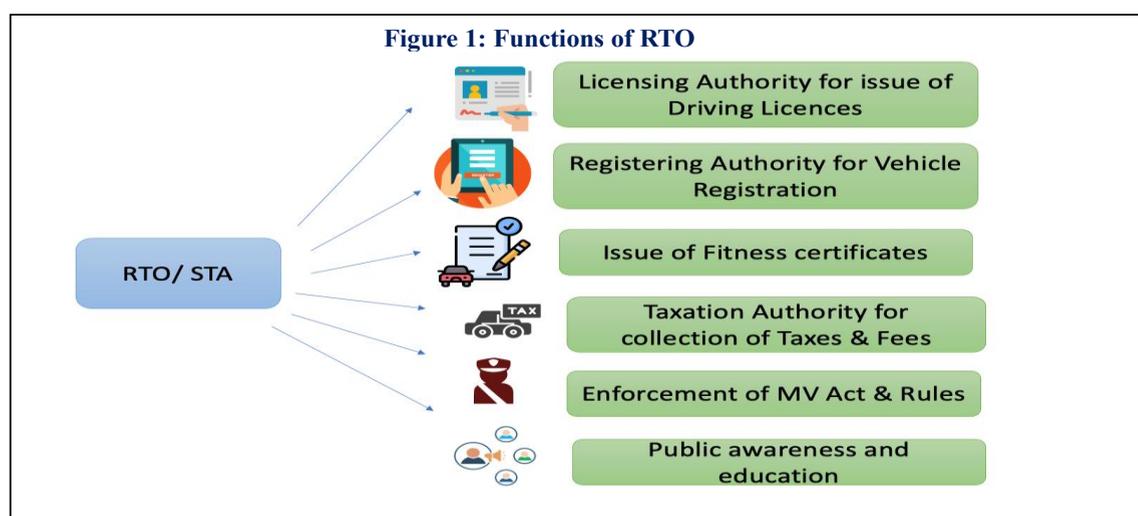
- VAHAN is a flagship application under the e-Transport Mission Mode Project, related to Vehicle Registration, Permit, Taxation, Fitness and allied processes. The latest version, VAHAN 4.0⁴⁶ (launched on 02 June 2015), is a centralised, web enabled application, facilitating easy web-based access to all stakeholders and also customised for each State’s requirements.

⁴⁶ As per MoRTH Annual Report, 2020-21, it is currently being implemented in more than 1,375 RTOs/ DTOs, in the 35 states/ UTs of the country. Apart from this, more than 25,000 Vehicle Dealers and approximately 20,000 PUCC Centres are also connected.

- SARATHI is a flagship application under the e-Transport Mission Mode Project facilitating for computerisation of Driving License related services. The latest version, SARATHI 4.0⁴⁷ (launched on 02 June 2015), is a workflow-based application, available in web-based, centralised mode and also customised for each State's requirements. It helps in management of Driving, Learner, Conductor and Driving School licenses in DTOs.

4.3.3 Major Functions of STA/DTOs

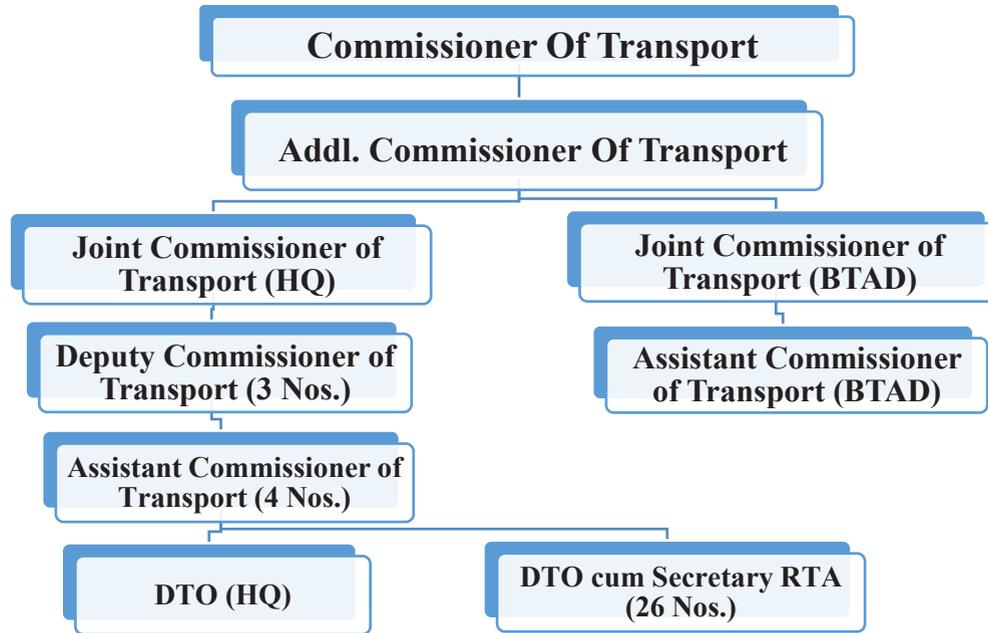
The Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 and Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1957 define the roles and responsibilities of the State Transport Authority (STA)/ District Transport Offices (DTOs). As on 31 March 2024, 32 DTOs were functioning under the Transport Department in Assam. The key responsibilities and functions of STA/ DTOs are depicted in **Figure 1**.



4.3.4 Organisational set up

The Secretary to the GoA, Transport Department is the administrative head of the Transport Department. The State Transport Authority (STA) is the regulatory wing, which is headed by the Commissioner of Transport. The STA deals with all policy matters and administration of applicable Acts and Rules. The Commissioner of Transport is assisted by an Additional Transport Commissioner (ATC), along with Joint Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of Transport (DCTs) at Headquarters level. There are 32 Regional Transport Authorities (RTAs) each headed by the Secretary of RTA (DTO is the Secretary of the RTAs) and is responsible for registration of vehicles, issue of permits to commercial vehicles, issue of driving licence, conductor licence, levy and collection of various taxes and enforcement of applicable Act.

⁴⁷ As per MoRTH Annual Report, 2020-21, it is currently being implemented in over 1,375 RTOs/ DTOs, in the 35 States /UTs in the country.



4.3.5 Audit objectives

The performance audit was conducted to assess whether:

- The DTOs managed the issue, renewal and cancellation of licenses effectively as per the Act/ Rules;
- Regulation and control over plying of vehicles through registration, issuing permits and fitness certificates were implemented by DTOs as per the Act/ Rules;
- The DTOs efficiently assessed, levied, collected and remitted revenue (Motor vehicle taxes, fines, penalties, cess, *etc.* as per Act/ Rules) and took effective action on arrears;
- The enforcement activities were effectively conducted by DTOs to ensure compliance with the motor vehicles Act/Rules with adequate follow up to deter violations; and
- The DTOs have been provided with required manpower, equipment and other resources to discharge the mandate as also to ensure public service delivery in a transparent and efficient manner.

4.3.6 Audit criteria

The performance audit has been conducted with reference to the following benchmarks:

- i. The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (amended in 2019);
- ii. The Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989;
- iii. The Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 2003;
- iv. The Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936 and its amendments from time to time;
- v. The Assam Road Safety Act, 2018 and Assam Road Safety Management Fund Control Rules 2022;
- vi. The Vehicle Scrapage Policy of Assam, 2022; and
- vii. Notifications issued by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India from time to time.

4.3.7 Audit scope and methodology

Field Audit, carried out between July and November 2024, covered the functioning of STA/ DTOs for the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24. The Audit commenced with an Entry Conference (July 2024) in which the Commissioner of Transport accompanied by the Joint Commissioner of Transport, Joint Secretary, Transport Department and representatives of Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC), was present. The DCP, Traffic Police, representing the Police Department, also attended the meeting. The participants were briefed about the Audit objectives and scope & methodology of Audit. Audit adopted a two-pronged audit methodology which includes data analysis and field verification. The Audit findings were discussed in an Exit Conference (April 2025) and replies received (May 2025) have suitably been incorporated in the Report.

4.3.8 Data Analysis of VAHAN and SARATHI

Back-end data of VAHAN and SARATHI applications were analysed, specifically in relation to service-delivery activities (such as licensing, registration of vehicles, issue of permits, *etc.*) and fee-collection responsibilities.

4.3.9 Field Verification

Audit scrutinised records of the Secretary to the GoA, Transport Department; Transport Commissioner; Joint Commissioners of Transport (who are monitoring the functions of the DTOs) and test-checked records of eight DTOs⁴⁸ selected through Stratified Random Sampling⁴⁹. Audit also accessed the records of the Finance Department, GoA to cross-verify matters relating to budget, transfer of cess, *etc.*

Audit also conducted physical inspection of driving training schools, driving test facilities, mobile fitness test vehicles, Pollution testing centres, *etc.* jointly with representatives of jurisdictional DTOs.

4.3.10 Acknowledgement

The Indian Audit and Accounts Department acknowledges the co-operation of the Transport Department and its District level functionaries for providing necessary information and records to the audit for scrutiny.

4.3.11 Audit findings

The PA brought out a number of deficiencies/ observations which are grouped under – ‘Issue, Renewal and Cancellation of Licences’ (*Paragraph 4.3.12*), ‘Registration, Permits and Fitness Certificates of vehicles’ (*Paragraph 4.3.24*), ‘Assessment, Levy & Collection of various Taxes on Motor vehicles’ (*Paragraph 4.3.25*), ‘Enforcement Activities’ (*Paragraph 4.3.26*), ‘Monitoring functions of the Transport Department’

⁴⁸ Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Biswanath Chariali, Karimganj (Later named Sribhumi), Kamrup (M) and Dima-Hasao

⁴⁹ At first, one STA and 32 DTOs were divided into three strata based on High Risk, Medium Risk and Low Risk based on equal weightage given on collection of Revenue, number of registered vehicles (both Transport and Non-Transport) and volume of approved transaction in respect of “VAHAN” and “SARATHI” applications. Thereafter, eight DTOs were selected using Simple Random Sampling.

(Paragraph 4.3.27) and ‘Operational Preparedness of the department for Service Delivery (Paragraph 4.3.28).

Audit Objective: Whether DTOs managed the issue, renewal and cancellation of licences effectively as per the Act/ Rules

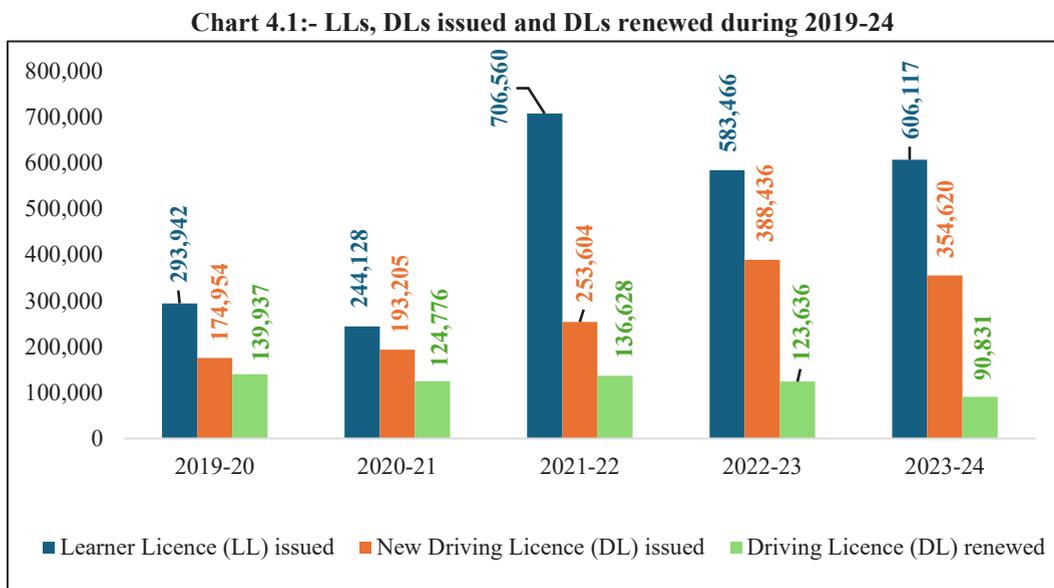
4.3.12 Issue, Renewal and Cancellation of Licences

The DTOs act as ‘Licensing Authorities’ under Sections 3 and 14 of the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 2003 for issuing of licences for the driver and the conductor respectively. The DTOs are empowered to issue four main types of licences namely, (i) Learner’s Licence (LL) (ii) Driving Licence (DL) (iii) Conductor Licence (CL) (iv) Driving School Licence.

LL is the first step and is to be provided after passing the standardised online test. For acquiring a DL, the DTOs conduct driving tests and issue DL to eligible applicants. For DL to operate transport vehicles, the applicant must have a DL for at least one year.

CL relates to persons who act as a conductor of a stage carrier. Driving School Licence is issued to the individual/ institution who wish to impart instructions in driving motor vehicles to others.

Details of LL and DL issued/renewed during the last five years 2019-24 are shown in **Chart 4.1**.



Source: Departmental data

No information could be made available by the DTOs in respect of Conductors’ licences issued/ renewed during the period covered by Audit. As regards issue/ renewal of licences of Driving Schools, no centralised data was available at the State level.

However, under the eight test checked DTOs, there were 91 Driving Schools⁵⁰ as of March 2024.

4.3.13 Driving test for Learner's Licence (LL) and Driving Licence (DL)

Section 4(3) of the Central Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 stipulates that no LL or DL should be issued to any person unless he/she is eligible to drive that class of vehicle. Further, as per Rules 11 and 15 of Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR), 1989, an applicant for a LL should be present for a preliminary test to satisfy the licensing authority that he/ she possesses adequate knowledge and understanding of the traffic rules and regulations. Thus, the driving licence test plays a critical role in ensuring road safety by evaluating candidates' understanding of traffic rules, road signs and driving etiquette.

4.3.13.1 Dates of driving test recorded as 'null': Test check of records of 23,19,445 numbers of learner's license (LL) which were issued during the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24 by 32 DTOs, indicated that the test dates against 3,56,805 numbers (15 per cent) of learner licences were recorded as null.

Similarly, in case of issue of 24,32,706 numbers of driving licenses (DLs), the test date of 16,338 numbers (0.67 per cent) of licenses were recorded as null (*Appendix-XXV*).

Non-recording of test dates of learners and driving licenses indicated possibility of licences being issued either without any preliminary/ driving tests or there existed deficiency in the system, which not only violated the provisions of the Act *ibid*, but also left substantial risks in terms of road safety.

The Department stated (May 2025) that certain applicants with existing DL or LL had applied for Additional Endorsement in DL (AEDL) or re-validation of expired LL, both of which were exempted from the LL test. As a result, the LL test date appears blank in the report. Furthermore, some DLs were entered as backlog, leading to blank DL test dates in the report.

The reply is not acceptable as in case of AEDL/ revalidation, for which no further test was necessary, the original test date should have been recorded. Further, backlog entry of DL test dates cannot be a reason for non-recording of test date. Moreover, the exempted LLs/ AEDL were not distinguishable in the database and in case of DLs, it was noticed that the dates of driving test were recorded as 'null' against 73 DLs issued during 2023-24.

4.3.13.2 Slots for Driving Test: Analysis of driving license test from SARATHI database for the eight selected regions (DTOs) for the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24, showed that the working days on which such tests were conducted by each test-checked district ranged from 11 days to 256 days in a year and total number of tests per district per year ranged from 357 to 43970 tests.

This indicated that the average number of tests conducted per day ranged between 20 (Dibrugarh in 2020-21) and 216 (Kokrajhar in 2023-24). Considering 24 parameters

⁵⁰ Kamrup: 38, Dibrugarh: 22, Jorhat: 14, Biswanath: 3, Dima Hasao: 1, Karimganj (Sribhumi): 2, Kokrajhar: 6 & Udalguri: 5

(as mentioned in *Appendix-XXVII*) stipulated for testing by one Motor Vehicle Inspector (MVI), a maximum of 25-30 tests could only be conducted in one test-facility per day. Moreover, audit also observed that in each eight selected districts, there was only one facility for driving tests available. Details are mentioned in *Appendix-XXVI*, which shows that out of total 40 instances, on 35 occasions, the per day number of tests were more than 30, which indicated that either the assessments were rushed or some parameters were skipped, leading to a dilution of testing criteria. Insufficiently assessed drivers may receive licenses despite not meeting the required competence levels, increasing the risk of road accidents and traffic violations.

However, all the selected DTOs stated that the minimum time required for conducting the test of competence to drive is 10 minutes. Even based on that, maximum 48 numbers of such tests were arithmetically possible to be conducted per day taking eight hours per working days. However, in 24 out of 40 cases, number of daily tests was more than 48.

Thus, conducting improbably high number of tests per day per facility nullified the very objectives of the driving test. Evidently, the driver's actual ability to drive a vehicle was not subjected to desired level of assessment before issuance of DLs/ LLs.

The Department, in a generalised statement without any supporting data, stated (May 2025) that to cope with the significant surge in DL applications following COVID pandemic and introduction of online DL application facilities, testing was conducted on holidays and multiple vehicles were tested in quick succession. Although tests were conducted on holidays, approvals were only processed on working days, resulting in a higher number of tests per day per MVI. The Department further added that the highest DL issuance data by any MVI is being reviewed, and any anomalies would be addressed strictly. It was further added that once Automated Driving Testing Tracks (ADTTs) are operationalised in the State, the aspect of Driving tests would be more effectively monitored.

The reply, however, does not justify occurrence of such trend even before Pandemic (*i.e.*, during 2019-20) and after normalisation of DTO functioning (during 2023-24).

4.3.14 Infrastructure for conducting driving test

Rule 15 (3) of the CMVR, 1989 prescribed 24 (twenty-four) criteria (as mentioned in *Appendix-XXVII*) to test the driver's ability to drive a vehicle in a safe and controlled manner. These criteria included basic vehicle control, parking skills, driving in traffic, road sense, ability to follow instructions, *etc.*

The Government of India modified the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 in June 2021⁵¹ to make the driving training scientific and systematic. Further, the GoI issued (December 2021) guidelines for setting up of Institute of Driving Training and Research, Regional Driving Training Centres and Driving Training Centres during XV Finance Commission period (2021-2026) which envisaged identification of accredited

⁵¹ Final Guidelines of IDTR RDTC scheme dated 07 June 2021.

Driving Training Centres and vesting them with functions like testing of aspirants for issue of driving licence.

There were no accredited Driving Training Centres in Assam during 2019-24. The DTOs continued to hold the driving tests at places/ tracks available with them. Audit visited the departmental testing tracks/ facilities under the eight test-checked DTOs jointly with representatives of the DTOs and observed the following:

4.3.14.1 Non-fulfilment of criteria for driving test: During joint physical verification of facilities for driving tests, it was observed that the criteria related to the basic vehicle controls such as stop/restart in case of emergency, use of hand brake, reverse gear, *etc.* were being tested during driving tests in all selected eight districts. However, some other criteria such as parking skills, road sense, change of gear at downhill/ uphill, *etc.* were not being tested due to non-availability of permanent driving tracks in seven out of eight selected districts.

Thus, the driving skills of the driving license holders were not tested adequately as per the provisions made in the CMV Rules.

In reply, the Department while accepting the audit observation, stated (May 2025) that once the upcoming Accredited Driver Training Centres (ADTC) with Automated Driving Testing Tracks (ADTT) are established across all districts, it would ensure a more scientific and comprehensive evaluation of driving skills which would also enable real-time monitoring through video-graphic evidence, enhancing the testing process.

4.3.14.2 Testing tracks of Driving Test: In course of joint inspections of testing facilities in eight selected DTOs, the following observations were made:

- Five out of eight districts have specific grounds for conducting driving tests. However, none of the districts has the adequate length of track for driving test; two districts (Dibrugarh and Jorhat) even conducted driving tests within office premises.
- Only one DTO (Kamrup) has its own driving track, but that too without requisite facilities like video recording, downhill/uphill system, overtake facilities, *etc.*
- Arrangements to judge the applicants' skill to use the rear-view mirror at parking facilities were provided by only one district namely, Kamrup.



Driving test being conducted in the office premises of
DTO Dibrugarh

Thus, the Department did not provide the ground/facilities for conducting the driving tests in all the selected districts indicating that the driving tests were not conducted in conformity with the provisions of the CMV Rules. This indicated that the tests may not adequately assess essential driving skills or be able to evaluate applicants' ability to

handle real-world driving scenarios. The absence of proper facilities cast a doubt on the fairness and accuracy of the assessments.

The Department stated (May 2025) that to standardise driving tests in accordance with Central Motor Vehicle Rules, efforts are underway to establish Accredited Driver Training Centres (ADTC) with ADTT across all districts. The Department further stated that the ADTC had started functioning in one district while construction for setting up of ADTC in other four districts were ongoing. However, no documentary evidence was furnished in support of the reply.

4.3.15 Issue of Driving Licences (DL) before attaining age or prior to becoming eligible

Section 4(2) of CMV Act, 1988, stipulates that no person under the age of twenty years should drive a transport vehicle in any public place. Further, Section 14(2) (a) of CMV Act 1988 stated that a driving licence issued or renewed in the case of licence to drive a transport vehicle carrying goods of dangerous or hazardous nature be effective for a period of one year⁵². The Transport Department, GoA also issued Standard procedure for Driving Licence (DL) for a Transport vehicle in 2012, which stated that an applicant for DL for Transport vehicle (TV) must have attained the age of 20 years at the time of Application and should have one year driving experience for Non-transport (NT) (Light Motor Vehicles).

Analysis of the SARATHI database in respect of eight selected DTOs showed that all DLs were issued to the persons above the age of twenty years, except for one DL, which was issued by DTO (Biswanath Chariali) to an applicant prior to attaining the age of 20 years.

Under the same DTO, in two cases, for DLs for Non-transport (NT) (Light Motor Vehicles) were converted into DLs for transport vehicles before completion of essential one year driving experience of the applicant.

The Department while accepting (May 2025) the audit observation, attributed it to specific technical issues that have since been resolved and stated that the matter had already been taken up with the NIC authority to implement measures that prevent similar cases from recurring in the future.

4.3.16 Delay in issue of Driving License (DL)

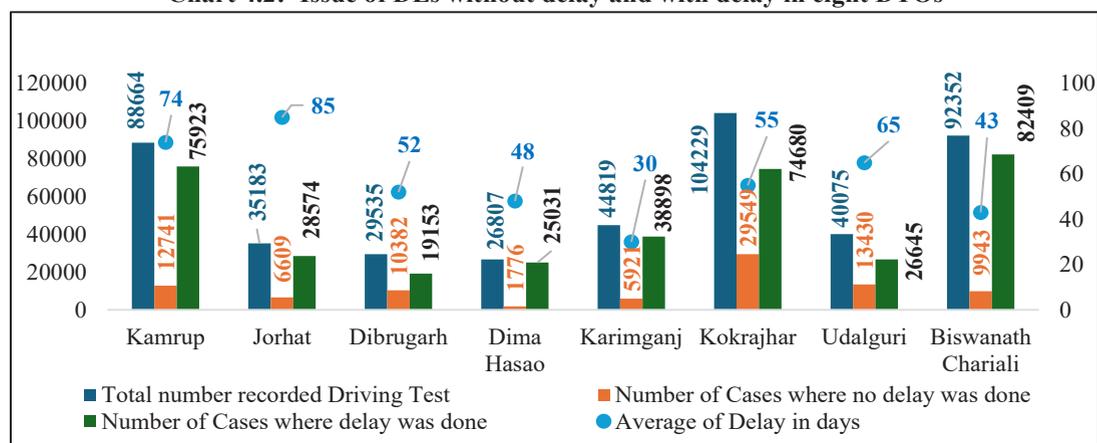
Issue of Driving License (both Transport and Non-Transport) is one of the 60 public services notified under Assam Right to Public Service (ARTPS) Act, 2012⁵³. The stipulated timeline for issuance of license both LL and DL (Transport and Non-transport) is 15 days.

Audit observed that under eight selected DTOs, the issue of DL (both LL and Non-Transport) was delayed by more than the stipulated periods (as detailed in *Appendix-XXVIII*). The average delays ranged from 30 days to 85 days as depicted in **Chart 4.2:**

⁵² For Hazardous Validities have been changed from 1 year to 3 years.

⁵³ GoA introduced the Assam Right to Public Service (ARTPS) Act, 2012 to ensure that the citizens of Assam receive notified public services in a timely, efficient, and accountable manner.

Chart 4.2:- Issue of DLs without delay and with delay in eight DTOs



Source: SARATHI database

Evidently, there is further scope for improvement in timeliness in service delivery in the form of issuance of DLs. Such delay may be viewed with the acute shortage in different categories of posts ranging from 30 to 57 per cent as elaborated in Paragraph 4.3.28.1.

As a potential impact of such delayed service, many individuals, particularly those seeking employment as commercial drivers (truck, taxi, delivery, or ride-hailing services), face delays in securing jobs due to licensing backlogs. Applicants facing excessive delays may be tempted to seek unauthorised agents or middlemen to expedite the process, and may possibly be exploited by the latter.

The Department stated (May 2025) that many applications were pending for extended periods due to applicants not appearing for driving competency tests, non-payment of required government fees, etc. However, the pendency data is regularly reviewed to ensure timely disposal of services.

4.3.17 Suspension or cancellation or disqualification of driving licence

Section 19 of the CMV Act, 1988 read with Rule 21 of the CMV Rules, 1989, stipulates that a licensing authority may disqualify the DL for driving with danger to the public or likely to cause nuisance or danger to the public for several reasons (as detailed in **Appendix-XXIX**). The Hon'ble Supreme Court Committee on Road safety⁵⁴ also issued direction to suspend driving licence for a period of not less than three months for:

- (i) Driving at a speed exceeding the specified limit which, in the Committee's view, would also include red light jumping;
- (ii) Carrying overload or carrying persons in goods carriage vehicles;
- (iii) Driving vehicles under the influence of drink and drugs;
- (iv) Using mobile phone while driving a vehicle.

The GoA also notified (September 2019) penalties for various offences under MV Act, 1988 and the corresponding compounding fees for the first offence as well as for

⁵⁴ (1) Order No. F. No. 05/2014/CoRS-Part-III dated 18/08/2015 and (2) Order No. F. No. 05/2014/CoRS-Part-III dated 17/11/2015 (Directions to the States/UTs to implement road safety laws)

subsequent offences. The said notification made provisions for impounding of DLs against subsequent offences under Section 183 of CMV Act, 1988.

Test check of the records of suspended/ cancellation of DLs in eight selected DTOs showed that during the period 2019-24, a total of 2,477 DLs⁵⁵ were suspended against five types of offences⁵⁶. Thus, the authorities had already initiated action for suspension/ cancellation of DLs. However, from the analysis of the offence database of seven DTOs⁵⁷, Audit observed that 1,37,795 vehicles violated traffic rules and were booked under Section 183. Out of which, a total of 21,842 vehicles were involved in subsequent offences under the same Section, though only four DLs were suspended.

Audit further observed that though the Department made provisions for impounding DL for driving with excess speed (Section 183(1) (i) & (ii)), but did not include the provision of impounding of DL in case of Overload of Goods vehicle (Section 194 (1)), Driving vehicles under the influence of alcohol and drugs (Section 185) and Using mobile phone while driving a vehicle (Section 184 (C)), in spite of directions (August and November 2015) of the Hon'ble Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety. Thus, the Department did not take appropriate steps under provisions of CMV Rules, 1989.

The Department stated (May 2025) that necessary instructions had already been issued to all the District Transport Officers by forwarding the direction issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety. It was further intimated that during 2019-24, a total of 11,751 DLs were suspended for four types of offences⁵⁸. However, the Department did not specify the reasons of suspension of only four DLs out of 21,842 cases (detected by the selected DTOs) which made subsequent offences under the same Section.

4.3.18 Driving Schools

Section 12 of the CMV Act, 1988 deals with licensing and regulation of schools or establishments for imparting instructions in driving of motor vehicles. It stipulates for availability of qualified manpower, vehicles, premises and other infrastructure facilities to carry out the activities.

Further, Rule 24 of CMV Rules, 1989 provides that every driving school requires a licence to be granted by the respective licensing authority. The licensing authority requires to inspect the premises of such schools, financial resources, parking area, motor vehicle type for which instructions would be imparted with dual control facility (to enable the instructor to control or stop the vehicle), *etc.* prior to issue the license.

⁵⁵ DLs suspended during 2019-24 were: (i) Kokrajhar:78, (ii) Biswanath Chariali:194, (iii) Kamrup:807, (iv) Dibrugarh:103, (v) Jorhat:620, (vi) Udalguri:216 (vii) Karimganj:285 and (viii) Dima Hasao:174.

⁵⁶ DLs suspended against five offences namely (i) Driving with excessive speed, (ii) Using mobile phone while driving (iii) Violating air & noise pollution (iv) Overloading and (v) Disobey of traffic signal.

⁵⁷ Except DTO, Dima Hasao.

⁵⁸ Four types of Offences for which DLs were suspended were (i) Overloading (9,062), (ii) Driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs (2,226), (iii) Over speeding (228), (iv) using mobile phone while driving (235).

4.3.18.1 Infrastructures of Driving Schools: Further, the MoRTH has formulated guidelines in this regard with the objectives like (a) implementation of the rules on uniform pattern throughout the nation; (b) to motivate scientific and systematic driving training Institutes; (c) to inculcate good behaviour in driving training aspirants; (d) issue of DLs based on scientific and systematic driving training, *etc.*

To test check of infrastructure of the driving schools, a joint physical verification of 40⁵⁹ out of total 91 driving schools⁶⁰ under eight DTOs was carried out, which showed the following: -

- 28 driving schools (70 *per cent*) have separate lecture halls, however, only 19 driving schools (48 *per cent*) have facilities like demonstration of models of engine/ vehicles;
- In 32 driving schools (80 *per cent*), there were parking facilities;
- In 15 driving schools (38 *per cent*), training vehicles with dual control facility were available;
- In 22 driving schools (55 *per cent*), instructors with technical diploma were available;
- Nine driving schools (23 *per cent*) have driving simulators⁶¹ and 21 driving schools (53 *per cent*) have apparatus and equipment⁶² as required under Rule 24 (3) (vi) of CMV Rules, 1989.



A Driving School at Karimganj (Sribhumi)

Further, though the authorities claimed to have inspected the driving schools during issue/ renewal of licenses to the driving schools, no documentation of outcomes of those inspections, were produced to audit except by the DTOs of Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Kamrup.

⁵⁹ Kokrajhar:2; Udalguri:3; Dibrugarh:8; Kamrup:13; Jorhat:11; Biswanath Chariali:1; Karimganj:1 & Dima Hasao:1

⁶⁰ Kokrajhar:6; Udalguri:5; Dibrugarh:22; Kamrup:38; Jorhat:14; Biswanath Chariali:3; Karimganj:2 & Dima Hasao:1

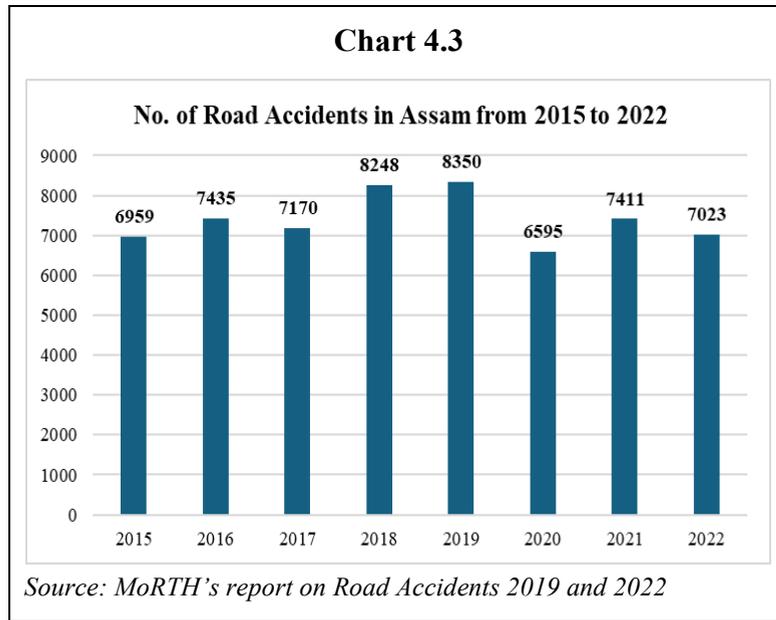
⁶¹ Driving simulators in driving schools are used to train and test drivers in a safe and controlled environment.

⁶² (a) a blackboard, (b) a road plan board with necessary signals and charts, (c) traffic signs chart, (d) chart on automatic signals and signals given by traffic controllers where there are no automatic signals, (e) a service chart depicting a detailed view of all the components of a motor vehicle, (f) engine gear box, (g) puncture kit with tyre lever, wheel brace, jack and tyre pressure gauge, (h) spanners (a set each of fix spanners, box/screw spanners, pliers, screw drivers, and hammer), (i) driving instructions manual *etc.*

As such, due to non-recording of inspection details of driving schools by the respective authorities and action taken against these schools, necessary controls on these schools/centres to ensure quality of instructions were missing.

Further, neither the Transport Department nor the Police authorities could produce vehicle-wise accident data to Audit, though called for.

Such data would have helped the Department in identifying reasons for accidents. As per MoRTH Report on Road Accidents in India 2022, over-speeding is one of the main violations associated with accidents. Violation of any traffic rule such as over-speeding and driving on wrong side do not constitute human error



alone, but it can be potentially attributable to lack of quality instructions and enforcement.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the matter had been noted and would be taken up with DTOs for necessary actions. It was further added that a process has been started for formulating a policy for setting up and operationalisation of driving training schools, which would ensure uniform implementation of driving training standards with provision for periodical inspections.

4.3.18.2 Irregularities in issuance/renewal of licences to the Driving Schools: During test check of records relating to 91 licences issued to the driving schools in eight selected districts along with joint physical inspection of 40 driving schools, Audit observed the following:

(a) Short realisation of Driving School License fee: In Kokrajhar, during 2019-21, licence fees were collected at the rate of ₹2500 from two out of six driving schools instead of ₹ 10,000 each⁶³ resulting in short realisation of driving license fee amounting ₹15,000. On this being pointed out, the DTO, Kokrajhar issued (August 2024) notices to the respective licensees. Present status in respect collection of pending amounts was awaited.

(b) Delay in renewal of licence of driving training school: Rule 25 of the CMV Rules, 1989 provides that license of a Motor Driving School should be renewed for another five years not less than sixty days before the date of expiry.

⁶³ TMV/219/2017/22 dated 19 December 2018.

One licence holder (out of 14 driving schools) under DTO, Jorhat applied for the renewal after a lapse of 27 days from the expiry of licence and the same was renewed after a lapse of 104 days *i.e.*, after passage of another 77 days, without recording any reason thereof. Audit observed that during the period of lapsed licence (2022-23), the driving school imparted training to 50 students.

The delay in issue of licence amounts to a procedural lapse by the licensing authority (District Transport Office, Jorhat) in ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. During this period, the school imparted training to 50 trainees, despite lacking a valid license, raising concerns about the legality of the training certificates issued, potential risk to road safety, and liability issues in case of accidents involving these trainees. Further, the absence of any recorded justification for the delay indicates administrative lapses and a lack of effective oversight by the DTO.

The Department stated (May 2025) that matter has already been taken up with the DTOs concerned.

4.3.19 Licensing of Conductors of Stage Carriages

Section 29 of CMV Act, 1988 and Rule 14 of Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 2003 stipulate that no person should act as a conductor of a stage carriage⁶⁴ without conductor's licence issued by the appropriate licensing authority. A conductor's licence plays a crucial role in ensuring passenger safety as licensed conductors are educated about safety protocols, including how to manage emergencies, conduct evacuations and provide first aids, if necessary.

Test check of the records of eight selected DTOs showed that during 2019-2024, no conductor's licenses were issued. The Department did not take any initiative to make conductors' licensing mandatory⁶⁵ for granting of permits of stage carriages.

In absence of Conductors licenses, the control on safety protocols in stage carriages especially in case of Educational Institutional Buses, was missing.

Moreover, audit also observed that in eight selected districts, a total of 1,056 numbers of stage carriage permits were issued against 1,022 on road vehicles and as such, an amount of ₹2.56 lakh could have accrued to Exchequer (considering one conductor per bus and ₹ 250 as conductor's license fee⁶⁶).

It was further observed from Offence database of seven selected DTOs, that 120 offence cases (against 105 vehicles) relating to Conductor Licence were recorded during 2019-2024.

The Department stated (May 2025) that as per record available in the Sarathi software with effect from 2019 to 2024, a total of 1,704 conductor licenses (CLs) (including 632

⁶⁴ "stage carriage" means a motor vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than six passengers excluding the driver for hire at separate fares paid by or for individual passengers, either for the whole journey or for stages of the journey;

⁶⁵ As done by the Government of Delhi and the Government of Karnataka which have added conductors' license as one of the conditions

⁶⁶ As per Section 30 (5) of CMV Act 1988, the fee for a conductor's licence and for each renewal should be one-half of that for a driving licence.

in Kamrup and one in Biswanath Chariali) were issued by different DTOs in the State, while a total of 131 CLs were renewed during the same period.

The reply did not explain the reasons for non-issuance of 389 (1,022 numbers of stage carriage permits for on road vehicles under the test checked DTOs *minus* 633 CLs issued).

4.3.20 Licensing for driving E-rickshaw or E-cart

GoI inserted⁶⁷ Rule 8A of CMV Rules, 1989, which stated that every applicant for obtaining a license to drive E-rickshaw or E-cart should undergo training for a period of at least ten days, the curriculum for which may be prescribed by the State Government and should obtain a certificate of training from any institution authorised by the State Government.

Audit observed that in selected eight districts, there was no training centre for imparting training for driving E-rickshaw or E-cart. Further, the State Government did not prescribe any such curriculum in respect of training for driving E-rickshaw or E-cart.

The absence of designated training centres for E-rickshaw and E-cart drivers in the selected eight districts, along with the State Government's inability to prescribe the mandatory training curriculum as required under Rule 8A of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, has resulted in non-compliance with regulatory provisions and compromised road safety. The lack of structured training raises concerns regarding the issuance of driving licenses without fulfilling prescribed requirements, thereby questioning the legality of such licenses, increasing the risk of unskilled drivers operating on public roads endangering passengers and pedestrians.

The Department while accepting the audit observation stated (May 2025) that presently all trainings were being conducted in the existing driving training schools. Once ADTC with ADTT are set up covering all districts, such minimum training would be imparted through such accredited driver training centres.

4.3.21 Trade licence for weighbridges

Section 138(2)(b) of the CMV Act, 1988 empowers State Governments to make rules for establishment and use of weighing devices. The weighbridges have a crucial role in ensuring departmental control on the regularity in plying of goods vehicle in terms of carrying weights. The Act also defines the maximum weight a vehicle can carry⁶⁸, and made provisions⁶⁹ for the authorities to require drivers to take their vehicles to a weighing device, if they suspect the vehicle is overloaded.

⁶⁷ G.S.R 27(E) dated 13/01/2015 regarding Licensing of drivers, Fitness and Registration of Motor Vehicles.

⁶⁸ Section 113 (3): No person shall drive or cause or allow to be driven in any public place any motor vehicle or trailer—(a) the unladen weight of which exceeds the unladen weight specified in the certificate of registration of the vehicle, or(b) the laden weight of which exceeds the gross vehicle weight specified in the certificate of registration.

⁶⁹ Section 114 of CMV Act 1988 authorised any officer of the Motor Vehicles Department if he has reason to believe that a goods vehicle or trailer is being used in contravention of Section 113 require the driver to convey the vehicle to a weighing device for weighment.

Further, Rules 92 and 112 of AMV Rules, 2003 state that no weighing device could be installed without the written permission thereof from the Regional Transport Authority having jurisdiction over the concerned area and the same cannot be established without a licence granted by the Licensing Authority (*i.e.*, DTOs).

Audit observed that no trade licenses for weighbridges were issued by the eight test-checked District Transport Authorities except seven trade licenses issued by DTO, Kamrup in 2018-19 and three by DTO, Karimganj (Sribhumi) district in 2020-21.

Further, the Commissioner, Food, Public Distribution, Consumer Affairs & Legal Metrology, Assam, informed (October 2024) that there were 1,022 weighbridges⁷⁰ in Assam as of March 2024 of which a total of 960 weighbridges were either in the private sector (515 weighbridges) or in the tea-garden sector (445 weighbridges). Out of 1,022 weighbridges, 285 were installed in six test checked Districts⁷¹. Audit observed that none of the 285 weighbridges were licensed by the Transport Department. Further, no inspection of such unlicensed weighbridges was carried out by any of the six selected DTOs. As such, due to non-issue of licenses to 285 weighbridges, there was a loss of revenue of ₹ 71.25 lakh (₹25,000 x 285) under six test-checked DTOs.

Non-availability of licensed weighbridges may be viewed with the fact that, out of 16,956 cases of overloading of vehicles in seven selected districts, 10,862 vehicles⁷² were not weighed for fixation of quantum of overloading.

Thus, due to non-adherence to the provisions of CMV Act, 1988 and the AMV Rules, 2003, not only the scope of weighment of the suspected overloaded vehicles became limited but also there was loss of government revenue amounting to ₹ 2.38 crore (950 x ₹25,000) due to non-issuance of trade licenses to the existing weighbridges in the State. The non-availability of licensed weighbridges in the selected seven districts resulted in 10,862 out of 16,956 cases of overloading being recorded without actual measurement of excess load, thereby compromising the accuracy and enforceability of penalties for overloading. This raises concerns about ineffective implementation of weight regulations, potential loss of revenue due to improperly assessed fines, and increased risks to road infrastructure and safety caused by unchecked overloading.

The Department while accepting the audit observation stated (May 2025) that DTOs would be directed to collect the list of weighbridges from the Legal Metrology Department offices of their respective district to ensure that no weighbridge was operational without obtaining written permission/license from the Regional Transport Authority as per rule 92 & 112 of the Assam Motor Vehicle Rules, 2003.

⁷⁰ Out of 1,022 weighbridges, 960 (Individual: 515 and tea garden: 445) operated under Private sector.

⁷¹ No data in respect of weighbridges under jurisdiction of DTO, Udalguri is available.

⁷² Against 6,341 cases of overload, the enforcement authority did not comment on quantum of overload and in case of 4,521 cases of overload no comments were made.

4.3.22 Non-renewal of Agent licences

Section 93 of CMV Act, 1988 stipulates that no person should be engaged as an agent or a canvasser⁷³ in the sale of tickets for travel by public service vehicles or in the business of collecting, forwarding or distributing goods carried by goods carriages, unless obtaining a licence from the authority. Rules 51 and 53 (A) of AMV Rules, 2003 also provide that no person should act as an agent without a valid licence from the Licensing Authority for the purpose of such business and the period of validity of such agent's licence would be one year from the date of its grant or renewal.

Audit observed that during the period 2019-24, 31 agents did not renew their respective agent licences for passenger vehicles and one agent did not renew its licence for goods vehicle. No inspection report in respect of activity of defaulting agents was produced to audit though called for.

This indicates regulatory lapses in the enforcement of licensing provisions. The absence of inspection reports on the activities of these defaulting agents, despite audit requisition, raises concerns about potential unauthorised operations, loss of regulatory control, and possible revenue leakage of ₹17.30 lakh from unlicensed transactions. This also poses risks of unregulated fare collections, passenger safety issues, and irregularities in goods transportation services.

The Department stated (May 2025) that matter was already communicated to the DTOs for taking necessary steps for realisation of necessary fee from defaulting agent licence holders.

4.3.23 Trade licence for body building, repairing centres of vehicles

Rules 33 of CMV Rules 1989 provides that a dealer⁷⁴, as specified under Section 2(8) of CMV Act 1988, should obtain a trade certificate from the registering authority having jurisdiction in the area in which the dealer has his place of business.

Further, Rule 112 of AMV Rules, 2003 states that no repairing centre, centre for construction of all type of bodies for vehicles could be established without a licence granted by the Licensing Authority (*i.e.*, DTOs).

Audit observed that no licenses for body building/ repairing centres of vehicles were issued by the selected DTOs except Kamrup and Dibrugarh. The documents in support of levy/ collection of license fee in these two DTOs were not furnished to audit for verification. Further, no inspection of repairing centres was carried out by any of the eight selected DTOs.

Non-availability of licensed repairing centres may be viewed along with the fact that during 2019-2024, a total of 7,604 vehicles in eight selected districts were recorded for

⁷³ "RedBus" facilitates bus ticket bookings without having the necessary licence, they could be considered as operating as an "agent or canvasser" under the MVA, as they are essentially connecting passengers with bus services by selling tickets online.

⁷⁴ Section 2(8) of CMV Act 1988 provides that (8) "dealer" includes a person who is engaged in building bodies for attachment to chassis; or in the repair of motor vehicles; or in the business of hypothecation, leasing or hire-purchase of motor vehicle.

alteration of vehicles. Audit also observed that during the period 2019-2024, a total of 2,424 vehicles were recorded for offence in seven selected districts for alteration vehicles without due permission of the respective authorities as per Section 52 of CMV Act, 1988.

Thus, due to non-adherence to the provisions of CMV Act, 1988 and the AMV Rules, 2003, the option for repair of vehicles at duly licensed centres was severely constrained. Moreover, there was also loss of government revenue due to non-issuance of trade licences to the existing repairing centres.

During Exit Conference (April 2025), the Department agreed to the view of audit and stated that the matter would be verified.

The lack of control over Driving Schools coupled with deficient system of driving tests and issue of Driving licences does not provide assurance about the skill level of the drivers. The area of conductors' licences remained neglected.

Audit Objective: Whether regulation and control over plying of vehicles through registration, issuing permits and fitness certificates were implemented by DTOs as per the Act/ Rules

4.3.24 Registration, Permits and Fitness Certificates

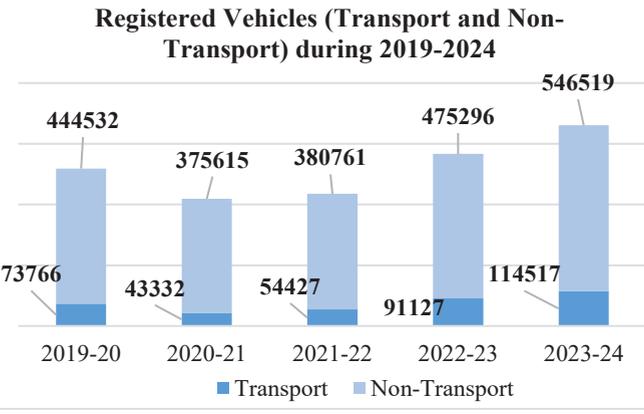
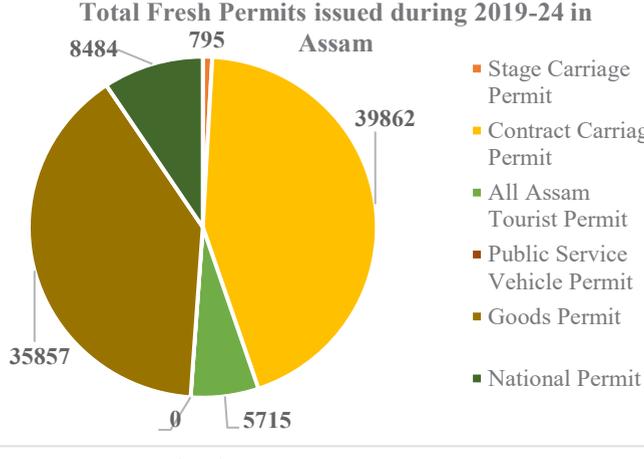
DTOs act as 'Registering Authorities' of Motor Vehicles (including cars, motorcycles, commercial vehicles, *etc.*) under Rules 24 (2) of the AMV Rules, 2003.

The Commissioner of Transport (CoT) is empowered to grant All India permits to the tourist vehicles and inter-state permit to stage carriages and goods carriages as per the terms of the inter-state agreements. The STAs/ DTOs issue the different types of permits to transport vehicles such as National Permits, Goods Carrier Permit, Contract Carriage Permit, Stage Carriage Permit, *etc.*

DTOs issue Fitness certificates to vehicles that passes fitness test. The Motor Vehicles Inspector (MVI) is to conduct various tests to check the fitness, conditions and functioning of various items of the vehicles such as spark plug, head lamps, reflectors, horn, silencer, braking systems, exhaust emissions, *etc.* to determine whether the vehicle is fit to be allowed to ply.

The numbers of transport and non-transport vehicles registered, permit issued, and fitness certificate issued in all the 32 DTOs of Assam during 2019-2024 are given in **Table 4.2:**

Table 4.2: The numbers of vehicles registered, permit issued, and fitness certificate issued in all DTOs of Assam during 2019-2024

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Registration</p>	<p>It is the process of recording a motor vehicle with Regional Transport Office (RTO) by assigning a unique registration number and issuing a license plate. This process involves submitting necessary documents and paying fees to the RTO to comply with legal and safety standards.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Registered Vehicles (Transport and Non-Transport) during 2019-2024</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: Departmental data</i></p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Permit</p>	<p>Issued by a State or Regional Transport Authority authorising the use of a motor vehicle as a transport vehicle.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Total Fresh Permits issued during 2019-24 in Assam</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: VAHAN database</i></p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Fitness Certificate (FC)</p>	<p>A certificate of fitness in respect of a transport vehicle granted under Section 56 of CMV Act, 1988 and such certificate when granted or renewed should be valid for the period for (a) two years for new transport vehicle, (b) one year in case of renewal of certificate of fitness in respect of vehicles mentioned in (a) or vehicles having tourist permit. Number of fitness certificates issued annually during 2019-2024 were 2,03,642; 1,38,700; 72,340; 31,184 and 1,65,414 respectively. <i>(As per VAHAN portal of Assam)</i></p>	

4.3.24.1 Registration of Motor Vehicles

4.3.24.1.1 Dealer Point Registration: As per Rule 47 (1) of CMV (Sixth Amendment)⁷⁵ Rules, 2021, in case of motor vehicle, purchased as a fully built motor vehicle, which is being registered in the same State in which the dealer is situated, should be made by the dealer, prior to the delivery of the vehicle. In case of a motor vehicle, purchased as a chassis to which body is fabricated separately, which is being registered in the same State in which the dealer is situated, should be made by the dealer, after the body is fabricated separately.

⁷⁵ G.S.R 240(E) dated 31/03/2022 regarding Licensing of drivers, Fitness and Registration of Motor Vehicles.

Accordingly, the GoA empowered (October 2022) the Motor Vehicle Dealers in the State as registering authority for registration of vehicles along with verification of documents, authenticity of information and maintenance of records.

Audit observed that during 2023-24, a total of 2,20,151 vehicles were registered in eight selected districts out of which, 98,166 vehicles were registered without recording any address proof documents, as discussed in *Paragraph 4.3.24.1.3*. Further, there was delay in registration of 1,96,469 vehicles during 2019-2024 as mentioned in *Paragraph 4.3.24.1.2*.

Thus, registration of vehicles without recording the address proof ID and without any linkage with the scanned copy of the address proof ID, if any, in the VAHAN database and plying of vehicles without registration of the vehicles nullify the very purpose of authorising the vehicle dealers as registration authority.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that the matter is noted for further action.

4.3.24.1.2 Delay in Registration: As per Rule 47 of CMV Rules, 1989, the registration of a motor vehicle should be made to the registering authority within a period of seven days from the date of taking delivery of such vehicle.

Further, Note 3 under Schedule-II of the AMV Taxation Act, 2015 provides that in case of failure to pay the Annual/ Quarterly tax by the due date, a fine of ₹5 per day for defaulting period would be imposed. The rate of fine for delay in payment of MV tax was enhanced⁷⁶ to ₹20 per day effective from 10 July 2023.

On analysis of VAHAN database for the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24 (up to June 2023)⁷⁷, audit observed that there were delays in registering the vehicles in selected eight districts as given in **Table 4.3**.

Table 4.3: No. of registered vehicles, No. of cases of delay (after lapse of 7 days) during 2019-2024

Year	Number of registered vehicles	Delay in registration (in days)		Loss of Revenue (in ₹)
		Minimum	Maximum	
2019-20	49,777	1	350	68,43,530
2020-21	40,929	1	641	52,05,860
2021-22	41,551	1	1063	70,53,945
2022-23	56,030	1	1417	76,63,440
2023-24	8,182	1	1355	9,08,915
Total	196,469	1	1417	2,76,75,690

Source: VAHAN database

The above table shows that there were delays in all selected districts. Furthermore, DTO wise average number of days of delay (calculated from the purchase date *plus* seven days) ranged from 13 to 63 days. However, no fine was recovered against those delays resulting in loss of revenue of ₹ 2.77 crore to the exchequer.

The Department attributed (December 2024) the delay in registration and corresponding loss of revenue to the failure of the dealers and owners of the vehicles. The response is not acceptable as the process of registration of vehicles by dealers

⁷⁶ Vide Gazette Notification No LGL.189/2020/26 dated 17 October 2023.

⁷⁷ Available data in date format.

commenced only from February 2022 and prior to February 2022, it was done by the respective DTOs. Moreover, even after transferring the responsibility to the Dealers, the Department should have ensured fixation of responsibility for delay if any and mandatory imposition of fines on plying of vehicles without registration and collect the fine at the time of registration. The delay in registration, ranging from a minimum of 1 day to a maximum of 1,417 days, indicates systemic inefficiencies in the vehicle registration process, affecting both regulatory compliance and government revenue collection. The lapse in timely registration also raises concerns about the enforcement of road tax and other statutory dues, potentially enabling vehicles to ply without fulfilling legal requirements.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that the vehicle registration process involves multiple steps, including data entry, verification, document upload, payment of fees and tax, registration number assignment, and final approval. Department also illustrated its reply with a randomly selected instance that though registration was completed after delay, tax was recovered within due date.

The reply is not acceptable as in this case audit noticed that though Dealer cart payment was made within due date, the registration number was assigned only after lapse of 17 days without recording any reasons of such delay. As a result, the very objective of decentralising the registration process was defeated.

4.3.24.1.3 Address Proof not entered in VAHAN Database: According to Rule 47 of CMV Rules, 1989, the application for registration of a motor vehicle should be accompanied by various certificates⁷⁸ and with valid address proof of the vehicle owner. Further, Rule 4 of CMV Rules, 1989 specified documents⁷⁹ for the purpose of age and address proof. Further, the VAHAN application provides scope for entry of Voter Id, Ration Card No., Passport No., Aadhar No., PAN and DL No. in the database as owner identification.

During test-check of VAHAN database for eight selected districts for the period from 2019-20 to 2023-24, audit observed that valid address proof was not entered in the system in respect of a substantial number of the registered vehicles as detailed in **Table 4.4.**

Table 4.4: Entries against address proof

Year	No. of registered vehicles	Number of vehicles registered with address proof					Total (per cent)
		Voter Id	Ration Card	Passport	Aadhar	DL	
2019-20	2,21,299	4,218	152	481	-	657	5,508 (2)
2020-21	1,84,392	4,089	2,035	2,169	-	2,388	10,681 (6)
2021-22	2,21,645	7,129	5,337	5,263	-	5,638	23,367 (11)

⁷⁸ Required Certificates are (a) sale certificate; (b) valid insurance certificate; (c) copy of the proceedings of the State Transport Authority or Transport Commissioner or such other authorities as may be prescribed by the State Government for the purpose of approval of the design in the case of a trailer or a semi-trailer; (d) original sale certificate from the concerned authorities in Form 21 in the case of ex-army vehicles.

⁷⁹ (1) Electoral Roll, (2) Life insurance Policy, (3) Passport, (4) Pay slip issued by any Government office or a local body, (5) School certificate, (6) Birth certificate, (7) Certificate granted by a registered medical practitioner not below the rank of a Civil Surgeon, as to the age of the applicant, and (8) Any other document or documents as may be prescribed by the State Government.

Year	No. of registered vehicles	Number of vehicles registered with address proof					Total (per cent)
		Voter Id	Ration Card	Passport	Aadhar	DL	
2022-23	3,22,432	31,952	30,847	30,095	-	31,129	1,24,023 (38)
2023-24	3,76,656	61,634	60,606	60,038	-	60,928	2,43,206 (65)

Source: VAHAN database

Though the percentage of record in support of address proof was increasing, it remained a matter of concern that 35 per cent of registration numbers are not linked to valid address proof of the owners during 2023-24. Due to absence of address proof of the owner of the vehicle, the Department would not be in a position to contact the owner for serving demand notices, if any, or for any other purpose. The absence of address verification raises concerns regarding the authenticity of vehicle ownership, potential risks of fraudulent registrations, and difficulties in tracking vehicles involved in violations, tax evasion, or criminal activities. This also reflects weak enforcement of documentation norms by the registering authorities, which may lead to compromised road safety, ineffective law enforcement, and revenue loss for the government.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that random cross-checking showed that address proofs were uploaded for newly registered vehicles. It was, however, observed by Audit that without proper recording of address ID proof and linkage with the scanned copy thereof, it would be extremely difficult to check the authenticity of the address of any vehicle owner. Moreover, the Department stated that based on audit reports, some dealers had been suspended for violating norms and DTOs had been directed to conduct periodic audits of automobile dealers to ensure compliance with registration norms.

4.3.24.1.4 Temporary Registration: Section 43 of the CMV Act, 1988 states that the owner of a motor vehicle may apply to any registering authority or other prescribed authority to have the vehicle temporarily registered in the prescribed manner and such temporary registration would be valid only for a period not exceeding one month and shall not be renewable.

On analysis of VAHAN database, it was observed that during the period 2019-2024, a total of 1,23,102 vehicles were temporarily registered in the State. In eight selected districts, the average days of delays in obtaining permanent registration from temporary registration ranged from 50 to 560 days. Further, the percentage of delay in permanent registration from temporary registration ranged from 6 to 74 per cent of year wise cases of delays except in three DTOs namely, Jorhat, Udalguri and Biswanath Chariali for the year 2023-24 as detailed in *Appendix -XXX*.

Thus, there were pervasive as well as persisting delays in permanent registration from temporary registration in all selected districts. This may be viewed with the fact that there was no provision for penalty in the AMV Rules for delay in obtaining permanent registration number though there was provision for penalty under CMV Rules, 1989.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that penalty was levied for delay in obtaining permanent registration and shared some screenshots in support of their reply. It, however, did not specify the provisions for imposing such penalty in the AMV Rules. This aspect needs to be reviewed by the Department for introduction of enabling provisions in the rules.

4.3.24.1.5 Migration of vehicles: Section 47 of CMV Act, 1988 provides that when a motor vehicle registered in one State is kept in another State, for a period exceeding twelve months, the owner of the vehicle should apply to the registering authority, within whose jurisdiction the vehicle presently is, for the assignment of a new registration mark and should present the certificate of registration to that registering authority. The registering authority, to which application was made, assigns the vehicle a registration mark and should enter the mark upon the certificate of registration and should in communication with the original registering authority, arrange for the transfer of the registration of the vehicle from the records of that registering authority to its own records.

(A) Non deregistration of migrated vehicles: During test check of 72 vehicles against which new registration marks were issued by the selected districts, audit observed that only 17 vehicles were deregistered from their earlier State portal. The remaining 55 vehicles were reflected in both the State portals. There was nothing on record to show that references had been made by the DTOs to the original registering authorities; reply of the DTOs concerned in this regard was also not forthcoming though called for.

(B) Non-levy of penalty for delay in intimation for re-assignment of registration in respect of migrated vehicles: Rule 24 of the AMV Rules, 2003 provides that the motor vehicle brought from outside the State or kept for the time being in the State, should intimate to the Registering Authority within 30 days from the date of entry of the motor vehicle in the State and on failure to apply for new registration mark, the owner would be liable to pay the penalty⁸⁰.

Audit observed that a total of 5578 vehicles migrated to Assam from outside the State. Against this, 4,632 vehicles were re-assigned registration numbers, while no re-assigned registration numbers were allotted to the remaining 946 vehicles, even though the owners had intimated the respective DTOs. Further, out of 4632 vehicles, owners of 4200 vehicles had reported for re-assignment of registration with delays however, no penalty/ fine was levied against such delayed intimation for reassignment of registration as shown in **Table 4.5:**

Table 4.5: Loss of Revenue due to delay in intimation for reassignment of registration of vehicles

Name of Selected Districts	Number of Vehicles			Average delays in days (beyond 30 days)	Loss of Revenue (in ₹)
	From Outside entered Assam with NOC	Reassigned in Assam	Delayed in reporting		
Kamrup	3,235	3219	2249	155	2,08,27,800
Jorhat	556	62	451	227	52,58,800
Dibrugarh	316	112	249	288	38,15,700
Dima Hasao	72	72	53	366	11,12,400
Karimganj	162	18	145	196	13,15,900
Kokrajhar	281	245	193	350	41,49,300

⁸⁰ On failure to apply for assignment of new registration mark for the vehicles brought from outside the State, the owner would be liable to pay the amount: (a) ₹ 100.00, if the application is submitted within 7 days after expiry of the prescribed period. (b) After lapse of 7 days again a fine of ₹ 300.00, can be re-imposed if the vehicle is not reassigned within 7 days of detection. This practice can be repeated after every 7 days till the vehicle is reassigned.

Name of Selected Districts	Number of Vehicles			Average delays in days (beyond 30 days)	Loss of Revenue (in ₹)
	From Outside entered Assam with NOC	Reassigned in Assam	Delayed in reporting		
Udalguri	710	691	630	626	1,88,37,100
Biswanath Chariali	246	213	230	848	88,61,200
Grand Total	5,578	4,632	4,200	274	6,41,78,200

Source: VAHAN database

Thus, due to non-levy of penalty/ fine for delay in intimation for reassignment of registration of vehicles, there was a loss of revenue of ₹ 6.42 crore to the Exchequer. Further, 946 vehicles were plying in Assam without reassignment of registration though applied for the same.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the matter has already been taken up with the NIC authority to undertake necessary data cleaning and de-duplication of the vehicle registration database.

4.3.24.1.6 Irregular registration of vehicles in multiple states: Section 48 of the CMV Act, 1988 provides that a no objection certificate (NOC) is required to be obtained in case of—(i) a motor vehicle registered in one State kept in another State, for a period exceeding twelve months, the owner of the vehicle should apply to the registering authority under Section 47 of the CMV Act, 1988; or (ii) where the transfer of a motor vehicle is to be effected in a State other than the State of its registration the vehicle owner within forty-five days of the transfer, under Section 50 of the Act *ibid*.

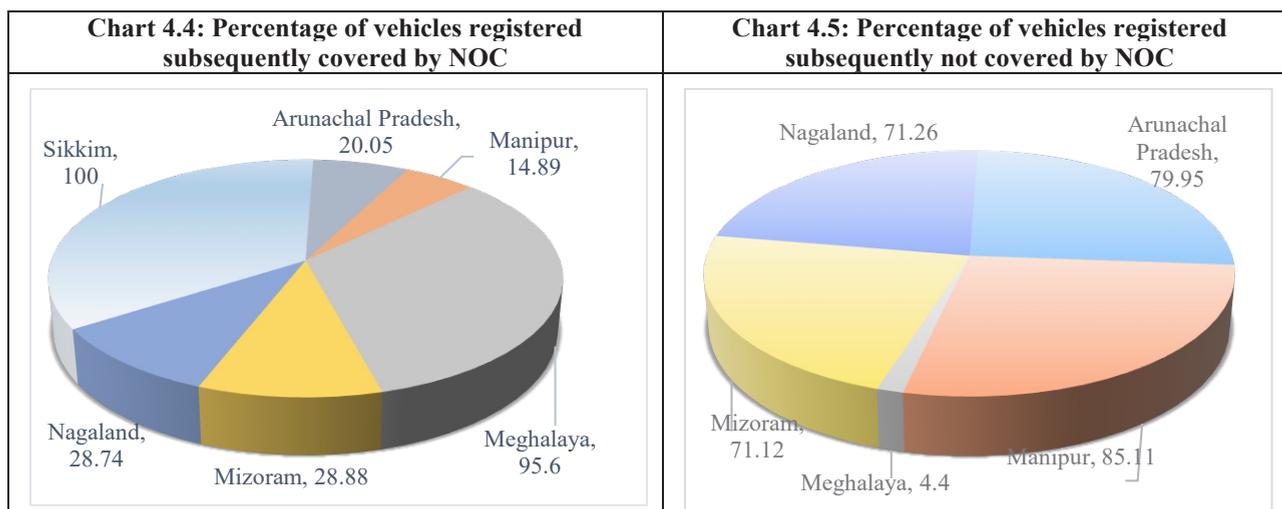
In the course of test check of records of VAHAN database for the seven States of North Eastern (NE) Region with that of Assam, it was observed that a total of 15,849 vehicles having same chassis number and engine number were registered in multiple states, as detailed in **Table 4.6**.

Table 4.6: Details of transfer/ subsequent registration of vehicles and issue of NOC

Vehicle found registered in Assam as well as other NE States		Of Column 2, vehicles first registered in Assam			Of Column 2, vehicles first registered in other NE States			Vehicle transfers covered by NOC	Vehicle transfers not covered by NOC
State	No.	No.	NOC issued	NOC not issued	No.	NOC received	NOC not received		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Arunachal Pradesh	1,112	201	30	171	911	193	718	223	889
Manipur	6,003	490	12	478	5,513	882	4,631	894	5,109
Meghalaya	159	4	2	2	155	150	5	152	7
Mizoram	1,392	99	11	88	1,293	391	902	402	990
Nagaland	7,181	723	99	624	6,458	1,965	4,493	2,064	5,117
Sikkim	2	-	0	0	2	2	0	2	-
Grand Total	15,849	1,517	154	1,363	14,332	3,583	10,749	3,737	12,112

It may be seen from **Table 4.6** that the transfer/ subsequent registration of only 3,737 vehicles out of these 15,849 vehicles, were covered by NOC issued by the DTOs concerned where the vehicle was first registered and the remaining 12,112 vehicles (76 per cent) were subsequently registered without NOC, which was irregular.

The percentage of transfer/ subsequent registration of vehicles covered by issue of NOC and not covered by issue of NOC by the DTOs concerned is depicted in **Chart 4.4** and **Chart 4.5**:



Further, out of the 15,849 vehicles registered in more than one NE States, 342 vehicles were found to have been blacklisted/ debarred in the VAHAN database.

Out of these 342 vehicles, NOCs were issued against 60 blacklisted vehicles; however, these vehicles were not reregistered in any state.

Thus, irregular registration of vehicles is a serious breach of standard operating procedure and a major security concern which may lead to legal implications such as taxation, insurance, and the validity of road permits and may also cause confusion to law enforcement agencies. Further, subsequent registration of lost/ stolen vehicles cannot be ruled out.

4.3.24.1.7 Alteration in motor vehicle: Under Section 52 (1) of CMV Act, 1988, no owner of a motor vehicle should, without due permission from the registering authority, alter the features of a vehicle, originally specified by the manufacturer and contained in the certificate of registrations. Further, the MoRTH has increased (18 July 2018⁸¹), the tolerance for vehicle weight limits by up to 5 per cent due to advancements in tyre technology, vehicle design, pavement design, etc. (as detailed in **Appendix-XXXI**).

Test check of records of alteration reports (contained in VAHAN) for the period 2019-2024 in eight selected districts showed that 7,604 vehicles had gone under modifications, such as changes in chassis number, engine number and weight. Out of these, 4,748 vehicles (mainly goods carriers and dumpers) increased their laden weight capacity. Of those 4,748 vehicles, 2,769 vehicles had original Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) more than 16,200 kgs. It was observed that GVW of 40 vehicles were enhanced beyond the permissible GVW as notified (July 2018) by the MoRTH as given in **Table 4.7**:

⁸¹ Vide notification No. RT11028/11/2017-MVL dated 18 July 2018.

Table 4.7: Alteration of vehicles beyond permissible limits

(Weight in Kgs)

Sl. No.	Tyres & Vehicles common name	Original GVW	Enhanced GVW	Permissible GVW including tolerance	No. of altered vehicles	No. of Vehicles altered to GVW more than col 5	Maximum enhanced GVW
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1.	6 Tyre Truck	16,200	19,000	19,950	1,171	5	54,500
2.	10 tyres multi axle truck	25,000	28,500	29,925	293	16	36,000
3.	12 tyres single chassis rigid truck	31,000	36,000	37,800	1,216	15	47,500
4.	14 tyres semi-trailer	35,200	40,000	42,000	15	3	45,500
5.	14 tyres single chassis rigid truck	37,000	43,500	45,675	74	1	46,200
Total					2,769	40	

Source: VAHAN database

The alteration in respect of 40 vehicles was found to be way beyond the permissible GVW. This not only negated the MoRTH notification (July 2018), but also increased the risk of road accidents due to overloading. This assumes further gravity given the fact that as per statistics of MoRTH, total 3,532 road accidents⁸², were attributable to overloading of the vehicles, in Assam during 2019-2022 in which 1,363 lives were lost.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the DTOs were already instructed to re-inspect the vehicles and rectify the GVW, if GVW was more than the permissible limit.

4.3.24.2 Permits of Transport Vehicles

Section 66 (1) of the CMV Act, 1988 stated that transport vehicles could be used in any public place only in accordance with the conditions of a permit granted or countersigned by a Regional or State Transport Authority or any prescribed authority with a few exceptions as detailed in *Appendix-XXXII*.

4.3.24.2.1 Vehicles plying without permits: In course of test check of records of permits in eight selected districts, audit observed that year wise numbers of permits issued were not matching with the number of newly registered transport vehicles in respective districts as shown in **Table 4.8**:

Table 4.8: Cases where permits issued were not at par with No. of transport vehicles registered

Name of Districts	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Reg. Transport Vehicle	Permits								
Kamrup	10,556	2,788	6,864	1,040	8,631	1,926	15,085	3,367	19,212	748
Jorhat	1,747	319	1,279	514	1,321	620	1,938	1,383	1,734	184
Dibrugarh	2,597	895	1,169	414	1,434	410	2,131	578	2,962	116
Dima Hasao	437	414	206	162	294	245	428	315	1,174	92
Karimganj	2,613	1,576	1,544	1,463	1,510	984	2,924	1,709	3,857	573
Kokrajhar	1,789	788	1,223	315	1,521	281	2,667	264	4,595	60
Udalguri	1,087	383	682	156	1,217	399	1,561	178	2,491	28
Biswanath Chariali	420	0	716	9	1,427	77	2,035	284	2,291	48
Total	21,246	7,163	13,683	4,073	17,355	4,942	28,769	8,078	38,316	1,849

Source: VAHAN database and Departmental data

⁸² No. of road accidents (Killed) in Assam in (i) 2019:862 (357), (ii) 2020:1,105 (380), (iii) 2021:804 (326) and (iv) 2022:761 (300)

Thus, it transpired from **Table 4.8** that the total number of permits issued (26,105 during 2019-2024) under eight DTOs, was far below the number of newly registered transport vehicles (1,19,369) during 2019-24.

The lapse in ensuring that every registered transport vehicle obtains a valid permit has led to revenue leakage from uncollected permit fees, compromised law enforcement efforts, and increased the risk of unregulated commercial transport activities. This gap also raises concerns about non-compliance with road safety norms, as vehicles operating without valid permits may lack necessary fitness certifications, insurance coverage, and adherence to traffic regulations.

Audit further analysed new/ fresh permits for specific five classes of vehicles⁸³ in eight selected districts with the newly registered transport vehicles for the period 2019-2024 (details in **Appendix-XXXIII**) as given in **Table 4.9**:

Table 4.9: New/fresh permits for specific five classes of vehicles in eight districts

Types of Vehicles	No. Transport of Vehicles	Year wise No. of Vehicles in eight selected districts						Percentage of permits
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total	
Bus/ Omni Bus	Registration	726	123	168	541	904	2462	62 per cent
	Permits	239	113	285	428	471	1536	
Maxi Cab/ Motor Cab	Registration	2277	403	603	2196	3927	9406	39 per cent
	Permits	315	307	464	1167	1426	3679	
Dumper	Registration	1083	568	712	666	637	3666	88 per cent
	Permits	600	444	710	718	748	3220	
Excavator (Commercial)	Registration	580	523	84	3	0	1190	6 per cent
	Permits	38	16	7	13	2	76	
Three-Wheeler (Passenger)	Registration	3690	1612	1655	3408	5699	16064	78 per cent
	Permits	1889	1268	1327	3026	4998	12508	

Source: VAHAN database

Thus, there was shortfall in issue of permits under all five classes of transport vehicles against which permits are mandatory as per the CMV Act, 1988 and the AMV Rules, 2003. The percentage of vehicles without permits was especially alarming in case of Maxi Cab/ Motor Cab and Excavators (Commercial). This not only indicated irregular plying of transport vehicles, but also frustrates the very purpose of permits.

This may be viewed with the fact that there was no provision for penalty in the act for delay in obtaining permit, excepting where such vehicles are booked under offence cases. However, in 2023⁸⁴, the Department introduced provisions of fine for delayed permit.

The Department while accepting the audit observation, stated (May 2025) that as per the existing system developed by NIC, the payment of permit fees was not related with the RC approval. It was added that NIC had been requested for modification of VAHAN application.

The remedial action suggested by the Department was not prudent as the DTOs were responsible to check and collect various dues before the RC was approved.

⁸³ (1) Bus/Omni Bus (2) Maxi/Motor Cab (3) Dumper (4) Excavator (Commercial) (5) Three-Wheeler (Passenger)

⁸⁴ Vide TMV/E332990/16 dated 21 July 2023.

4.3.24.2.2 Limitations of Permits: Section 113 (1) of the CMV Act, 1988 states that Government may prescribe the conditions for the issue of permits for transport vehicles by the State Transport Authority (STA) and may prohibit or restrict the use of such vehicles in any area or route.

During test check of records of STA, Assam and eight selected DTOs, it was observed that despite of resolution (February 2017) in respect of temporary restriction on permits of specific vehicles⁸⁵ in Kamrup and Kamrup (Rural), contract carriage and stage carriage permits were issued against 128 vehicles (Motor Cab and Maxi Cab with seating capacity more than 10) during 2019-2024.

Thus, the RTA, Kamrup and RTA, Kamrup (Rural) continued issuing permits without adhering to resolution (February 2017).

The Department stated (May 2025) that the STA lifted the restriction on issuance of various road permits in its meeting held on July 31, 2018 stating that STA/ RTA may issue permits to contract carriages in a judicious manner.

Audit noticed that in the meeting (31 July 2018), it was resolved to assess the actual requirements of such Taxi permits in Kamrup (Metro) and Kamrup (Rural) and issue permits only after obtaining approval of the concerned RTA Board. However, copies of such approval of the concerned RTA Board for issue of taxi permits were not furnished to Audit.

4.3.24.2.3 Educational Institution Bus (EIB) and Charitable Institution permits: Sections 2 (11) and 2(47) of the CMV Act, 1988 state that an educational institution bus (EIB) means a bus, which is owned by a college, school or other educational institutions and used solely for the purpose of transporting students or staff of the educational institution in connection with any of its activities. It was further stipulated that an educational institution bus is a transport vehicle, which requires a permit to ply on road. Permits are granted by the State Governments with various terms and conditions such as mandatory fitness test, installation of Vehicle Location Tracking Devices as made mandatory by the MoRTH, for security and safety measure⁸⁶.

Further, sub-rule (2) of Rule 125(C) of CMV Rules, 1989 mandates that the testing and approval for the body building of school buses should be in accordance with AIS:063-2005⁸⁷. Further, from 2018-19, MoRTH, GoI mandated⁸⁸ that all school buses should be fitted with Fire Detection Alarm System (FDAS) and Fire Detection Suppression System (FDSS)⁸⁹.

⁸⁵ As per resolution made (13/02/2017) in the meetings of the STA, (i) Kamrup and Kamrup (Rural) should not issue any ten-seater share taxi, inter regional taxi or local taxi permit or any other kind of taxi permit; (ii) RTAs should not issue new auto rickshaw permits and (iii) issuance of all Assam tourist taxi

⁸⁶ Vide S.O 5453 (E) dated 25 October 2018.

⁸⁷ Stop signal arm', 'Speed governor' (to limit the speed of a vehicle), Retracting step, 'School bus insignia' etc.

⁸⁸ vide G.S.R. 367(E) dated 13 April 2018.

⁸⁹ A FDAS detects and alerts people to a fire, while a FDSS detects, alerts, and suppresses a fire.

Test check of records of eight selected districts showed that instead of such institutional permits the respective DTOs issued contract carriage permits to EIBs during 2019-2024. The reasons for non-issue of such EIB permits were not on records. As the school buses were issued contract carriage permits instead of EIB permits, the requirement of mandatory fitness test and other safety protocols prior to the issue of EIB permits was by-passed and resultantly the very

purpose of the issue of EIB permits remained frustrated. Further, as per Vehicle Location Tracking Device Report⁹⁰ of VAHAN Application for the period 2019-2024, only one vehicle of an educational institute adopted the device. Audit also observed that 202 vehicles (Bus, Maxi cab and Motor cab) under ownership of various Schools of Assam, have speed governor devices (Speed Governor Report of VAHAN). However, due to non-availability of the total number of vehicles utilised for transportation of

Good Practice of DTO, Kamrup

DTO, Kamrup convened meetings with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and educational institutions of Kamrup district on Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's guidelines and directives of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights for Safety in School Transportation. Several school buses were impounded as well as detained by the DTO, Kamrup for non-compliance of the direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. Further, Safety audit on school Transportation of 403 numbers of school buses of 20 schools related to Permit condition, Emergency door, Fire extinguisher, camera, etc. was carried out during 2022-23.



school children, audit could not analyse the veracity of the facts and adequacy of the measure.

The issuance of contract carriage permits instead of Educational Institution Bus (EIB) permits for school buses across eight selected districts during 2019-2024 resulted in the bypassing of mandatory fitness tests, thereby defeating the purpose of EIB permits, which are specifically designed to

Good Practices of other States

- “Surakshit School Vahan Policy” issued by the Transport Department of Haryana for EIBs specifying the mandatory guidelines for EIBs.
- Transport Departments of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka lunched web-portal for enrolment of educational institutes



⁹⁰ MoRTH S.O 5453 (E) dated 25 October 2018, for security and safety measure, the installation of Vehicle Location Tracking Devices is mandatory as per Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1953 (Answered on 28 July 2022).

ensure enhanced safety standards for school transportation. The absence of recorded reasons for this deviation raises concerns about regulatory lapses and possible procedural irregularities by the District Transport Offices (DTOs). These lapses in enforcement pose significant risks to student safety.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, did not specifically provide for a separate “Educational Institution Bus Permit”. However, Audit observed that under the column namely “Permit category” in VAHAN portal, there is scope for issue of permit for “Educational Institution Bus” and as such the reply is not acceptable.

4.3.24.2.4 Issue of National Permits: National Permits⁹¹ are issued to goods vehicles to enable them to ply outside the home state and issued for a minimum of four contiguous states (including the home state) under Rules 86 & 87 of CMV Rules, 1989, on payment of consolidated fees of ₹ 16500⁹² per *annum* to be deposited in the national permit account for obtaining national permit.

For obtaining such permits, the maximum age of a particular vehicle should not exceed 12 years other than multi-axle vehicles, while in case of a multi-axle vehicle, the maximum age should not exceed 15 years for granting National Permit. MoRTH notified⁹³ (06 August 2018) the maximum safe axle weight of each axle in relation to the transport vehicles (other than motor cabs). As per the said notification, for granting National Permits, the maximum gross vehicle weight (GVW) of a vehicle with single axle is 3 tonnes while for multi axle vehicles, the GVW ranged from 18.5 tonnes (two axle rigid truck) to 49 tonnes (six axle rigid truck).

Audit observed that a total of 49,139 numbers of national permits were issued against a collection of ₹ 81.08 crore in Assam during 2019-24. Out of which, 7,049 vehicles were randomly selected for test check by Audit, and it was observed that:

- 511 vehicles belonged to the age-group of 12 years to 15 years
- age of 12 vehicles ranged from 12 years to 14 years with GVW ranging from 975 kg to 16200 kg (*i.e.*, single axle vehicle), while the age of one vehicle was more than 15 years with GVW 25 tonnes (*i.e.*, multi axle vehicle).

Audit further cross verified 55 instances (in respect of which valid Maker’s Model were available), belonging to vehicle age group of 12 years and 1 month to 14 years, with their respective GVW. It was observed that out of 55 selected vehicles,

- GVW was more than the GVW of the respective models⁹⁴ by 200 kg to 6500 kg and as such, the recorded GVW of such vehicles was not reliable (Details in *Appendix-XXXIV*).

⁹¹ As per explanation under Section 88 of CMV Act 1988, “national permit” means a permit granted by the appropriate authority to goods carriages to operate throughout the territory of India or in such contiguous States, not being less than four in number, including the State in which the permit is issued as may be specified in such permit in accordance with the choice indicated in the application.

⁹² Vide G.S.R. 514(E), dated 29-6-2012 (*w.e.f.* 29/06/2012).

⁹³ Vide Notification No. RT11028/11/2017-MVL dated 06 August 2018.

⁹⁴ of vehicles as mentioned in their respective websites

- National permit was issued to one three-wheeler vehicle (Maker Model is APE D600) with permit category as ‘MULTI AXLE GOODS VCH’.

The non-verification of minimum required records such as permit category, safe axle load, and Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) before issuing national permits indicates serious regulatory lapses potentially leading to unsafe vehicles operating across States, compromised road safety, and weakened enforcement of transport laws⁹⁵.

The Department in reply stated (May 2025) that National Permits were issued as per the bindings/parameters evaluated by the system itself, where calculation of the age of the vehicle is also done within the specified limit of vehicle age. Further, the Department added that during the backlog data entry period, there occurred an inadvertent error in entering vehicle details in the system. The matter was being taken up with NIC authority to make necessary rectification.

4.3.24.3 Issue/ Renewal of Fitness Certificates

Section 56 of CMV Act, 1988 states that a transport vehicle should not be deemed to be validly registered unless it carries a certificate of fitness issued by the prescribed authority, or by an authorised testing station to the effect that the vehicle complies for the time being with all the requirements of this Act and the rules made thereunder.

Further, Rule 62 of CMV Rules, 1989 stipulated that a certificate of fitness in respect of a transport vehicle should be valid for two years for a new transport vehicle, while in respect of renewal of fitness certificate for old vehicles, validity is for one year.

4.3.24.3.1 Plying of vehicles with expired Fitness Certificates: The number of vehicles in the selected eight DTOs against which fitness certificates expired *vis-à-vis* issued are given in **Table 4.10**:

Table 4.10: Vehicles with expired Fitness Certificates as of March 2024 in eight selected DTOs and Government Revenue involved (Fees & Penalty) Showing heat map

Particulars	Biswanath Chariali	Dibrugarh	Dima Hasao	Jorhat	Kamrup	Karimganj	Kokrajhar	Udalguri
Expired for 2019-20		158	34	286	2,346	390	156	245
FC Fees (@ ₹600) for 2019-20		0.95	0.20	1.72	14.08	2.34	0.94	1.47
Penalty due for 2019-20		12.60	6.49	17.96	206.18	14.74	10.58	10.88
Expired for 2020-21		164	12	219	1,808	65	198	62
FC Fees (@ ₹600) for 2020-21		0.98	0.07	1.31	10.85	0.39	1.19	0.37
Penalty due for 2020-21		14.59	0.43	14.00	163.96	4.58	13.16	3.18
Expired for 2021-22		297	53	331	2,306	239	364	121
FC Fees (@ ₹600) for 2021-22		1.78	0.32	1.99	13.84	1.43	2.18	0.73

⁹⁵ as per Road Accidents Reports, 35.70 per cent of deaths on National Highways in 2019 and 32.90 per cent took place on the National Highways (NH) including Expressways, and 23.10 per cent on State Highways (SH) in 2022.

Particulars	Biswanath Chariali	Dibrugarh	Dima Hasao	Jorhat	Kamrup	Karimganj	Kokrajhar	Udalguri
Penalty due for 2021-22		23.59	3.48	31.11	216.78	12.95	30.06	6.71
Expired for 2022-23	14	131	8	94	808	67	164	56
FC Fees (@ ₹600) for 2022-23	0.08	0.79	0.05	0.56	4.85	0.40	0.98	0.34
Penalty due for 2022-23	0.85	10.63	0.55	12.35	64.52	3.33	11.92	4.35
Expired for 2023-24	42	291	45	313	1,522	192	160	114
FC Fees (@ ₹600) for 2023-24	0.25	1.75	0.27	1.88	9.13	1.15	0.96	0.68
Penalty due for 2023-24	1.87	20.61	1.73	15.00	96.14	6.20	9.62	6.47
Expired for 2019-24	56	1,041	152	1,243	8,790	953	1,042	598
FC Fees (@ ₹600) for 2019-24	0.33	6.25	0.91	7.46	52.75	5.71	6.25	3.59
Penalty due for 2019-24	2.72	82.02	12.68	90.42	747.58	41.80	75.34	31.59

Source: VAHAN database

Note: Vehicles for expiry of FC is considered from April 2009 to March 2024 and also pointed in previous year's Audit Reports.

Further from the VAHAN application, database of fitness expiry of vehicles compared with that of database of MV Tax payment, it was observed that the owners of 34,025 vehicles had paid MV Tax of ₹ 51.01 crore however, the Department did not insist on the fitness test of these vehicles.

The minimum chargeable fees for fitness certificate are ₹ 600 (for conducting fitness test: ₹400 and for issuing/ renewing fitness certificate: ₹ 200) per vehicle while an additional fee of ₹50 for each day was to be levied for delay in getting fitness certificate from the expiry of validity of the earlier certificate. Based on this, the expired fitness certificates as shown above accounted for a possible Government revenue of ₹83.25 lakh and penalty of ₹10.84 crore chargeable for delays.

The Department while accepting audit observations stated (May 2025) that necessary instruction to all DTOs had already been issued and the matter would be reviewed regularly.

4.3.24.3.2 Fitness Tests of Vehicles: Rule 62 of CMV Rules, 1989 read with GoI notification (11 April 2018)⁹⁶ specified that 26 items of tests were required to be carried out as a part of fitness test by the Inspecting Officer or authorised testing stations. Further, specific tests in respect of visual inspection⁹⁷ of the vehicles were to be conducted during manual fitness test.

⁹⁶ GoI notification No. RT-25044/01/2017-RS dated 11 April 2018.

⁹⁷ Visual Inspection of Fitness tests includes (a) Inspection of legal documents, insurance and identification of the vehicle; (b) Steering play; (c) Chassis / frame integrity; (d) CNG / LPG Safety inspections; (e) Fuel tank and piping; (f) Exhaust pipe; (g) Catalytic converter (mounting, heat shield damages, presence); (h) Engine mountings; (i) Battery (terminals, mounting, etc.); (j) Seatbelts (presence, integrity); (k) Condition of Tyres including spare tyre; (l) Lighting and signalling devices; (m) Oil leakages (engine, transmission); (n) Leaf springs integrity, shock absorbers (o) Wind screen, wipers & doors; (p) Horn; (q) Availability of Tool Box, First Aid kit, Fire Extinguisher and Warning Triangle and (r) Registration plates.

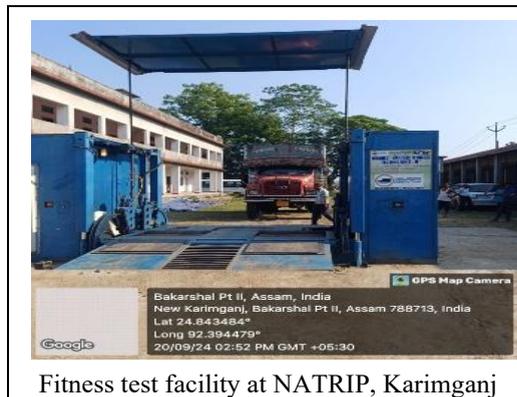
During analysis of the VAHAN database in respect of six⁹⁸ out of eight selected districts for the period 2019-24, Audit observed that each of these six districts had one Motor Vehicle Inspector (MVI) responsible for the fitness tests. The number of working days for fitness tests varied district wise and ranged from 31 to 306 days in a year while the average number of fitness tests in a day ranged from one to 28 (Karimganj in 2022-23) (Details in *Appendix-XXXV*).

Audit also observed that during 2022-2024, the number of fitness tests increased abruptly except for one district namely Dima Hasao without increase in manpower or involving any third party for fitness tests. Carrying out such improbably high⁹⁹ number of tests per day by one MVI indicated potential dilution of the quality and rigour of the tests.

The Department while accepting audit observations stated that following the COVID-19 pandemic, a large number of vehicles underwent fitness testing, including on holidays, while approvals were processed only on working days. This resulted in a higher number of tests per day. The reply, however, did not justify higher number of tests per day (18 to 20) in four districts even during 2023-24.

The Department further stated (May 2025) that efforts are underway to modernise vehicle testing by introducing Automated Testing Stations (ATS) to ensure scientific and quality fitness testing, minimising manual intervention.

4.3.24.3.3 Verification and record of the results of Fitness tests of vehicles: There was scope to record 26 items in the VAHAN application as and when the tests were conducted and the same were to be cross-verified by the designated authority with that of test result sheets. Audit considered 15 out of those 26 items, from the VAHAN application of the vehicles against which fitness certificates were issued during the period 2019-2024 and found that in ten cases¹⁰⁰, the fitness certificates were issued either without recording the same (in 2022-23 and 2023-24, when the number of test increased abruptly) in VAHAN application or after recording as 'no' in the application (Detailed in *Appendix-XXXVI*).



Fitness test facility at NATRIP, Karimganj

⁹⁸ From the selected eight districts, Kamrup was not considered as it has more than one MVI and Biswanath Chariali was not considered as the district was established only in 2019-20.

⁹⁹ Rule 62 of CMV Rules, 1989 stipulates that the FC has to be issued after conducting tests of 17 specified components in a vehicle which is an elaborate process involving three to five checks for examination of each critical component of the vehicle for ensuring its road worthiness. This would require an MVI to devote 9 to 14 hours a day.

¹⁰⁰ In 2019-20: 6 cases, 2020-21: 1 case, 2021-22: 1 case; 2022-23: 1 case, 2023-24: 1 case.

Thus, the recorded information in the VAHAN application could not provide any assurance about the quality of fitness tests.

The Department stated (May 2025) that efforts are underway to modernise vehicle testing by introducing Automated Testing Stations (ATS) to ensure scientific and quality fitness testing, minimising manual intervention.

4.3.24.3.4 Automated Testing Station (ATS) for fitness tests: Automated Testing Station (ATS) is a facility for testing fitness of vehicles without manual intervention. Citizens can get their vehicles tested at any ATS across the country and obtain a fitness certificate from them. Further, as per Rule 174 (1) (ii) of Recognition, Regulation and Control of Automated Testing Station¹⁰¹, an ATS means any automated testing facility, authorised by the State Government, where vehicle fitness testing may be conducted through automated vehicle testing equipment.

In Assam, only two ATS were available (ATS, Kendukona in Kamrup (Rural) district and National Automotive Testing & R&D Infrastructure Project (NATRIP)¹⁰² in Cachar district). Audit observed that NATRIP, Cachar was also functioning as Mobile Vehicle Fitness Testing Unit II under Karimganj (Sribhumi) district with effect from August 2023.

A joint inspection of the said mobile vehicle fitness testing unit was done by Audit and it was observed that out of 11 types of equipment required as per the said G.S.R, five¹⁰³ were not available in the testing unit. In this regard, the Department stated that appropriate steps were initiated for upgradation of equipment of the existing fitness facility of NATRIP, Cachar. However, audit observed that fitness tests were continued to be done by the under-equipped mobile vehicle fitness testing unit under DTO, Karimganj (Sribhumi) during 2019-2024. As a result, all the fitness tests involving headlights, exhaust gas analyser, *etc.* could not be done. As such, the efficacy of such fitness certificates was doubtful to that extent.

Furthermore, no log table showing uptime and downtime of Mobile Vehicle Fitness Testing Unit II under Karimganj district and ATS, Kendukona was made available to audit.

Thus, though two ATS for fitness tests were available in Assam, at least one of them was substantially falling short of standards set by the said GSR.

The gaps in enforcement listed above increase the likelihood of accidents, environmental hazards, and legal non-compliance, necessitating urgent corrective measures, including augmentation of MVI staffing, stricter enforcement of fitness certification standards, and enhanced digital tracking and verification mechanisms to ensure the integrity of the vehicle inspection process.

¹⁰¹ vide General Safety Regulation (GSR) 652 (E) dated 23 September 2021

¹⁰² National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project (NATRIP), an initiative in automotive sector created jointly by the Government of India, a number of State Governments and Indian Automotive Industry to create modern Testing, Validation and R&D infrastructure in the country.

¹⁰³ (i) Automated steering gear play detector (ii) Fully automatic headlight tester (iii) Opachimeter (iv) Exhaust gas analyser and (v) Sound level meter.

The Department in reply stated (May 2025) that the matter was to be further looked into and the NATRIP authority had already been directed to upgrade the required equipment.

Non-availability of fool-proof fitness test infrastructure, too high passing percentage and improbably high number of fitness tests per day indicated potential compromise in the quality and rigours of the tests. The control on safety protocols in stage carriages especially in case of Educational Institution buses, was missing. Control over functioning of weighbridges was almost non-existent.

Audit Objective: Whether DTOs efficiently assessed, levied, collected and remitted revenue (Motor vehicle taxes, fines, penalties, cess, etc. as per Act/ Rules) and took effective action on arrears

4.3.25 Assessment, Levy and collection of different Taxes on Motor Vehicles

DTOs act as 'Taxation Authorities' for vehicles and were responsible for levy, assessment and collection of different taxes and fees related to vehicle registration, fitness certification and other services rendered by them. The details of MV Tax, Legal Provisions, Vehicle Class, etc. are mentioned in *Appendix-XXXVII*.

The levy and collection of tax on motor vehicles are governed by Assam Motor Vehicles Tax (AMVT) Act 1936 and Amendments and Rules made thereunder. Motor Vehicles Tax in respect of non-transport vehicles¹⁰⁴ and specified Transport vehicles¹⁰⁵ is realised in the form of lump sum tax as one-time tax (OTT). On the other hand, tax from transport vehicles is realised on quarterly/ annual basis at the rates specified under AMVT Acts. Further, the annual rate of tax from any other vehicles¹⁰⁶ (Non-Transport & Transport) which were not covered by any category, was based on the cost of vehicles excluding VAT/GST.

Audit observed cases of non/ short realisation of motor vehicle tax fines, penalties, cess, etc. as per Act/ Rules in all the selected eight districts as elaborated in succeeding paragraphs:

4.3.25.1 One Time Tax (OTT)

In Assam, the concept of OTT was introduced under Section 4(A) (1) of Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936 which was modified from time to time. Further, AMV Rules, 2003 prescribed the lifetime period of a vehicle as fifteen years and the rates of OTT for non-transport personalised two, three and four wheelers vehicles were classified in AMVT (Amendment) Act, 2015. The OTT for two and three wheelers vehicles required to be paid in full at the time of registration of the vehicles. However,

¹⁰⁴ OTT applicable on Non-Transport (Personalised) Two, Three and Four-Wheeler vehicles as per Gazette Notification No LGL.3/2010/80 dated 30 September 2015.

¹⁰⁵ OTT is also applicable on Tractors (Transport/ Non-Transport) and Trailers (Transport/ Non-Transport) vide Gazette notification No. LGL.189/2020/26 dated 17 October 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Dumper/Tipper, Excavator, Hydraulic Crane, Camper Van, Cash Van, Mobile Canteen, Mobile Workshop, Mobile Clinic, Fork-lift, Tow-Truck, Mobile Rig, Mobile Cementing Unit and any other truck mounted machineries etc.

for four wheelers, the OTT for vehicles with original cost price up to ₹6.00 lakh, should be paid at a time in full. For vehicles priced more than ₹ 6.00 lakh, there was an option for deferred payments (half of the total OTT for first five years and at the end of first five years, the remaining half of the total OTT for remaining 10 years). There is a provision of fine at a rate of ₹ 5.00 per day to be levied from the due date for payment of OTT and the same was revised to ₹ 20 per day with effect from 10 July 2023. Further, as per Article No. II of the AMVT (Amendment) Act, 2023, OTT was introduced for tractors and trailers also.

4.3.25.1.1 Assertion of sale price of vehicles: The VAHAN application provides several columns for recording various characteristics¹⁰⁷ of a vehicle which are mainly defined by its maker and maker's model¹⁰⁸, based on which the sale amount of the vehicles varies.

Test check of records of VAHAN database with that of original invoices of selected vehicles (randomly selected) registered under eight sample districts, showed that the sale amount was not duly/correctly recorded. Audit observed that the sale amount of 21,672 vehicles ranged from ₹1 to ₹1000. Further, all the recorded maker model of vehicles in the VAHAN application were not reliable.

Thus, owing to unreliable entry of makers model and recording the re-sale value (in absence of scope of entering original sale amount alongside) audit could not cross verify the sale amount of vehicles based on its makers model. This also leaves substantial scope of under-collection of OTT.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the matter would be cross checked in co-ordination with the NIC authorities.

4.3.25.1.2 Outstanding OTT: During test check of records of registered vehicles under selected eight districts from VAHAN database, it was observed that OTT was pending against 1,396 motor cars (during 2015-2022) as shown in **Table 4.11:**

Table 4.11: No. of Vehicles against which OTT is pending

Year	No. of Motor Cars against which OTT is pending as of March 2024	Amount to be collected as (in ₹)		
		Tax	Fine	Total
2015-16	756	1,50,77,450	2,05,915	1,52,83,365
2016-17	397	1,56,96,412	20,645	1,57,17,057
2017-18	124	33,63,210	25,200	33,88,410
2018-19	92	28,28,697	2,270	28,30,967
2019-20	24	7,36,375	-	7,36,375
2021-22	3	30,712	-	30,712
Grand Total	1,396	3,77,32,856	2,54,030	3,79,86,886

Source: VAHAN database

Note: The rate of OTT changed from 17 June 2015 and accordingly calculation was done

¹⁰⁷ Body Type, No. of Cylinders, HP, Seat, Stand and Sleeper Capacity, Unladen and Laden Weight, Fuel, Colour, Manufacture Month and Year, Wheelbase, Cubic Capacity, Floor Area, AC/ Audio/ Video Fitted etc.

¹⁰⁸ Model (Type of vehicle)' means a group of vehicles, constructed by the same manufacturer, including variants and versions of a particular category which do not differ in at least the essential respects- as defined Criteria for Vehicle Types, Variants and Versions (AIS-017 (Part 5) (Rev.1) / D1 dated August 2015).

During the period from 2015-16 to 2021-22, OTT remained outstanding against 1,396 Motor Cars as of March 2024. Further, Audit randomly selected 186 vehicles in eight selected districts after promulgation of AMV Taxation (Amendment) Act, 2015 (with effect from 17 June 2015) and cross-verified their details with the available documents like copy of tax receipts, vehicle wise Tax History details and observed that OTT remained pending against 174 numbers of vehicles as shown in **Table 4.12**.

Table 4.12: Number of vehicles with pending OTT after June 2015

(Amount in ₹)

Name of the DTOs	Number of vehicles with pending OTT after June 2015	Amount of OTT to be paid	Fine	Total
Kokrajhar	27	8,45,945	1,82,910	10,28,855
Udalguri	4	1,14,721	32,775	1,47,496
Dibrugarh	31	9,43,933	2,66,420	12,10,353
Jorhat	11	3,01,999	84,875	3,86,874
Karimganj	3	95,191	26,565	1,21,756
Kamrup (Metro)	85	26,37,148	5,01,725	30,93,711
Dima Hasao	13	3,26,480	78,555	4,05,035
Total	174	52,21,095	11,72,985	63,94,080

Source: VAHAN database

Audit also observed that though there was outstanding OTT against those 174 vehicles, the concerned DTOs could not produce records/ list relating to demand notices generated by the system and issued during the period covered in Audit.

The inability of the DTOs concerned to produce records or lists of demand notices generated and issued for outstanding One-Time Tax (OTT) against 174 vehicles indicates weak enforcement of tax collection, lack of accountability, and potential revenue leakage.

The Department while accepting the audit observation, stated (May 2025) that the concerned DTOs had already been instructed for realisation of pending arrear tax. The matter would be reviewed soon.

4.3.25.2 Motor Vehicle Taxes (MVT) on Transport Vehicles

In India, different States use different parameters for computation of registration fees, goods tax and passenger tax, such as cost of vehicle, engine capacity, unladen weight, seating capacity, *etc.* and also use different rates and different periodicity.

In the case of Transport Vehicles for passengers, the passenger tax rates are differentiated based on whether the vehicle is for stage or contract carriage, with the seating capacity generally forming the basis for levying tax.

Goods vehicles are usually taxed based on the registered laden weight (RLW) or gross vehicle weight (GVW)¹⁰⁹ or unladen weight (ULW)¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁹ **Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW)/ Registered Laden Weight (RLW):** The total weight of the vehicle and load certified and registered by the registering authority as permissible for that vehicle.

¹¹⁰ **Unladen Weight (ULW):** The weight of a vehicle or trailer including all equipment ordinarily used with the vehicle or trailer when working but excluding the weight of a driver or attendant; and where alternative parts or bodies are used, unladen weight of the vehicle means the weight of the vehicle with the heaviest such alternative part/ body.

In Assam, the MV Tax is based on five different parameters¹¹¹ namely, seating capacity, unladen weight, capacity, cost of the vehicle and passenger carrying capacity.

During test check of calculation of MV Tax on transport vehicles, audit observed that in Assam, the difference between the laden weight¹¹² and unladen weight is used as the basis of calculation of MV tax which is system-calculated through the VAHAN application. The quarterly MV Tax was to be cleared within the first 15 days of the quarter and if not paid, penalty was collected at the applicable rates¹¹³.

4.3.25.2.1 Non-payment of MV tax and fine: Test check of reports generated from 'VAHAN' application relating to non-payment of MV Tax by the owners of 31 categories of transport vehicle used for commercial purposes¹¹⁴ showed that out of 1.29 lakh commercial vehicles with nine types of ownerships¹¹⁵ (as of March 2024) in seven¹¹⁶ (out of eight) selected DTOs, owners of 29,560 vehicles (71 per cent) did not pay MV Tax of ₹61.28 crore, which also attracted a fine of ₹24.53 crore as of March 2024 (Details are shown in *Appendix-XXXVIII*).

Audit further observed from the enforcement database that a total of 4.22 lakh cases relating to 2,24,305 vehicles in seven¹¹⁷ (out of eight) selected DTOs, were recorded under offence cases during 2019-2024. However, there is no system of collecting the pending MV Tax during collection of compounding fee or at the time of issue of PUC. Though the respective DTOs stated that the demand notices had been issued to the concerned defaulters, there was, however, neither any system of keeping the records (Demand, Collection and Balance register) in respect of the issuance of demand notices; nor any system to monitor the actual realisation of road taxes from the defaulting vehicle owners.

The Department while accepting the audit observation, stated (May 2025) that the recovery of Outstanding arrear MV tax was being pursued seriously. The Department further informed that communication had been made to NIC to explore the feasibility of putting a system in place for clearance of the pending MV Tax during payment of Compounding fee or at the time of issuance of PUC.

¹¹¹ (i) seating capacity for buses, (ii) capacity for Goods vehicles, Trailers and Tractors, (iii) Unladen weight for Two wheelers (OTT), (iv) Cost value of the vehicles for Cars/ Jeeps (OTT), (v) Passenger Carrying capacity for Taxi/Cab and Auto rickshaws/ 3 Wheelers.

¹¹² **Laden Weight: Total** combined weight of a vehicle when fully equipped for use with the cargo or payload transported thereon; provided that in no event the laden weight shall be less than the unladen weight of the vehicle fully equipped for use, plus the manufacturer's rated carrying capacity.

¹¹³ Up to 09 July 2023 at the rate of ₹ 5 per day and from 10 July 2023 at the rate of ₹ 20 per day.

¹¹⁴ (1) Ambulance (2) Articulated Vehicle (3) Auxiliary Trailer (4) Bus (5) Camper Van / Trailer (6) Cash Van (7) Construction Equipment Vehicle (8) Construction Equipment Vehicle (Commercial) (9) Crane Mounted Vehicle (10) Dumper (11) e-Rickshaw with Cart (G), (12) e-Rickshaw(P) (13) Excavator (Commercial) (14) Excavator (NT) (15) Fire Tenders, (16) Fork Lift, (17) Goods Carrier, (18) Hearses, (19) Maxi Cab, (20) Mobile Canteen, (21) Mobile Clinic (22) Mobile Workshop (23) Motor Cab (24) Omni Bus (25) Recovery Vehicle (26) Road Roller (27) Three Wheeler (Passenger) (28) Tow Truck (29) Vehicle Fitted With Compressor (30) Vehicle Fitted With Generator (31) Vehicle Fitted With Rig.

¹¹⁵ (1) Drama/Tamasha Groups (2) Driving Training School (3) Educational Institute (4) Firm (5) Individual (6) Joint Stock Company (7) Multiple Owner (8) School (9) Others.

¹¹⁶ Except Biswanath Charili.

¹¹⁷ Except Dima Hasao.

4.3.25.2.2 Non-realisation of fine against delayed payment of Annual/ Quarterly MV tax:

Section 5 of the AMV Taxation Act, 1936 provides that motor vehicle taxes should be payable in advance on or before the fifteenth day of April each year for a term of one year. Further, there was provision for payment of MV tax in four equal instalments payable on or before the fifteenth day of April, July, October and January respectively.

‘Note 3’ under Schedule-II of the said Act provides that in case of failure to pay the Annual/ Quarterly tax by due date, a fine of ₹ 5 per day, enhanced¹¹⁸ to ₹ 10 per day effective from 10 July 2023, would be imposed for the period of default.

During test check of payment of MV Tax in eight selected DTOs, Audit observed that the first MV Tax was calculated from the date of purchase of the vehicles and collected at the time of registration of the vehicles. However, as regards the subsequent MV taxes, though collected after due dates, no fine/penalty was collected in respect of 1,51,196 vehicles by the test-checked DTOs. Details are shown in **Table 4.13**:

Table 4.13: MV Tax collected after due date without fine during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24

Name of Districts	Number of Vehicles against which tax was collected	Range of Delays (in days)		Total Loss of Revenue (fine) (in ₹)
		Average	Max	
Biswanath Chariali	306	54	607	81,505
Dibrugarh	4,606	36	678	10,00,045
Dima Hasao	60	43	446	14,580
Jorhat	3,690	50	679	9,65,250
Kamrup	1,38,094	38	6,061	3,46,52,000
Karimganj	1,042	51	1,096	3,02,125
Kokrajhar	2,212	43	679	5,70,000
Udalguri	1,186	54	1,099	3,30,250
Grand Total	1,51,196			3,79,15,755

Source: VAHAN database

Thus, due to non-collection of fine for delay in payment of MV Tax in respect of 1.51 lakh vehicles in eight selected districts, there was a loss of revenue amounting ₹ 3.79 crore to the Exchequer.

The Department acknowledged the Audit observation and stated (May 2025) that the same was being analysed. Department further stated (May 2025) that in case any instance of non-collection of fines for delay in payment of MV tax is found, the necessary steps for recovery of fines at the time of collection of penalty during the next payment would be taken. In this regard, NIC authority was requested to explore a system to put into place for recovery of fine at the time of the next tax payment.

4.3.25.2.3 Transport vehicles of other States entering Assam without authorisation:

From the offence database collected from seven selected DTOs, audit observed that a total 2,534 goods vehicles of different states entered in Assam without valid permit during 2019-24. It was, also, observed that neither the period of invalid permit was recorded, nor was the capacity of vehicles noted in the offence registers. Further, out of these 2,534 vehicles, fine (@ of ₹ 10,000 under Section 192 (A)) for “Vehicle without permit and violating permit conditions” was collected against 2,128 vehicles while

¹¹⁸ Vide Gazette Notification No LGL.189/2020/26 dated 17 October 2023.

finances against permits of remaining 406 vehicles were not collected. As a result, there was a loss of government revenue amounting ₹ 40.60 lakh due to non-imposition of fines against the vehicles of other states without valid permit.

The Department stated (May 2025) that due direction was already issued to all DTOs to carry out strict enforcement drives against the vehicles of other State entering Assam without authorisation.

4.3.25.2.4 Transport vehicles of other States entering Assam with authorisation:

From VAHAN database, it was observed that during the period 2019-2024, a total of 5,998 vehicles of other states obtained permit from their respective authorities for entering Assam. Cross verification of data in respect of authorised permits from other states with the e-Challan data of seven selected districts¹¹⁹, showed that a total of 10,280 vehicles were booked under permit offence clauses. Audit further observed that the dates of offence in respect of 3,210 out of 5,998 vehicles (matched with database in respect of vehicle permits authorised by other states) pertained to period prior to start of the permit validity. Thus, these 3,210 vehicles had entered Assam without valid permit period as shown in **Table 4.14**:

Table 4.14: No. of Vehicles (as per Enforcement Data of seven selected Districts) entered in Assam

Year	Total numbers of vehicles from Other States obtained permits	No. of Vehicles (as per Enforcement Data of seven selected Districts) entered in Assam			Amount of fine not imposed for invalid permit
		beyond permit period	against which fines imposed for invalid permit	against which fines @₹10,000 not imposed	
2019-20	199	2	0	2	20,000
2020-21	233	17	1	16	1,60,000
2021-22	579	195	21	174	17,40,000
2022-23	4,156	2,435	269	2,166	2,16,60,000
2023-24	831	561	87	474	47,40,000
Total	5,998	3,210	378	2,832	2,83,20,000

Source: VAHAN database

From the table above, it may be seen that there were 2,832 vehicles (out of 3,210), whose offence dates were prior to the period of authorised permit, but fines were not imposed and as such, there was a loss of ₹2.83 crore (Fine @₹10,000 per vehicle leviable for plying without permit under Section 192 A of the CMV Act, 1988) to the Exchequer.

The Department stated (May 2025) that a direction had already been issued to all the DTOs to carry out strict enforcement drives against the vehicles of other State entering Assam without authorisation.

4.3.25.2.5 Tax collected against Special Permit: Rule 45 (g) of the AMV Rules, 2003 provides that the STAs/RTAs were authorised to issue the special permit for a

¹¹⁹ One district namely, Dima Hasao did not submit the e-Challan data though called for.

maximum duration of 10 days after observing all formalities without any provision of renewal.

Test check of records of STA and eight selected DTOs showed that 16,193 special permits were issued after collection of appropriate fees. Out of these permits, durations in respect of 999 numbers of such special permits were more than 10 days, ranging from 11 days to 29 days, which was irregular.

Further, though the special permits were not renewed, special permits were found to have been sanctioned repeatedly for the same route against the same vehicle, which negated the very purpose of issuance of special permits.

The Department stated (May 2025) that due to absence of provision to restrict issuance of Special Permit repeatedly for the same route, stringent measures could not be ensured. The matter calls for consideration of the Department.

4.3.25.3 Collection of Fees on all the services rendered by DTOs

During test check of records of eight selected DTOs, audit observed that the fees for rendering various services were collected and deposited in the respective heads of accounts. After collection of fees, the challan numbers were quoted by the respective DTOs before the process of rendering the respective services.

4.3.25.3.1 Imposition of Green Tax (GT): Green Tax (GT) at the rate of 25 per cent of Road Tax was introduced from October 2022 under the AMV Taxation (Amendment) Act, 2022 in respect of non-transport/ transport vehicles which are more than 15/ 10 years old and incorporated into the VAHAN application.

Audit observed that there was arrear of GT against a total of 8,590 transport vehicles fulfilling the conditions. Out of these vehicles, Fitness Certificates (FCs) in respect of 218 transport vehicles (out of sample selected 429 vehicles fulfilling conditions of GT and issued FCs after introduction of GT) were issued without collecting GT (**Table 4.15**). Thus, GT was not systematically imposed diluting the basic objective of introducing deterrence against plying of old vehicles with more adverse impact on environment.

Table 4.15: details of green tax collection and arrears

Types of Transport Vehicles fulfilling conditions of GT and were issued FC	Whether Green tax collected		
	GT not Collected	GT Collected	Not Available
Bus	16	26	-
Construction Equipment Vehicle	2	-	-
Crane Mounted Vehicle	4	-	1
Dumper	36	34	2
Excavator (Commercial)	4	2	-
Excavator (NT)	11	1	-
Goods Carrier	145	135	10
Total	218	198	13

Source: VAHAN database

Audit further observed that the GT was imposed from October 2022 and incorporated in the VAHAN application. Though the rate of road tax was enhanced from October 2023, the rate of GT was not modified in VAHAN application accordingly. Audit cross checked 198 cases where GT had been collected and observed that in case of

101 vehicles, GT ₹3.73 lakh was collected against payable of ₹4.50 lakh leading to loss of Government Revenue amounting ₹0.77 lakh.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the matter was being taken up with NIC to devise a system to ascertain that no fitness certificate is issued without realisation of green tax in respect of those vehicles fulfilling the conditions for payment of green tax.

Audit is of the view that the DTOs were responsible to ascertain that no fitness certificate was issued without realisation of GT.

4.3.25.3.2 High Security Registration Plates (HSRP): Rule 50 of the CMV Rules, 1989 was amended based on the recommendations made by the Technical Standing Committee mandating introduction of new High Security Registration Plates, both in respect of new and in-use motor vehicles throughout the country. The benefits of HSRP mainly include improved safety, curbing theft, quick verification, etc.

Audit observed that against the vehicle population of 19,05,238 (as of March 2024) in eight selected districts, a total of 9,13,917 vehicles (48 per cent) adopted HSRP.

In this respect, it was further observed that during 2019-24, in eight selected districts, a total of 3,653 vehicles were blacklisted in connection with theft. Audit observed that of these blacklisted vehicles, a total of 1,733 (47 per cent) vehicles had adopted HSRP.

The Department stated (May 2025) that as per data collected from NIC authority, HSRP got affixed against 84.30 per cent vehicles of the State till 11 March 2025.

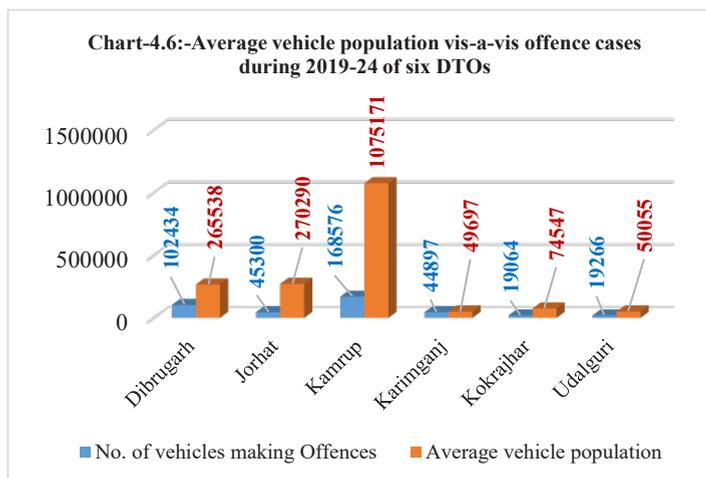
The system of assessment-levy-collection of revenue, especially arrears and fines on OTT and MV tax, calls for more pro-active approach with documentation. The department must take corrective actions to address these inefficiencies, including improving the reliability of databases, enforcing penalties, ensuring proper tracking of vehicle exemptions, and ensuring full collection of taxes and fees.

Audit Objective: Whether the enforcement activities were effectively conducted by DTOs to ensure compliance with the motor vehicles Act/Rules with adequate follow up to deter violations

4.3.26 Enforcement Activities

4.3.26.1 Targets for enforcement activities

To ensure the effective implementation of transport rules and regulations, the Enforcement Wing of the Transport Department plays a crucial role. The main objective is to create deterrence against violations of traffic rules along with collection of revenue in terms of penalties for violation of transport rules and regulations. However, the Department fixed revenue targets in respect of enforcement wing based on MV revenue collection and trend of vehicle registration of the respective districts.



Test check of records of seven¹²⁰ out of eight selected districts showed that during 2019-2024, number of offence cases increased with respect to the vehicle population in respect of six districts (except for the newly formed district of Biswanath Chariali).

Audit also observed that during 2019-2024, a total of 4,21,708 offence cases were recorded in seven districts and 1,25,531 vehicles were recorded as repeated offenders. Section wise number of vehicles involved in repeated (more than once) offences are given in *Appendix-XXXIX*.

Further, out of total 4,21,708 recorded vehicles in offence database of seven DTOs, the penalty levied against 2,71,388 (64.35 per cent) remained pending for recovery as shown in **Table 4.16**:

Table 4.16: Number of cases of penalties collected for violation of MV rules and regulations

Particulars	Biswanath Chariali	Dibrugarh	Jorhat	Kamrup	Karimganj	Kokrajhar	Udalguri	Grand Total
Cash at office	127	245	98	-	19,159	25	0	19,654
Online	9,002	35,972	18,278	49,037	0	9,785	6,900	1,14,458
In court	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	6
Not Available	-	196	-	-	-	-	-	196
On road	17	138	26	1,307	0	2	0	1,490
Pending	13,025	65,883	26,895	1,18,229	25,738	9,252	12,366	2,71,388
Grand Total	22,171	1,02,434	45,300	1,68,576	44,897	19,064	19,266	4,21,708

Source: Departmental data

¹²⁰ One selected district namely Dima Hasao did not furnish any offence database though called for.

Thus, substantial number (57 to 70 per cent) of offence cases remained pending in test checked DTOs with Kamrup having highest pendency both in number and percentage.

The Department accepted (May 2025) the audit observation.

4.3.26.2 Compliance to Permit conditions

Section 84 of the CMV Act, 1988 specified the general conditions of permits like valid certificate of fitness, adherence to permitted speed, *etc.* The conditions of permits are laid down for regulating the use of vehicles in transportation, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and maintaining public safety.

Test check of records of offence cases of seven out of eight selected districts, showed that a total 19,410 cases of violation of permit conditions by 15,603 vehicles were reported under Section 192(A) of MV Act, 1988. However, the specific permit conditions, which had been violated were not recorded.

The Department stated (May 2025) that there was a provision in the e-challan device where enforcement personnel can record the specific conditions which is violated in the remarks column. Further, it is being explored in consultation with NIC if the violated condition of permit can be reflected in the system itself.

4.3.26.3 Offloading of excess weight

Section 114 of MV Act, 1988 provides that when a vehicle is found to ply with excess load over the permissible load, the inspecting officer may direct the driver to off-load the excess weight at his own risk and not to remove the vehicle/trailer from that place until the laden weight has been reduced to the permissible weight or the vehicle/trailer has otherwise been dealt with.

Further, Section 194 of MV Act, 1988 provides that whenever a motor vehicle is found overloaded, it should be punishable with minimum fine of two thousand rupees and an additional amount of one thousand rupees per tonne of excess load, together with the liability to pay charges for off-loading of the excess load. The rate of fine for overloading of goods vehicle was enhanced¹²¹ to minimum fine of ₹20,000 and ₹ 2,000 per excess tonne from 23 September 2019.

Test check of records in respect of offence cases (from November 2019 to March 2023) as recorded by the seven out of eight selected districts showed that a total of 16,956 vehicles were detected for violation of respective loading limits and an amount of ₹ 53.80 crore (Challan amount) was levied as fine for such violation as shown in **Table 4.17:**

Table 4.17: Penalties collected against violation of respective loading parameters

		(₹ in lakh)							
Year	Particulars	Biswanath Chariali	Dibrugarh	Jorhat	Kamrup	Karimganj	Kokrajhar	Udalguri	Grand Total
2019-20	No. of vehicles	0	21	0	558	0	0	0	579
	Challan Amount	0.00	4.20	0.00	212.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	217.01
2020-21	No. of vehicles	26	15	31	1,513	59	69	2	1,715

¹²¹ Notification No. TMV.250/2019/67 dated 23 September 2019.

Year	Particulars	Biswanath Chariali	Dibrugarh	Jorhat	Kamrup	Karimganj	Kokrajhar	Udalguri	Grand Total
	Challan Amount	5.20	3.00	8.54	587.61	20.30	13.80	0.40	638.84
2021-22	No. of vehicles	142	370	520	4,867	304	216	158	6577
	Challan Amount	28.40	74.00	116.23	1,638.25	77.70	43.20	31.60	2,009.37
2022-23	No. of vehicles	125	86	666	4,099	487	258	48	5,769
	Challan Amount	27.50	17.96	185.22	1,211.35	152.69	80.86	11.48	1,687.06
2023-24	No. of vehicles	93	105	302	1,398	168	175	75	2,316
	Challan Amount	32.04	28.02	115.20	496.36	53.10	77.18	26.04	827.39
	Total No. of vehicles	386	597	1,519	12,435	1,018	718	283	16,956
	Total Challan Amount	93.14	127.18	425.18	4146.37	303.78	215.04	69.52	5,380.20

Source: Departmental data

Audit further observed that out of payable fine of ₹ 53.80 crore, ₹ 47.32 crore (88 per cent) was realised against 14,673 (out of 16,956) cases and ₹6.48 crore against 2,283 cases were pending.

Further, rate of fine for overloading (in excess of permissible GVW) of goods vehicle was enhanced (from 23 September 2019) to ₹ 22,000 (i.e., ₹20,000 plus ₹ 2,000 for the first excess tonne). However, the amount levied against violation of overloading of goods vehicle in respect of 2,568 vehicles was less than ₹ 22,000 each. Audit also observed that in 963 cases, though the Inspecting Authority pointed out the excess load of the vehicles, the excess load was neither recorded nor charged for (at the rate of ₹ 2000 per tonne). As a result of levying of fines at the minimum fine amount without charging for the excess load, there was a loss of at least ₹ 1.18 crore to the Exchequer against 2,568 vehicles (on a conservative estimate considering excess weight within one tonne only).

This also diluted the deterrence against overloading, which assumes significance given the fact that as per statistics of MoRTH, total 3,532 road accidents occurred in Assam during 2019-2022, were attributable to overloading of vehicles. The vehicles with extra load above the permissible limit represent a potential threat not only to road safety but also to the quality of roads and also to the environment due to higher levels of emission.

While acknowledging the audit observation, the Department stated (May 2025) that in the existing e-challan software, there was a provision for recording the additional load in the software system and the software itself can calculate the amount for overloaded cases. Thus, despite having provisions in the software, the quantum of overload is not recorded. The Department stated that the matter would be looked into and necessary directions would be given to DTOs for strict compliance with the law.

4.3.26.4 Departmental Statutory Action (DSA)

Offences committed are booked under relevant provisions of the Act and Rules. The compounding fee (CF) is levied by the MVI/enforcement authority by issuing Check Report cum Receipt (CRR)¹²² or Check Report (CR)¹²³. The cases were booked in the VAHAN application during checking of the vehicles by the MVI/ enforcement authority and are forwarded to the DTO for further follow up. Section 207 of MV Act,

¹²² CRR is issued where the offences are compounded on the spot.

¹²³ CR is a show cause notice which is issued in case where offences are not compounded on the spot but at later date.

1988 provides power to detain vehicles plying without certificate of registration, permit, etc.

Test check of records of eight selected DTOs showed that during 2019-24, a total 3,911 vehicles were impounded as stated by seven DTOs without mentioning the details of the vehicles. However, as per offence database, only 3,321 vehicles were impounded for violation of MV rules and regulations. Further, all eight selected DTOs stated that no parking yard was available under their respective jurisdiction. The status of impounded vehicles was also not intimated to audit.

There is lack of transparency in respect of the status of impounded but undisposed vehicles. Thus, there was no effective follow up of DSA cases.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that instruction for maintaining records regarding disposal and undisposed vehicles impounded for violation of MV Rules and regulations had been issued to all the DTOs.

4.3.26.5 Inspection of Emission Testing Centres (ETCs)/ Pollution Testing Centres

The GoA in April 2000¹²⁴ had issued detailed directions to all RTAs for setting up of private emission testing stations which included the provision that the officer authorised by the CoT, Assam may inspect the pollution checking centre at any time.

As of March 2024, there were 125 emission/pollution testing centres under eight selected DTOs¹²⁵. Four out of eight selected DTOs stated that inspection was done during issue of licenses to the auto emission centres; however, no documentary evidence in support of such inspection was made available to Audit.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that inspection report for setting up of AETs at the locations applied for by the applicant was called for from the District Commissioner, Superintendent of Police and DTOs of concerned district and licences were issued based on the report from the above authority. Calibration certificate during issuance of licence was mandatory. However, the Department did not submit anything in support of its assertion regarding such inspection reports of sampled DTOs.

4.3.26.5.1 Vehicles plying without Pollution Under Control Certificates: There are 316 pollution testing centres in Assam (as of March 2024) attached to 32 DTOs. Audit observed that as of March 2024, the on-road vehicle population of Assam was 51,81,111 against which, only 26,42,797 PUCCs¹²⁶ (51 per cent) were issued during 2023-24. The year wise details in respect of on-road vehicle population of Assam as well as total number of PUCC issued mentioned in **Table 4.18**.

¹²⁴ Vide Gazette notification No. TMV.45/96/183 dated 25 April 2000

¹²⁵ No. of Auto Emission Testing Centres in (1) Biswanath Chariali: 13, (2) Dibrugarh: 11, (3) Kokrajhar: 9, (4) Dima Hasao: 1, (5) Karimganj: 6, (6) Jorhat: 16, (7) Kamrup: 56 and (8) Udalguri: 13.

¹²⁶ PUCC: Pollution Under Control Certification

Table 4.18: Total vehicles registered vis-à-vis PUC issued during 2019-24

Year	Total number of On-Road vehicles	Total number of Off-Road vehicles	PUC issued as per GoI portal	Vehicles without PUC as per VAHAN considering one PUC per year	PUC issued as per VAHAN Portal
1	2	3	4	5= (2) – (3) – (4)	6
2019-20	41,67,346	76,481	906	40,89,959	1,323
2020-21	44,18,715	1,67,578	13,16,553	29,34,584	1,24,092
2021-22	45,81,330	2,72,573	16,88,885	26,19,872	2,01,563
2022-23	48,08,182	3,39,571	20,41,570	24,27,041	6,05,671
2023-24	51,81,111	2,88,107	26,42,797	22,50,207	10,48,575

Source: Departmental data

Though the percentage of PUC certificates issued in 2023-24 increased by 29 per cent over that issued in 2022-23, however, it covered only 51 per cent of total on-road vehicles. Further, it was observed that during the period 2019-2024, the total PUC certificates as per GoI portal was 76,90,711 while as per VAHAN portal, was 19,81,223. Due to absence of vehicle wise details of PUC certificates in the GoI portal, audit could not analyse the reasons of such huge discrepancies among two portals.

Audit also observed that out of 4,21,708 offence cases recorded by the seven selected DTOs, 16,594 (only four per cent) cases were booked for violation of air and noise pollution, while only 3,567 cases were booked as “failed to produce PUC” during 2019-2024 though PUC of 8,74,656 vehicles were expired under the jurisdiction of seven DTOs during the same period i.e. 2019-2024.

Evidently, appropriate steps were not initiated for stringent enforcement of pollution control measures. This negated the very purpose of setting up of auto emission centres in Assam.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that regular enforcement drives had been carried out for detection of various traffic violations including plying of vehicles without valid pollution under control certificate. However, the Department did not submit any specific reply in this regard.

4.3.26.5.2 Joint inspection of Pollution Check Centres: To derive a reasonable assurance of compliance to the directions issued in the GoA’s notification¹²⁷, joint inspections were conducted by Audit along with Transport Department Officials covering 35 Pollution Check Centres (PCCs) falling under the jurisdiction of eight selected DTOs. The working of the 35 Pollution Check Centres was inspected against eleven parameters prescribed in the directions dated 25 April 2020. The result of the joint inspection is tabulated in **Table 4.19:**

Table 4.19: Status of Pollution Check Centres found during Joint Physical Inspection

Sl. No.	Parameters	Benchmark	Findings
1.	Number of sets of Smoke Meter installed in the Auto Emission Testing Stations?		
	(i) For Petrol	1	Yes
	(ii) For Diesel	1	Yes
2.	Number of sets of Gas Analyser installed in the Auto Emission Testing Stations?		
	(i) For Petrol	1	Yes
	(ii) For Diesel	1	Yes

¹²⁷ Vide Gazette notification No. TMV.45/96/183 dated 25 April 2000

Sl. No.	Parameters	Benchmark	Findings
3.	The educational qualification of the person of the Auto Emission Testing Stations under whose superintendence the emission from Motor Vehicles is tested.		Graduate :11 Higher Secondary:17 Diploma Holder: 4 Technical Degree holder: 3
4.	The Technical qualification of the person of the Auto Emission Testing Stations by/under whose superintendence the emission from Motor Vehicles is tested.		
	(i) The National Trade Certificate in Mechanic (Diesel) or Mechanic (Motor Vehicles)		Only four out of 35 PCCs have such Certificate
	ii) Motor Mechanic Certificate issued by the Industrial Training Institute		Only seven out of 35 PCCs have such Certificate
	(iii) Two years' experience in engine adjustment (from any reputed workshop or motor garage)		Only seven out of 35 PCCs have such experience
5.	Total number of Technically qualified person against each machine installed		
	(i) No. of Technically qualified person		14 persons (Available in 12 PCCs; not available in 23 PCCs)
	(ii) No. of machine installed in the AETs		Two machines in 14 PCCs One machine in 12 PCCs Nil in 9 PCCs
6.	Working days and Time of the Auto Emission Testing Station	7AM to 7PM with one hour break	6 days in a week (9AM to 6PM)
7.	Display of a signboard to enables any customer to locate the testing station		All except one have signboard
8.	Display of the licence and the prescribed standard for pollutants		Licence displayed in only one PUCC, No PUCC displayed the prescribed standards of pollutants
9.	Preparation of the certificate in single or duplicate and issue		Yes, online ¹²⁸
10.	Copies of register/ paper in support of inspection of the Auto Emission Testing Station by the Transport authorities		Not available
			

Source: Joint verification

Thus, the PCCs lacked basic equipment and technically qualified human resource to operate the installed machines in the PCCs.

The Department while accepting the audit observation, stated (May 2025) that necessary instructions would be issued to all the DTOs.

The Department needs to ensure that the Pollution Check Centres adhere to the prescribed rule provisions.

4.3.26.5.3 Non-compliance with the directives of Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA): As the pollution levels of Assam are increasing, the PCBA, with the

¹²⁸ Available by entering vehicle No. and chassis No. at <https://puc.parivahan.gov.in/puc/views/PucCertificate.xhtml>.

involvement and co-ordination of various agencies/ organisations¹²⁹, prepared (September 2019) an action plan for Control of Air Pollution in five cities¹³⁰/ towns of Assam which could not attain the parameters required for pollution under control. The actionable aspects in respect of Transport Department, Assam are as under:

- Auditing and reform of Pollution Under Control (PUC) certification,
- Launching extensive drive against polluting vehicles which have completed 15 years for ensuring strict compliance and their stepwise phasing out from the road,
- Setting up of adequate numbers of additional auto emission testing stations.

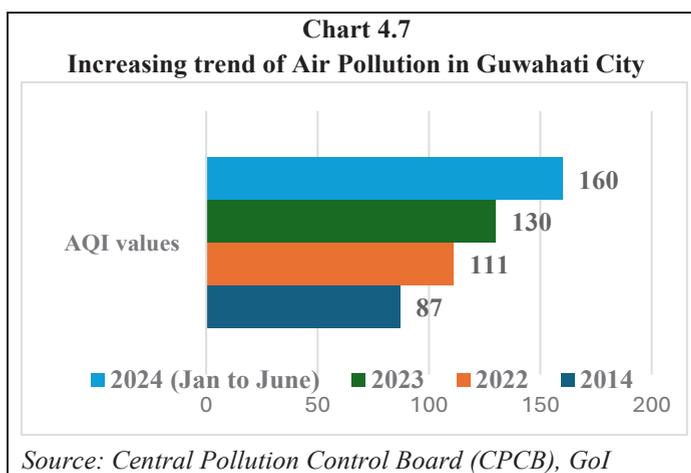
Audit observed the followings in respect of one city namely Guwahati (selected by PCBA) under DTO, Kamrup (one out of eight selected DTOs):

(i) In 14 auto emission testing stations (ETS), a total 2,73,408 vehicles were tested, and 2,73,121 (99.89 per cent) vehicles were declared as “pollution under control” vehicles and PUC certificates were issued during January 2021 to December 2023. Transport Department, Assam did not initiate any action for auditing and reforms of PUC certification, though suggested by the PCBA.

(ii) Out of 2,73,121 vehicles, the age of 8,527 vehicles were more than 15 years with maximum age of a vehicle being 54 years. Out of 8,527 vehicles older than 15 years, 967 vehicles were booked under various offences which proved that these vehicles were on road. However, audit also observed that no steps were initiated towards further verification of strict pollution compliance of these ageing vehicles and phasing them out from road.

(iii) Audit also observed that

- In 476 cases, fitness certificates were issued under DTO, Kamrup though the validity of PUC certificates had expired which represented undue leniency on the part of DTO while issuing fitness certificates.
- In 420 cases, PUCC was issued though the validity of fitness certificates has been lapsed under DTO, Kamrup.



¹²⁹ (1) Transport Department, (2) Pollution Control Board, Assam, (3) Public Works Department (Road), (4) Guwahati Municipal Corporation, (5) Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority, (6) District Administration, (7) Traffic Police Department, (8) Forest Department, (9) National Highway Authority of India, (10) Industries and Commerce Department and (11) Food and Civil Supplies.

¹³⁰ Five City/ Towns were (1) Guwahati, (2) Sivasagar, (3) Silchar, (4) Nalbari and (5) Nagaon.

Thus, the Transport Department, one of the major organisations primarily responsible for implementing the action plan for Control of Air Pollution, did not initiate adequate steps as suggested by PCBA in the action plan to reduce the pollution level of Guwahati city. Further, audit collected data in respect of air pollution in Guwahati city which clearly reflects that the air quality of the city is deteriorating as shown in **Chart 4.7**.

In reply, the Department stated (May 2025) that a new version of testing the emission norms had been introduced in the State. Further, on operationalisation of ATSS, it is expected to ensure scientific testing of vehicles including Pucc check, leading to phase out of old and polluting vehicles. It was added that other relevant matters would be looked into for taking necessary steps.

High percentage (30 per cent) of repeated offences indicates substantial scope for improvement in enforcement activities. There were lacunae in handling cases involving overloading of vehicles. The fact that more than 99 per cent of the vehicles (including old vehicles) visiting Auto Emission Test Centres/ Pucc centres were being issued “pollution under control” certificate, throws doubt on the efficacy and reliability of the tests. The Department did not comply with the directives of Pollution Control Board (PCB), Assam.

Audit Objective: Whether DTOs have been provided with required manpower, equipment and other resources to discharge the mandate as also to ensure public service delivery in a transparent and efficient manner.

4.3.27 Monitoring functions and remedial activities of the Transport Department

4.3.27.1 Review Meeting and action taken report

Review meetings of a department is crucial for evaluating overall performance of the department, identifying areas for improvement, resolving issues within specific timeline, *etc.* which ultimately contribute to increased efficiency and better overall departmental performance.

Audit observed that during 2019-2024, nine meetings¹³¹ (five chaired by the CoT, three chaired by the Chairman, STA and one chaired by Chief Minister, Assam) were held to review the functioning of the DTOs. The gist of such meetings as well as audit observations on implementation of the resolutions taken therein, is mentioned in **Table 4.20**.

Table 4.20: Major resolutions in Review Meetings and Status of implementation

Gist of major resolutions in review meetings	Audit observations on compliance to the resolutions
(A) Taxation aspects	
(i) to make realistic assessment/planning for fixing monthly target of revenue collection;	In place of realistic assessment for fixing target of collection of revenue, the Department fixed revenue targets based on MV revenue collection and trend of
(ii) all avenues for collection of MV revenue should be worked out properly;	

¹³¹ Number of meetings in 2019-20: four; 2021-22: two and 2022-23: three.

Gist of major resolutions in review meetings	Audit observations on compliance to the resolutions
(iii) assessment of arrear tax for all categories of vehicles with all efforts to collect the outstanding dues.	<p>vehicle registration of the respective districts. However, the Department did not assess arrears and number of migrated vehicles.</p> <p>The Department stated that fixation of revenue targets was based on pattern of MV revenue collection and vehicle registration of the respective districts. However, in support the Department did not provide any documents for fixation target of MV revenue.</p> <p>Further, the Department did not assess the arrear taxes, the migration of vehicles and entry of vehicles from outside State without valid permits, etc.</p>
(B) Regulatory aspects	
(i) Special drives should be made against vehicles of other states plying irregularly within the State.	<p>Non-levy of penalties on migrated vehicles has been continuing;</p> <p>Substantial mismatch between number of transport/ non-transport vehicles registered during 2019-24 and number of permits granted against transport vehicles, was observed.</p>
(ii) vigorous enforcement drives should be carried out against vehicles violating MV rules especially against overloaded vehicles;	<p>Effective enforcement drives were not carried out as pointed in <i>Paragraph 4.3.26</i>; further, there were lacunae on the part of the DTOs in imposing penalties on overloaded vehicles.</p>
(iii) to take action against over dimension projection vehicles;	<p>Deficiencies in taking actions against Irregular alteration of vehicles were observed.</p>
(iv) to analyse the actual causes of road accidents, identification of accident-prone areas;	<p>Vehicle wise accident data could not be produced to audit though called for; evidently, the same was not maintained.</p>
(v) stringent measure required to be taken in issue of DL as most of the accident takes place due to the carelessness of the drivers and	<p>Such data would have helped the Department in identifying reasons for accidents like validity of fitness certificates, quality of drivers' tests, etc.</p>
(vi) DL and FC should be issued to the deserving ones as the ratio of DL tests passed to failed and FC issued to rejected were disproportionately high.	<p>Supreme Court judgement on overloaded vehicles was not implemented as there were indications that overloaded vehicles were allowed to ply even after offence case detection without seizure of the vehicle. Though three out of eight selected DTOs stated that offloading was carried out, Audit observed lacunae in this matter.</p> <p>Strict stance against issue of DL without actual driving tests were not conducted. To assess 24 parameters of driving skills per DL applicant, an MVI may require at least 15 to 20 minutes. Therefore, in a day at the maximum 25 to 30 applicants can only be tested. However, more than</p>

Gist of major resolutions in review meetings	Audit observations on compliance to the resolutions
	48 DL tests were conducted per day in 24 out of 40 instances (<i>Paragraph 4.3.13.2</i>).
(C) Strategic Planning - Department did not prepare any strategic plan, though recommended by the Committee.	

Source: Departmental information

There were significant deficiencies in compliance to resolutions taken at State/Department level monitoring meetings relating to taxation and other key regulatory aspects.

The review meetings of the Department were intended to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in revenue collection, regulatory compliance, and road safety enforcement. However, the audit reveals significant gaps in implementation, including the absence of realistic revenue assessment, weak enforcement of motor vehicle regulations, and inability to address issues like arrear tax collection and the regulation of migrated vehicles. Additionally, non-compliance with Supreme Court judgments on overloaded vehicles and the issuance of driving licenses without adequate testing indicate systemic weaknesses in enforcement. The lack of a strategic plan further highlights the department's reactive rather than proactive approach. These shortcomings have serious implications for revenue optimisation, road safety, and overall governance within the transport sector.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the DTOs had been directed to assess the numbers of migrated/other State vehicles plying in the State and reassignment thereof and maintain such records. The District Transport Officers were also directed to levy penalty on the migrated vehicles that have been plying in the State.

4.3.27.2 Absence of departmental manual

Rule 109 of the AMV Rules, 2003 made provisions for power/ responsibilities of the higher authorities of the Motor Vehicle Department towards the subordinate officers. Under the provisions of different Sections¹³² of the CMV Act, 1988, there is segregation of powers among various levels of functionaries. However, the Department did not prepare any departmental manual which may serve as a standing order and a means of coordinated efforts and a basis for performance measurement and appraisal of these functionaries for day-to-day activities.

The Department stated (May 2025) that for the purpose of carrying into effect the provision of the MV Act and rules made thereunder, the State Government already made Rules regulating the discharge of duties by officers of Transport Department of

¹³² (i) The rank of Motor Vehicle Inspector or above should exercise the powers under provisions of Sections 56, 109, 136, 178, 179, 184, 190, 190(2) 192, 192(A), 193, 196, 206, 207 of the Act and Rules 116 of Motor Vehicles Rules 1989 (ii) the rank of Enforcement Inspector or above should exercise the powers under the provisions of Sections 114, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 192, 192(A), 193, 194, 196, 203, 206, 207 of the Act and (iii) the rank of District Transport Officer or above should be exercised the powers under the provisions of Sections 177, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 189, 195, 196, 197, 198 of the Act.

their functions, uniform, *etc.* However, the Department did not submit any specific reply in respect of a departmental manual.

4.3.27.3 Prescribed time schedule of different kinds of services of DTOs

To ensure citizens' access to public services in timely, efficient, and accountable manner, the GoA enacted the Assam Right to Public Services (ARTPS) Act, 2012 which enables the Department to notify stipulated timeframe for public services. Accordingly, the CoT, Assam included¹³³ twelve Transport Department related services¹³⁴ under Assam Citizen Centric Service Delivery. From March 2022¹³⁵ onwards, 16 services were included for public service deliveries under ARTPS Act.

During test check of records in eight selected DTOs, audit observed the followings:

In 3,71,313 cases, the DL was issued after 15 days. The average delay in issue of DL after 15 days ranged between 30 days and 85 days (details in *Paragraph 4.3.16*);

There were delays in permanent registration from temporary registration ranging from 6 to 74 *per cent* in the test checked districts except three districts namely, Jorhat, Udalguri and Biswanath Chariali for the year 2023-24 (details in *Paragraph 4.3.24.1.4*).

Thus, there were instances of delays in different kinds of service delivery by the Department.

The Department did not provide (May 2025) any specific reply in this regard.

4.3.27.4 Disposal of public grievances

"Effective Redressal of Public Grievances" arising out of corruption, from systemic deficiencies and from poor service delivery, is one of the most important citizen centric aspects which enhances the performance of the department.

Audit observed that none of the eight selected DTOs maintained register for recording public grievances and timely disposal of the same. However, during 2019-2024, all public grievances were received through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). It was also observed that for timely disposal of public grievances, the Department issued instructions through CPGRAMS and 1,220 (99 *per cent*) out of 1,231 grievances in CPGRAMS were resolved till December 2024.

Training on redressal of public grievances: Audit observed that though a workshop on RTPS and CPGRAMS for all the Public Grievance Officers of the Service Delivery Department was held (November 2024) at the Assam Administrative Staff College,

¹³³ Vide letter No. CST-E/19/2012/Pt-(II)/2153 dated 03 September 2019.

¹³⁴ 12 Services of Transport Department include Issuance of (i) LL for non-transport vehicle, (ii) LL for transport vehicle, (iii) DL for non-transport vehicle, (iv) DL for transport vehicle (v) Duplicate DL for both transport and non-transport vehicles, (vi) vehicle registration for non-transport vehicle, (vii) vehicle registration for transport vehicle (Viii) Duplicate registration for non-transport vehicles, (ix) Duplicate registration for transport vehicles, (x) NOC, (xi) FC for transport vehicle and (xii) Ownership transfer for both transport and non-transport vehicles.

¹³⁵ Vide Office Memorandum No TMV.54/2012/pt/Vol-III/44 dated 07 March 2022.

Guwahati, no such training/ workshop was organised by the Transport Department for its staff.

The absence of a dedicated grievance register at the DTO level indicates a lack of structured tracking and accountability in handling public complaints, which could lead to unresolved issues and diminished public trust in the Transport Department. While the Department has relied on CPGRAMS for grievance redressal, its effectiveness may be undermined by the lack of internal monitoring mechanisms at the district level. The high resolution rate (99 *per cent*) suggests efficiency in addressing complaints; however, without independent verification, the quality and effectiveness of redressal remain uncertain.

Moreover, the Department's inability to conduct targeted training on grievance redressal for its staff reflects a missed opportunity to enhance service delivery and responsiveness.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the Officers and Staff from the Transport Department had been sent from time to time to be trained on RTPS and on CPGRAM portal organised by the ARTPS authority and other competent authorities. Further, the Department stated that the CPGRAM portal itself keeps the records which can be downloaded as and when required. However, the Department did not submit any supporting documentation in this regard.

4.3.27.5 Effectiveness of online applications

Audit observed that prior to September 2021, there was no system for proper recording of the number of applications other than DL, FC and RC in eight selected DTOs. Services other than DL, FC and RC were provided manually, however, relevant records (like different registers for different services) were not maintained by any of the eight selected DTOs and as such, audit could not analyse the cumulative numbers of applications received and services provided thereagainst.

From September 2021, a total of 40 services were brought under the purview of online applications.

All the eight selected DTOs stated that the online services had enabled the DTOs to process a greater number of applications compared to the manual system and the benefits of the online system had accrued to the general public in terms of reduced number of visits to the DTOs. Further, four out of eight DTOs stated that tickets were raised by them on the complaints of public which were duly attended and resolved.

The Department stated (May 2025) that almost all Transport services were online with 56 services being made faceless and contactless till date, requiring no visit by the public to DTO offices. Such services can be availed by people online, from making online application to payment of fee digitally to online scrutiny and approval. Further, cent percent cashless and digital transaction is made compulsory in the DTO offices *w.e.f.* 01 September, 2020.

The resolutions of the Departmental Review meetings on arrear tax collections, stricter regulation of driving licenses, analysing reasons for road accidents, drawing of departmental strategic plan, etc. were not implemented.

Audit Objective: Whether DTOs have been provided with required manpower, equipment and other resources to discharge the mandate as also to ensure public service delivery in a transparent and efficient manner.

4.3.28 Operational Preparedness of the Department for Service Delivery

Strategic planning is important for departments as it influences the goal of the department and also helps in improved decision making, resource management and operational efficiency. Audit observed that the Department did not prepare any strategic plan despite directions made in the review meeting¹³⁶ to strategise the action plan of the Department. Absence of such plan had an adverse impact on availability of manpower and infrastructures at DTOs.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the budget was the main tool for carrying out various departmental activities, implementations of schemes/ project/ works/ programmes *etc.* Further, activities, services under the Commissioner of Transport, Assam are being carried out as per guidelines issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) from time to time. However, the Department did not submit any specific reply about strategic planning.

4.3.28.1 Manpower management: Cadre restructuring of Transport Department

Under the CMV Act and the Rules made thereunder, the MVIs and Senior MVIs of the Transport Department discharge critical functions like (i) inspection and registration of new vehicles; (ii) issue and renewal of FC of Transport Vehicles; (iii) inspection of Transport Vehicles on road for compliance with license and permit conditions, inspection of goods/ passengers vehicles, condition of the vehicle, *etc.*; (iv) inspection of vehicles involved in accident cases and (v) issue of DLs after conducting driving test.

With entry of new vehicles, the vehicular density in the State has been increasing steadily as shown in **Table 4.21**:

Table 4.21: Growth in vehicular population in Assam

Particulars	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total Non-Transport Vehicles registered in the State	4,44,532	3,75,615	3,80,761	4,75,296	5,46,519
Total Transport Vehicles registered in the State	73,766	43,332	54,427	91,127	1,14,517
Total vehicles registered in the State	5,18,298	4,18,947	4,35,188	5,66,423	6,61,036
Percentage of growth in number of Non-Transport vehicles		-15.50	1.37	24.83	14.98
Percentage of growth in number of Transport vehicles		-41.26	25.60	67.43	25.67
Percentage of growth in number of vehicles		-19.17	3.88	30.16	16.70

Source: Departmental information

¹³⁶ Review meetings with DTOs dated 02 August 2022 and chaired by the Chief Minister of Assam.

Further, the increase in population seeking licenses and obtaining fitness certificates for older vehicles adds to the workload of the Department which requires adequate number of personnel to discharge their stipulated duties.

Audit observed that the Assam Transport Service Rules, 2003 provide for three classes and cadres¹³⁷ which include 10 categories of posts in the Department along with total number of posts in these categories against 23 DTOs. However, presently there were 32 DTOs in Assam. Though no restructuring of technical as well as administrative cadres of the Transport Department after 2003 was done; however, the sanctioned strength of different cadres was enhanced from time to time.

The present position of sanction strength *vis-à-vis* persons-in-position (as of March 2024) as shown in **Table 4.22**:

Table 4.22: Sanctioned Strength & Man-in Position of various categories of staff

Category of Posts	Name of Posts	Sanctioned strength	Persons-in-Position	Vacancy (in per cent)
Technical	Motor Vehicle Inspector	61	38	23 (37.70)
Administrative	District Transport Officer	39	27	12 (30.76)
	Enforcement Inspector	94	40	54 (57.45)
	Senior Assistant (District)	77	49	28 (36.36)
	Asstt. Enforcement Inspector	194	135	59 (30.41)
	Enforcement Checker	151	102	49 (32.45)

The rapid increase in vehicular population in Assam, particularly in the last two years (2022-24), has significantly added to the workload of the Transport Department. While the overall vehicle registration has seen a substantial growth of 30.16 *per cent* in 2022-23 and 16.70 *per cent* in 2023-24, this increase directly impacts the demand for driving licenses, fitness certifications, and regulatory enforcement. Despite this surge, the sanctioned strength and actual manpower in the Department have not kept pace with the growing responsibilities. The lack of restructuring since 2003, despite an increase in the number of DTOs from 23 to 32, suggests a systemic shortcoming in workforce planning and resource allocation. The increasing volume of vehicles necessitates not only an adequate number of officials but also efficient enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with motor vehicle regulations and road safety measures.

The audit findings reveal that vacancies across various technical and administrative posts range between 30 *per cent* and 57 *per cent*, severely hampering the Department's ability to conduct enforcement activities, inspections, and public service delivery. Particularly concerning is the 37.70 *per cent* shortfall in Motor Vehicle Inspectors (MVIs), which compromises the quality of vehicle checks and road safety compliance. Similarly, the Enforcement Inspector cadre faces a 57.45 *per cent* vacancy, weakening the department's ability to curb violations such as overloading, irregular plying of vehicles, and fraudulent licensing.

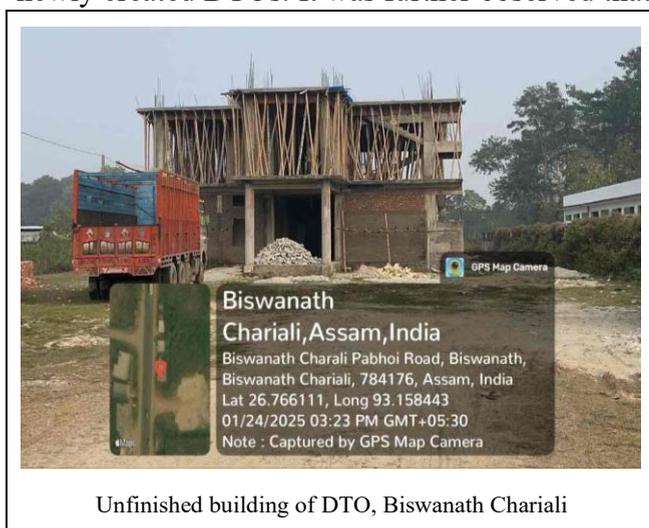
¹³⁷ (A) Class-I (Grade-I) includes (i) Joint Commissioner of Transport, (ii) Deputy Commissioner of Transport, (iii) Assistant Commissioner of Transport; (B) Class-I (Grade-II) includes (i) District Transport Officer, (ii) District Transport (Pool) Officer, (iii) Principal, Drivers and Conductors Training School; (C) Class-II includes (i) Motor Vehicle Inspector, (ii) Enforcement Inspector; (D) Class-III includes (i) Assistant Enforcement Inspector and (ii) Enforcement Checker.

All eight test-checked DTOs acknowledged the inadequacy of staff, highlighting the urgent need for recruitment and structural reforms. The continued manpower shortage, despite the increasing vehicle population, risks eroding public confidence in the transport department's efficiency and regulatory oversight.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the matter would be looked into and would be taken up at appropriate level.

4.3.28.2 Construction of DTOs

The number of DTOs in 2003 was 23 which enhanced to 32 in 2019. Audit observed that during 2017-18 to 2022-23, work orders in respect of construction of nine DTO offices were issued. However, three of these work orders related to old DTOs namely Nagaon, Hailakandi and Lakhimpur. Thus, only six buildings were taken up out of nine newly created DTOs. It was further observed that out of nine DTO offices¹³⁸ taken up,



the physical progress in respect of only two buildings at Nagaon and Hojai has reached 100 per cent.

In the case of remaining seven other buildings¹³⁹, (including five for newly created DTOs), the physical progress ranged from 17 to 67 per cent till March 2024.

Thus, in absence of strategic plan of the department, the department could not address the need of infrastructure and staff to meet the

need associated with growing vehicular population in the state.

The Department stated (May 2025) that the construction works are of ongoing nature and factors like pace of execution of the works, fund requirement demand from the competent authorities, revised estimate for any technical reasons, etc. have impact on physical progress for completion of the works within the financial outlay and within specified time-period. The PWD (Building) and ASTC are the executing authorities relating to construction of DTO office building across the state. The Commissioner of Transport, Assam is not the appropriate authority to draw up strategic plan regarding construction of DTO office building. The reply was however silent on the pursuance done by the Department for timely completion of the construction.

¹³⁸ Nagaon, Majuli, Hailakandi, Charaideo, Hojai, South Salmara, Lakhimpur, Kamrup (R) and Biswanath Chariali.

¹³⁹ Work orders issued for the remaining incomplete seven constructions of DTO office at (i) Hailakandi, (15/02/2019) (ii) South Salmara (26/02/2019), (iii) Charaideo (08/03/2019), (iv) Biswanath Chariali (08/03/2019), (v) Majuli (05/08/2019), (vi) Lakhimpur (dated NIL), (vii) Kamrup (R) (23/05/2022).

4.3.29 Conclusion

The Performance Audit (PA) encompassed full gamut of activities of the STAs/DTOs and came across a number of deficiencies in their functioning in terms of issue, renewal and cancellation of licences; registration, permits and fitness certificates of vehicles; assessment, levy & collection of various taxes on motor vehicles; and enforcement activities. There were also lacunae in the monitoring functions at various levels including non-implementation of resolutions taken at the highest level.

The infrastructure for conducting the driving tests was found deficient in all the selected districts indicating that the driving tests were not in conformity with the provisions of the CMV rules. Evidently, the drivers' actual ability to drive a vehicle was not subjected to desired level of assessment before issuance of DLs/ LLs. In absence of provision for making conductors' licences mandatory, the control on safety protocols in stage carriages, especially in case of Educational Institution Buses, were missing.

Another area calling for attention is the non-availability of fitness test infrastructure and non-adherence to the statutory requirements of the fitness test of vehicles. Though two ATS for fitness tests were available in Assam, at least one of them was substantially falling short of standards set by the Gazette of India, Statutory Rules (GSR). Such a scenario is surely a matter of concern if viewed with accidents due to mechanical failures, compromised braking systems, or age of vehicles as seen from the MoRTH reports of road accidents.

As regards outstanding One-time Tax and MV Tax of transport and goods vehicles (including statutory fines thereon), though the sampled DTOs informed that the demand notices were issued, there was no system of documentation of demand notices and to pursue and monitor the actual realisation of road taxes from the defaulting vehicle owners. Further, Department did not collect substantial amount of tax on the basis of periodic permits covering 12 months and capacity of vehicles exceeding nine MT.

There is substantial scope for improvement in enforcement activities as would be evident from high percentage (30 *per cent*) of repeated offences. There are lacunae in handling cases involving overloading of vehicles and resultantly the amount payable against each tonne of excess load was not realised. Non-compliance of directives of Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) by the Transport Department and its functionaries was another area of concern. There were substantial number of instances where fitness certificates were issued to vehicles with expired PUC certificates and *vice-versa*.

The resolutions of the Departmental Review meetings covering aspects of arrear tax collections, regulatory issues like stricter rules in granting driving licenses, analysing reasons for road accidents, *etc.* were not implemented. Deployment of manpower was not commensurate with the increase in number of vehicles in the state, which was further compounded by high percentage (30 to 57 *per cent*) of vacant posts at all cadres.

4.3.30 Recommendations

The Department of Transport, Government of Assam may consider implementation of the following corrective measures:

- *The proper infrastructure may be made/created for driving test for granting Driving Licences as well as for fitness test for issuance of Fitness Certificates for vehicles in all Districts;*
- *The Department may invoke the enabling provisions in the Acts and Rules to bring the weighbridges in the ambit of licensing;*
- *Proper monitoring may be made while granting/renewal of licences to the Driving Schools and the Pollution Testing Centres and also periodical inspection may be carried out by the Competent Authority;*
- *Stricter control on the permit, fitness and safety measures of the buses of Educational Institutions needs to be in place;*
- *System may be made in such a way that Outstanding Tax, Fine, Fitness Test, Pollution Control Test, Insurance, Permits, etc. may be linked to each other for better compliance.*