

SHILLONG, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2020

CAG reports non-filing of utilisation certificates worth over Rs 4,200 cr

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG, Nov 13: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has reported non-submission of as many as 1,110 utilisation certificates (UCs) amounting to Rs 4,299.62 crore by various departments in Meghalaya between 2016 and March 2019.

The CAG state finances audit report for the year ended March 31, 2019, states that the Education department has not submitted UCs amounting to Rs 1,757.25 crore (40.87 per cent of the total).

Other defaulter include Economic Service department (Rs 532.87 crore, 12.39 per cent); Rural

Employment department (Rs 506.06 crore, 11.77 per cent); Rural Development

department

(Rs 424.50 crore, 9.87 per cent); Health & Family Welfare Department (Rs 410.79 crore,

9.55 per cent); Welfare of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward

Classes (Rs 273.30 crore, 6.36 per cent); Power department (Rs 123.55 crore, 2.87 per cent);

Arts and Culture department (Rs 76.78 crore, 1.79 per cent); Social Security & Welfare department (Rs 58.83 crore, 1.37 per cent) and Sports & Youth Affairs department (Rs 45.24 crore, 1.05 per cent).

In the absence of UCs, it could not be ascertained whether the recipients had utilised the grants for the purposes for which these were disbursed. Huge pen-

dency in submission of

UCs is fraught with the risk of fraud and misappropriation of funds.

Construction workers' welfare cess

Meghalaya Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board (MBOCWFB) was constituted on September 2, 2009, and reconstituted in April 23, 2018, to oversee implementation of welfare schemes for its beneficiaries from the funds collected by the Board.

As per information furnished by the Board, the total amount of labour cess collected since inception till 2018-19 was Rs 137.70 crore while the total amount spent was only Rs 4.15 crore (3 per cent). Less utilisation of the cess amount indicated that the welfare measures for

workers were not being undertaken at a scale as envisaged in the Meghalaya Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Act.

Moreover, the cess so collected was not credited into the government accounts but was deposited into the Board's bank account. "While agreeing to the audit observation, the Finance department instructed (February 2020) the Secretary, Labour department to henceforth deposit the cess under the appropriate Head of Account", the CAG reported.

Misappropriation, loss

The state government reported 74 cases of theft, misappropriation and loss involving government money amounting to Rs 200.75 lakh up to March 2019 on

which final action was pending.

Out of the 74 cases, departments concerned had filed FIRs with the Police department only in respect of 69 cases involving Rs 154.73 lakh. In the remaining five cases involving Rs 46.02 lakh, information on filing of FIRs had not been furnished.

Out of Rs 200.75 lakh, the highest amount of theft and loss of Rs 88.44 lakh pertained to Finance department involving in two cases.

The highest amount of misappropriation of Rs 44.09 lakh pertained to Meghalaya Legislative Assembly involving two cases. Loss of government material of Rs 21.06 lakh pertained to the Horticultural department involving one case.