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CAG trashes state's waste management

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JAIPUR: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has trashed the efforts of urban local bodies (ULBs) and gram panchayats (GPs) on waste disposal and said there were no effective plans for reducing, reusing and recycling of waste in most of the ULBs and gram panchayats.

In its report tabled in the Assembly on September 5 and released to the media on Tuesday, the CAG noted that the state failed to do an assessment of the waste being generated and risk it poses to the environment and human health. The CAG did a performance audit of 22 ULBs (out of total 197) and 43 gram panchayats (out of total 9,894 as on March 2017) in eight (out of total 33) districts—Baran, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jhalawar, Karauli, Pali and Udaipur—from 2012-13 to 2016-17.

According to the report, the government of Rajasthan released Rs 292.81 crore to urban local bodies in 2015-17 for solid waste management under the Swachh Bharat Mission but the ULBs could use only 21% of it and the remaining was unused. Door-to-door collection of municipal solid waste (MSW) was not done in 55.41% urban wards of the state in 2016-17, according to the report.

The report points out major flaws in collection, segregation and disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW). The situation, the report wrote, is same for plastic waste and e-waste.

In the report, the Directorate of Local Bodies assessed that 6,400 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste per day (MTPD) in urban areas for a year in 2015-16. The ULBs did not assess the quantum of plastic waste and e-waste in the urban areas in these five years. The Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board was also clueless regarding e-waste and plastic waste in the state, according to the report.

The report pointed out that solid waste was being neither

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segregated nor processed in any of the ULBs and GPs and unprocessed municipal solid waste was being dumped on open land. Landfill sites were made available in only three out of the 22 ULBs and these three were unused. The report found fault with hiring of vehicles from private contractors for transport of waste by Bikaner Municipal Corporation, Pali Municipal Council and Sumerpur Municipal Board, putting the expenditure to Rs 16.46 crore, which the CAG said was avoidable. The report lists the replies by the three ULBs to this but CAG found them unconvincing.

The CAG said all ULBs should prepare detailed project reports for the management of solid waste and introduce effective strategies for better waste management, including strategies for reduction, reuse and recycling of waste. It added that the ULBs and GPs should identify and register waste pickers and waste dealers to facilitate and regulate their participation in waste management.

In its recommendations, the CAG said all the ULBs and GPs should ensure 100% door-to-door collection of waste, develop adequate storage facilities and encourage waste generators to segregate the waste at source. They should ensure that transportation of all waste is done in covered vehicles and ensure its disposal in developed landfill sites after processing and they should establish a mechanism for collection, handling, segregation, transportation and disposal of plastic waste and e-waste, it said.