

CAG Audit Report

Why in news?

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Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) tabled a report in Parliament, on Environmental clearance (EC) and the progress in Border roads construction.

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What changed now?

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- Of 2,898 projects that were granted EC between 2011 and 2015, the CAG chose 208 and analysed them to check if they were cleared within the prescribed 105 days.

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- Nearly **90% of them were delayed**. 86 days delay in 2011 was spiked to 316 days in 2014.

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- After the NDA government came to power, the Environment Minister introduced a provision, **whereby project developers could submit their applications online**.

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- In a reply to the CAG, the Ministry said reasons for delay were in moving documents, opening specific files for submitting to the Member Secretary, insufficient skilled hands and insufficient information and clarification from project developers.

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- 62/216 projects scrutinised, had problems with the way they conducted their public consultation process with villagers or residents.

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What did the CAG say about border roads?

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- In the aftermath of border war with China in 1962, India had maintained a policy to not build border roads reasoning that they could be used by the Chinese forces to make quick inroads.
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- Later, in 2007, the policy was reversed and the Government had identified the construction of 73 strategically important roads to improve connectivity.
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- These **roads are critical for the Indian Army** to quickly mobilise men and equipment to remote posts in the high altitude region.
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- In that, 61 India China Border Roads (ICBR) were included in **Border Roads Development Board** (BRDB) programme and they were planned to be completed by 2012.
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- However, only 15 roads had been completed by 2012.
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- Out of the balance 46 roads, only 7 roads were completed by March 2016, thereby, extending the Planned Date of Completion to 2021.
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- This means only 36% of target had been completed despite spending 98% against the estimated cost.
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- The report also noted numerous instances of **defective construction** of roads.
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Source: The Hindu

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