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The Bihar government has been indicted by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) for not replying to inspection reports in the investigation into the multi-crore defalcation of funds by the animal husbandry department (AHD).

In its report, the CAG has also taken a serious view of the major irregularities in the purchase of medicines and other materials like cattle feed, totalling over Rs 62.02 crores.

The report, placed in both houses of the state legislature, says that 167 inspection reports, issued since 1990-91 pertaining to the irregularities in the AHD in 19 districts, have not been submitted by the department. It has pointed out that expenditure to the tune of Rs 18.52 crores has been incurred in comparison to the revenue received in two piggery development farms in Kanke and Hatwar.

Purchase of yellow maize, medicines and other goods during 1990-92 on irregular bill forms and the mode of transportation for their supply to the tune of Rs 18 crores

has been detected. Apart from this, fraudulent withdrawals, excess purchase of medicines and other irregular payments to the tune of over Rs 62.02 crores have also been found in different offices of the department in Ranchi and Gumla. In none of these cases, the state government had taken the trouble to get the matter investigated either by higher departmental authorities or the vigilance department, according to the CAG report. It added that in all these cases the state government had been told to take such action as may be deemed necessary.

The report also flayed the state government for non-utilisation of funds, mainly for Centrally-sponsored schemes, including the Ganga Action Plan (GAP) and modernisation of prison administration.

An amount of Rs 540 crores was withdrawn by four departments and kept in civil deposits to avoid the budget grants during 1989-90 to 1994-95 from lapsing. The amount drawn included funds for various non-plan schemes as well as funds sanctioned for specific programmes. Of this, Rs 379.89 crores was lying unutilised in civil

deposits, including Rs 102.82 crores meant for the implementation of Central and Centrally-sponsored schemes, the report revealed.

The GAP, launched with much fanfare in 1986 for improving the water quality of the river Ganga and its tributaries to acceptability standards as a Centrally-sponsored scheme with cent per cent Central grants-in-aid for completion by March 1996, continues to be languishing, the report says and adds that of over Rs 36.31 crores available during 1989-90 to 1994-95, the Bihar Rajya Jal Parishad did not uti-

lise over Rs 6.66 crores.

Significantly, during 1986-87 to 1994-95, the Parishad diverted Rs 5.4 crores of GAP funds for payment of salaries and allowances and other miscellaneous expenses. Further, Rs 2.39 crores was spent on items which were not covered under the GAP scheme. Because of the lackadaisical approach of the Parishad, the cost had been escalated, the report commented.

Modernisation of prison administration, yet another Centrally-sponsored scheme, has also received serious setback because of non-utilisation of funds.