

Balasore train accident: why Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw must resign?



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Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended March 2021 **Derailment in Indian Railways**



AT News 5 June 2023 Updated 5 Jun 38279 views

In a devastating incident on 2 June 2023, three trains collided near the city of Balasore in Odisha, resulting in a catastrophic loss of life and a large number of injuries. The collision involved the 12841 Coromandel Express, the 12864 SMVT Bengaluru-Howrah SF Express, and a goods train near the Bahanaga Bazar railway station.

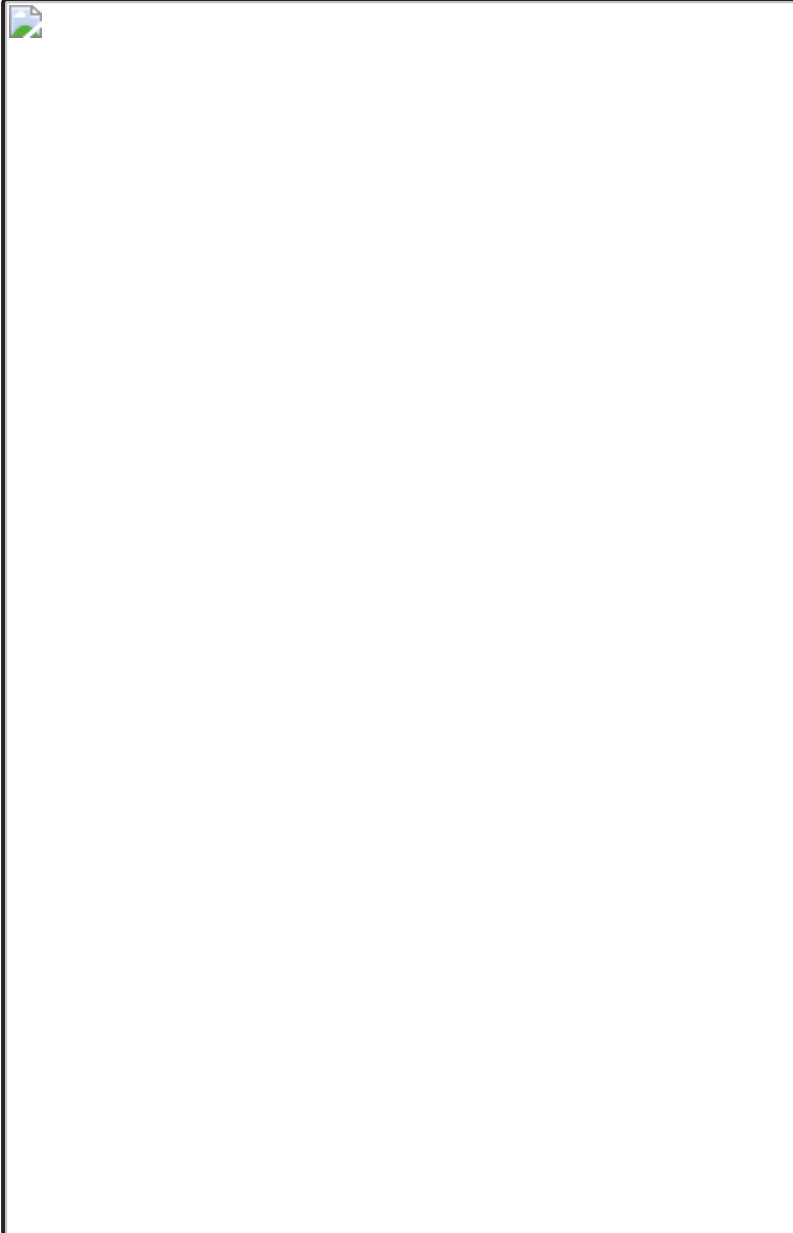
The incident has sent shockwaves throughout the country, and questions are being raised about the safety measures in place within the Indian Railways. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has previously published an audit report exposing the neglect of crucial rail safety by the Modi government and Rail Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The report revealed glaring holes in the risk-control systems and a lack of systematic mechanisms for monitoring procedures to prevent serious rail accidents.

One of the significant findings of the CAG report was that a large number of derailment accidents occurred due to simultaneous failures in following safety procedures. Shockingly, investigations into 49% of rail accidents were not conducted within the prescribed deadline. Railways also failed to monitor preventive actions to address rail accidents effectively.



Furthermore, the report highlighted the shortage of adequate staff and officials dedicated to railway safety. It pointed out that the minimum required time to monitor track maintenance was not followed, and basic targets mandatory for rail safety were not achieved. The allocation of funds to non-priority projects instead of crucial rail safety work was another alarming revelation.

Specifically, the CAG report noted that only 181 track inspections were conducted instead of the required 350, indicating that over 50% of compulsory track safety inspections were neglected. Out of a total of 217 accidents in the last four years, a staggering 75% were attributed to derailments, with 211 accidents occurring due to signal failure.



The gravity of the findings and the failure of the Railways to ensure essential safety measures has led to widespread outrage, demanding accountability from the Modi Government and Rail Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Critics are calling the negligence by the government and the minister "sheer criminal negligence" and are urging for Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's resignation.

As the nation mourns the tragic loss of life in the Balasore train accident, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive overhaul of safety protocols within the Indian Railways. The authorities are under immense pressure to take immediate action to prevent such disasters in the future and restore public confidence in the railway system's safety and efficiency.

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