

# CAG indicts home ministry for buying defective jammer

By **Bisheshwar Mishra**  
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**NEW DELHI:** The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) has castigated the home ministry and the National Security Guard for purchasing a defective jammer worth some Rs 75 lakhs. Such jammers are used to disrupt radio signals that can be used by terrorists and assassins for detonating bombs from a remote location.

More than the cost, the transaction reveals an alarming lapse by the highest levels of organisations responsible for VIP security in the country. The details, including the fact that the purchase was made by the Special Protection Group which protects the Prime Minister, have been provided in the CAG report tabled in Parliament on Friday. According to the report, in July 2000 the NSG requested the Cabinet Secretariat for purchase of a mini jammer to enhance their capability for bomb detection and disposal.

The report notes that the indent for purchase was issued by SPG in August 2000. An order for the purchase of the equipment and spares worth Rs 75.09 lakhs was placed with M/s Thunderbird Industries Inc., Virginia, USA in the same month.

In November 2000 the Home

Ministry informed the NSG that the mini jammer along with spares and power supply had been procured from USA after proper testing of the equipment. The report noted that as per the conditions of contract the inspection and the test of the equipment was to be made on the charge of the supplier in his factory by the inspecting officer deputed by the government.

The NSG collected the equipment from SPG in November 2000 but when the board of officers of NSG carried out trials on the equipment, they found it did not meet the specifications claimed by the firm. After additional trials in December, the NSG concluded "that the jammer could not jam the communication equipment used."

Since the guarantee and warranty period of the equipment was in force till August 31, 2001, NSG in March 2001 requested the MHA to convene a meeting with Cabinet Secretariat and SPG to sort out the issue. However, "no such meeting was held. The equipment, which was lying with NSG, had also not been returned to SPG for further action," the CAG report observed. The CAG had sought a reply from the ministry before concluding its report, but the ministry had not bothered to reply till the end of last year.