

## Need for radical thinking while auditing govt companies: Jaitley

**NEWDELHI:** Union finance minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday said some radical thinking is needed on the part of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) while auditing government companies as they are now expected to take quick decisions to compete with their private sector firms.

Jaitley said the government companies get audited by the CAG and follow a prescribed procedure for tenders, hiring employees, while the private sector companies go for campus hiring. Private sector enjoys flexibility.

Making a case for radical thinking and changing of mind-space on part of the CAG while looking into the accounts of the public sector companies, the finance minister in his concluding address to the two-day 29th Accountants General Conference said: "We still have not paid enough attention to this chaining of the public sector to the legal regime that we have done, particularly in sectors where there is competition. And, therefore, this impacts on their performance, this impacts on the timetable, whereas the private sector is free from this. If we want them to exist, survive, and survive with full financial strength then how do we allow them a level playing field". The minister recalled how before 1991 some of these public sector companies worked in fields they had full monopoly. Now it's not the case and but they still follow rules of pre-1991 era. The CAG, government, and judiciary need to appreciate the competitive environment prevailing now. "Therefore, these situations... will require a more radical thinking and I am sure in your future deliberations, this is one area which will occupy your mindspace," Jaitley said.

He said the implementation of Goods and Services Tax checked tax evasion and the demonetisation brought the money from outside the system to inside the system. It has led to formalization of the economy. In his speech in the valedictory function, CAG Rajiv Mehrishi said while auditing they want to tell the government what works and what doesn't work in implementation of government schemes. "We want to give systemic findings, not discrete faults/errors which are episodic in nature," said Mehrishi in his address.

He also pointed out the "indifferent" record keeping practises in the government which makes their job difficult. **HTC**