

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)

❖ Context

- Recently, Lok Sabha Speaker said **CAG is among the most effective and prestigious audit institutions** in the world.

About CAG

- The **Comptroller and Auditor General of India** is the supreme audit institution of India.
- He/she **acts as the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department** and also the **guardian of the public purse**.
- It is a **financial watchdog** that closely monitors all government revenues and expenditures and their adherence to existent laws.
- **Constitutional Provisions Related to CAG**
 - **Article 148** of Constitution of India provides for an independent office to the CAG of India.
 - **Article 149** provides Duties and Powers of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.
 - **Article 150** says that the accounts of the Union and of the States shall be kept in such form as the President may, on the advice of the CAG, prescribe.
 - **Article 151** says that the **reports** of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India relating to the accounts of the Union shall be **submitted to the president**, who shall cause them to be laid before each House of Parliament.
 - **Article 279** states Calculation of “net proceeds” is ascertained and certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, whose certificate is final.
- **Appointment and Term**
 - The CAG is **appointed by the president of India** by a warrant under his hand and seal.
 - The CAG vacates the office on attaining the **age of 65 years or 6-year term**, whichever is earlier or by impeachment process.

● Removal

- CAG gives **Resignation letter to the president**.
- He can also be removed by the president on the **same grounds and in the same manner as a judge of the Supreme Court** (Parliament – Special majority).

● Functions

- **He audits the accounts related to –**
 - Consolidated Fund of India.
 - The consolidated fund of each state.
 - Consolidated fund of each union territory having a Legislative Assembly.
- **CAG audits all expenditures from the-**
 - Contingency Fund of India.
 - The Public Account of India.
 - The contingency fund of each state and the public account of each state.
- CAG is empowered to **audit all receipts and expenditure of autonomous bodies** and corporations substantially financed by the Government.
- He ascertains and certifies the net proceeds of any tax or duty and his certificate is final on the matter.

● Reports

- The CAG **submits three audit reports to President-**
 - Audit report on appropriation accounts.
 - Audit report on finance accounts.
 - Audit report on public undertakings.

Baliyatra

❖ Context

- During the sidelines of the G20 Summit, the PM mentioned Baliyatra in his address to the Indian diaspora in Bali.

Key highlights

- Literally meaning ‘**voyage to Bali**’, it is **one of the country’s largest open-air fairs**.
- It commemorates the **2,000-year-old maritime and cultural links** between ancient Kalinga (today’s Odisha) and Bali and other South and Southeast Asian regions like Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).
- It is held annually on the **banks of the Mahanadi in Cuttack**.
- The **nine-day festival** begins on **Kartik Purnima** (full moon night in the month of Kartik)

Origin

- The origin of the festival can be traced back to more than 1,000 years.
- The Bay of Bengal region had several ports, and **sadhavas (traders)** traditionally began their voyage across the sea on this auspicious day, when the winds were favourable for the boats, known as **boita**, to sail.



- This year's Baliyatra also found a place in the Guinness World Records for achieving an impressive feat of origami, the creation of 22,000 paper boats at a single venue in 35 minutes.
- Popular items of trade between Kalinga and Southeast Asia included **pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, silk, camphor, gold, and jewellery.**
- Even today, thousands of people across Odisha sail decorative **miniature boats** made of banana stems, paper, or thermocol to celebrate **boita bandana**, or the worshipping of the boats.

National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)

❖ Context

- The Union Finance minister chaired a meeting of the Governing Council (GC) of the NIIF.

Key highlights

- The GC appreciated that the loans by two infrastructure Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) where NIIF has majority stakes - **NIIF Infrastructure Finance** and **Aseem Infrastructure Finance** - increased by more than sixfold in three years.
- The NIIF has proposed setting up its first bilateral fund, '**India Japan Fund**'.
- The MoU between **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL)** and **Japan Bank for International Development (JBIC)** has been signed recently.
- India-Japan Fund will make equity investments in environmental preservation and low carbon emission strategies.
- In addition, JBIC will consider providing debt financing under their "**Global action for Reconciling Economic growth and Environmental preservation**" (**GREEN**) initiative to investee companies of funds managed by NIIFL.

About NIIF

- It was set up by the government in **2015**.
- The **Governing Council**, chaired by the Union Finance Minister, **meets annually** and provides guidance on the overall strategy of NIIF.
- The **Investment Committee (IC)** is responsible for all investments and divestment decisions and reviews investment performance periodically.
- It manages **over \$4.3 BN assets**.
- NIIF manages three funds -
 - **Master Fund** - invest in high quality businesses / assets across different core infrastructure sectors.
 - **Fund of Funds** - focused on building a portfolio of private equity funds across diversified sectors.
 - **Strategic Opportunities Fund** - to provide long-term capital to high-growth future-ready businesses in India.

Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

❖ Context

- India has opposed during the discussions on the draft text that seeks to expand the scope of emissions mitigation target to agriculture at the ongoing U.N. climate summit in Egypt.

Key highlights

- The **discussions were part of** a special UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) effort known as the **Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture**.
- India said developed countries are blocking a pro-poor and pro-farmer decision by insisting on expanding the scope for mitigation to agriculture, thereby compromising the very foundation of food security in the world.

About Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

- The **Conference of the Parties** at its **twenty-third session**, held in **Bonn in 2017**, adopted a landmark decision on the "Koronivia joint work on agriculture".
- The Koronivia decision **recognized the unique potential of agriculture in tackling climate change**.
- It addresses **six interrelated topics** on - soils, nutrient use, water, livestock, methods for assessing adaptation, and the socio-economic

About SBSTA & SBI

- SBSTA stands for **Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice**.
- SBI stands for **Subsidiary Body for Implementation**.
- These are **two permanent subsidiary bodies to the UNFCCC** established by the COP/CMP.
- The bodies meet at least twice a year.
- SBI assists the COP in the assessment and review of the

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and food security dimensions of climate change across the agricultural sectors.

- The decision requested the SBSTA and the SBI to jointly address issues related to agriculture.

effective implementation of the Convention.

- SBSTA advises the COP on matters of science, technology and methodology.

News in Between the Lines

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)



❖ Context

- The extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was made recently.

❖ Key Highlights

- Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) is a **scheme as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat** to supply free food grains to migrants and the poor.
- The scheme aimed at providing each person who is covered under the **National Food Security Act 2013** with an **additional 5 kg grains** (wheat or rice) for free, in addition to the **5 kg of subsidized foodgrain already provided** through the Public Distribution System (PDS).

➤ Aims

- It aims at **ensuring sufficient food for the poor** and needy during the coronavirus crisis.

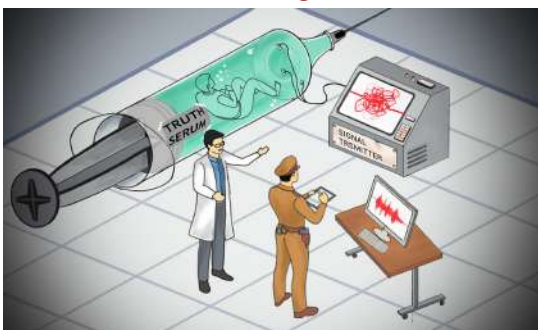
➤ Nodal Ministry

- Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

➤ Beneficiaries

- **Families belonging to the Below Poverty Line** - Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH) categories will be eligible for the scheme.
- **Widows or terminally ill persons or disabled persons or persons aged 60 years** or more or single women or single men with no family or societal support or assured means of subsistence.
- All primitive **tribal households**.
- **All eligible Below Poverty Line families of HIV positive persons**.
- Landless agricultural laborers, marginal farmers, rural artisans/craftsmen such as potters etc.

Narcoanalysis Test



❖ Context

- Recently, A court in Saket, New Delhi, allowed Delhi Police to conduct a narco test on accused of Delhi murder case.

❖ About Narcoanalysis Test



- In a 'narco' or **narcoanalysis test**, a drug called **sodium pentothal** is injected into the body of the accused.
- It transports them to a **hypnotic or sedated state**, in which their imagination is neutralised.
- In this hypnotic state, the accused is understood as being incapable of lying, and is expected to divulge information that is true.



➤ Sodium Pentothal

- Sodium pentothal or sodium thiopental is a **fast-acting, short duration anaesthetic**.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is used in larger doses to sedate patients during surgery. ■ It belongs to the barbiturate class of drugs that act on the central nervous system as depressants. <p>➤ Polygraph Test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A polygraph test is based on the assumption that physiological responses that are triggered when a person is lying are different from what they would be otherwise. ■ A polygraph test does not involved injecting drugs into the body. ■ It involves measuring variables such as blood pressure, pulse rate, respiration etc.
<p style="text-align: center;">World Wildlife Trade Report</p>  <p>The graphic features the word 'CITES' in large, stylized letters. Each letter is filled with a different image of a wildlife species: 'C' shows a toucan, 'I' shows a parrot, 'T' shows a colorful bird, 'E' shows a fish, and 'S' shows a colorful bird. The background is a collage of various animals and plants.</p>	<p>❖ Context</p> <p>➤ Recently, The CITES Secretariat published the first-ever World Wildlife Trade Report.</p> <p>❖ Key Highlights</p> <p>➤ The report is a joint production of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), along with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and TRAFFIC.</p> <p>➤ The report gives insights and analysis into the global trade in animals and plants that are regulated under this international treaty.</p> <p>➤ The report observes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Between 2011-2020, approximately 3.5 million CITES shipments were reported in direct trade by exporters. ■ Asia and Europe represented both the top exporting and importing regions. <p>➤ CITES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. ■ It regulates trade in nearly 40,000 species, worldwide. ■ 183 of the world's governments (and also the European Union) have agreed to be bound by its terms. ■ It aim to stop international trade becoming a threat to the viability of any species it lists.
<p style="text-align: center;">Finfluencers</p>  <p>The graphic shows two men in business attire. One man is pointing upwards towards a large, glowing blue arrow that points upwards and to the right. The background is a light blue with some abstract shapes.</p>	<p>❖ Context</p> <p>➤ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is working on guidelines for financial influencers — popularly known as ‘influencers’.</p> <p>❖ Key highlights</p> <p>➤ Finfluencers are those who give advice to stock investors on various social media platforms like Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and Facebook.</p> <p>➤ Their videos cover budgeting, investing, property buying, cryptocurrency advice and financial trend tracking.</p> <p>➤ Concerns -</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eroding trust of retail investors against the backdrop of an increasing capital markets investor base. ■ Scamsters are using this route to manipulate share prices. ■ Finfluencers get paid to push financial products on social media.
<p style="text-align: center;">Tabletop Airports</p> 	<p>❖ Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is expected to review tabletop airports in India. <p>❖ Key highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These are the airports where the runway is elevated as compared to the surrounding geography. ➤ The motive is to increase prevention against any unforeseen incidents at such airports. ➤ The tabletop runways in the country currently include Kozhikode in Kerala, Mangaluru in Karnataka, Shimla and Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, Lengpui airport in Mizoram and Pakyong in Sikkim.
<p style="text-align: center;">Evergreening</p> 	<p>❖ Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indian government officials have said that India is unlikely to agree to British demand for evergreening of patented medicines under India-UK FTA. <p>❖ Key highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evergreening is the practice of companies filing for patent extensions by making minor changes to their drugs just before the patent expires at 20 years. ➤ The Lancet, a British medical journal, had warned that such a clause would hurt Indian generic drug manufacturers and create problems for the UK's National Health Service (NHS) which is dependent on Indian generic medicines. ➤ The Indian bulk drug industry accounts for a quarter of the price-controlled medicines in the UK and is a lifeline for some of the world's poorest nations.

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