



## Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)

### Why in news?

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is one of the most important institutions of the country to ensure public accountability of the executive.

### What is Comptroller and Auditor General?

Feature	Description
<b>Constitutional body</b>	<b>Article 148</b> provides for an independent office of the CAG.
<b>Financial administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAG is the head of <i>Indian Audit and Accounts Department</i></li> <li>He/She is the <i>guardian of the public purse</i> and controls the entire financial system of the country at the Centre and the State level.</li> </ul>
<b>Appointment</b>	<u>President</u> by a warrant under his hand and seal
<b>Core Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Institutional values-</b> Maintaining professional standards, objective and balanced approach, independence and transparency.</li> <li><b>People values-</b> Ethical behaviour, integrity, professional competence, fairness and social awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Tenure</b>	6 years or up to age of 65 years whichever is earlier
<b>Resignation</b>	CAG can resign any time from his office by addressing the resignation letter to President
<b>Removal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same manner as <u>a judge of Supreme Court</u></li> <li>Can be removed by the <u>President</u> on the basis of a resolution passed to that effect by both the Houses of Parliament with <i>special majority</i>.</li> <li>Reason for removal - Proved misbehaviour or incapacity</li> </ul>
<b>Reappointment</b>	Not eligible for further office, either under the Government of India or of any State
<b>Salary &amp; service conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by Parliament.</li> <li>Salary is equal to judge of Supreme Court.</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative expenses</b>	<u>Charged upon Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)</u>
<b>Success stories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2G spectrum scandal</li> <li>Commonwealth games corruption scandal</li> <li>Coal mine allocation scam etc.,</li> </ul>

## What are the challenges with CAG?

- **Centrally sponsored schemes-** It accounts for more than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of budget but most of them have not been audited by the CAG beyond 2018.
- **MGNREGA** - In 2013, CAG found that the scheme have neither alleviated rural poverty nor created any durable assets but it has been left out of audit for over a decade.
- **Political interference-** Established convention is that CAG does not take part in public debates on contents of his reports, they are self-explanatory and compete with all evidences.
- But recently Union ministry has contradicted CAG's observations on government accounts and gave point wise replies to each observation.
- **Lack of transparency-** There is no proper selection criteria with respect to CAG appointment.
- The involvement of executive in the CAG's appointment is hugely problematic as he/she is supposed to audit the executive.
- **Overburdened-** It is very impractical for one individual to handle the audit mechanism of both the State and Central government as well as Public Service Units.
- **Mismanagement-** The office is allegedly holding up or delaying completed reports, alteration of approved audit plans, suspending filed audits midway which is done only in unusual situations like the pandemic.
- **Poor administration-** Transferring officers who have reportedly been involved in auditing sensitive government schemes impedes the public trust and confidence of the office.
- **Decline in reports-** The number of reports submitted by the CAG to Parliament has steeply declined over the years, thus questioning the political neutrality of the office.

*CAG, Supreme Court, Election Commission and Union Public Service Commission were referred as the bulwarks of democratic system of government*

## What lies ahead?

- There should be a separate State auditor for each and every state and also specialized agencies which would maintain their accounts.
- As recommended by **Murali Manohar Joshi Committee**, a separate panel must be established to appoint the CAG.
- To obtain greater transparency, the suggestions of **Shungulu Panel** can be incorporated by advocating structural changes in CAG by making it a three-member body.

## References

1. [Business Line- CAG could have done better](#)
2. [CAG- Vision mission and values](#)



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