



Ninth Schedule

❖ Context

- Recently, The Jharkhand Assembly cleared two Bills.
- Chief Minister of Jharkhand said they would come into force only after the Centre carries out amendments to include these in the **Ninth Schedule of the Constitution**.

❖ About The Bills

• **Jharkhand Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (Amendment) Bill, 2022.**

- It raised reservation to 77 per cent.

• **Jharkhand Definition of Local Persons and for Extending the Consequential, Social, Cultural and Other Benefits to Such Local Persons Bill, 2022.**

- It is aimed at using land records with 1932 as the cut-off year to determine domicile status and the definition of 'local residents'.

❖ Need to Include in Ninth Schedule

- The **77% reservation** breaches the 50% ceiling.
 - This ceiling was set by the Supreme Court in the landmark 1992 **Indra Sawhney v Union of India** verdict.
 - However, placing a legislation in the Ninth Schedule **shields it from judicial scrutiny**.

❖ Previous Instances

• **The Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1993.**

- It reserves 69% of the seats in colleges and jobs in the state government.
- The reservation provision was included in the Ninth Schedule.

❖ Ninth Schedule

- It contains a **list of central and state laws which cannot be challenged in courts**.
- Currently, **284 such laws are shielded** from judicial review.
- Most of the laws protected under the Schedule **concern agriculture/land issues**.
- The Schedule **became a part of the Constitution in 1951**, when the document was amended for the first time.
- It was created by the new **Article 31B**, which along with **31A**.
 - It was brought in by the government to protect laws related to agrarian reform and for abolishing the Zamindari system.
 - **31A** extends protection to 'classes' of laws.
 - **31B** shields specific laws or enactments.
- While the Ninth Schedule provides the law with a **"safe harbour"** from judicial review, the protection is not blanket.
- **I R Coelho v State of Tamil Nadu 2007** : SC said- Laws placed under 9th Schedule cannot be challenged on the grounds of violation of fundamental rights.
 - However, they can be challenged on the ground of violating the **basic structure of the Constitution**.
 - The laws cannot escape the "basic structure" test if **inserted into the Ninth Schedule after 1973**.
 - It was in 1973 that the basic structure test was evolved in the Kesavananda Bharati case as the ultimate test to examine the constitutional validity of laws.

MARS

❖ Context

- The UN has decided to set up a **satellite-based monitoring system** for tracking **methane emissions**.



❖ Key Highlights

- The **Methane Alert and Response System, or MARS**, will integrate data from a large number of existing and future satellites.
- It will have the ability to detect methane emission events anywhere in the world.
- It will send out notifications to the relevant stakeholders to act on it.
- It would feed into the **International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO)** of the **UN Environment Programme**, that was launched at the G20 summit on the eve of COP26, Glasgow.
- It will track the large point emission sources initially, mainly in the fossil fuel industry, but would be able to detect emissions from coal, waste, livestock and rice fields as well with time.

❖ Methane & Global Warming

- Methane is the **second-most common** of the six major greenhouse gases accounting for about **17 percent** of the current global greenhouse gas emissions.
- It is, however, far more dangerous than carbon dioxide as its **global warming potential is about 80 times** that of carbon dioxide.

- Methane is blamed for having caused at least 25 to 30 percent of temperature rise since the pre-industrial times.
- However, unlike carbon dioxide, **methane is largely a sectoral gas**, and there are only a few sources of emission.
- It is possible, therefore, to cut down on methane emissions without having widespread impact on the economy.

❖ Global Methane Pledge

- At the Glasgow climate conference last year, nearly 100 countries had come together in a voluntary pledge to **cut methane emissions by at least 30 percent by 2030** from the 2020 levels.
- It is expected to result in avoiding **0.2 degree rise in temperature by the year 2050**.

Face to Face Centres





Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

❖ Context

- More than 200 Chinese fishing vessels have been monitored in the Indian Ocean in the first half of this year, according to the Indian Navy.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU)** fishing continues to rise beyond India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- Most of the illegal activity is found in the **Northern Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- As per **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, coastal nations are responsible for addressing IUU fishing issues within their respective EEZ.
- There are **regional fisheries management organisations** operating under the mandate of UNCLOS as regulatory bodies to monitor IUU fishing on the high seas.
- **Impact of IUU Fishing :**
 - It depletes fish stocks.
 - Destroys marine habitats.
 - Puts fishermen at disadvantage & impacts coastal communities, especially in developing countries.



- **Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) :**
 - **Announce by Quad**, comprising India, Australia, Japan and U.S.
 - It aims to **provide a more accurate maritime picture of "near-real-time" activities** in the region.
 - It is expected to catalyse joint efforts of India and other Quad partners towards addressing IUU in Indo-Pacific region,
- **Monitoring :** All vessel movements on the high seas are monitored by the **Indian Navy's IMAC in Gurugram** and the **Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** which is co-located with it.
- **Regulations :** There are two main regulations globally on IUU fishing - The Cape Town Agreement.
 - The Agreement on Ports State Measures.
 - So far, **India is not a signatory** of either agreement.
 - Fishing vessels across the world are supposed to have **vehicle management systems installed**.
 - It not only identify their position, but also requires them to record the volume and location of their catch, helping to tackle the issue of IUU fishing.

India's First Biological Data Bank and Brahm

❖ Context

- The government has for the first time set up a digitised repository where Indian researchers will store biological data from publicly funded research.



❖ Key Highlights

- The '**Indian Biological Data Bank**' has come up at the **Regional Centre for Biotechnology** in Faridabad.
- The government has mandated that data from all publicly funded research should be stored in this central repository.
- This will be the first national data repository, where the data will not only be submitted from across India but can be accessed by researchers from across India.
- At present, most Indian researchers depend on the **European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL)** and **National Center for Biotechnology Information** databases for storing the biological data.

❖ Benefits

- Provide a platform to researchers to securely store their data within the country.
- Provide access to a large database of indigenous sequences for analyses.
- Reduce the dependency of Indian researchers on American and European data banks.
- With genomes of humans, animals, and microbes present in the same database, it will help researchers in studying zoonotic diseases.

❖ About Brahm

- The digitised data will be stored on a **four-petabyte supercomputer called 'Brahm'**.
- A petabyte equals 10,00,000 gigabytes (gb).
- ❖ **What is Currently Stored?**
 - **Nucleotide sequences** - the digitised genetic makeup of humans, plants, animals, and microbes.
 - **200 billion base pair data** including 200 human genomes sequenced under the '**1,000 Genome Project**'.
 - Most of the **2.6 lakh Sars-Cov-2 genomes** sequenced by the Indian Sars-CoV-2 Genomic Consortium (INSACOG).
 - **25,000 sequences of mycobacterium tuberculosis** that will help in understanding the spread of multi-drug and extremely drug resistant TB in the country, and aid in the search for new therapies and vaccines.
 - **Genomic sequences of crops** such as rice, onion, tomatoes and mustard, among others.

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Currency Monitoring List

❖ Context

- India is among the few countries removed from the United States' Currency Monitoring List.



❖ Key Highlights

- The list is released by the **US Department of Treasury** in its biannual report to the Congress.
- The report entitled - 'Macroeconomic and Foreign Exchange Policies of Major Trading Partners of the United States'.
- It had also removed **Italy, Mexico, Vietnam and Thailand** from the list.
- **China, Japan, Korea, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore & Taiwan** are currently on the list.

❖ Why has India been removed?

- India has been on the list for about two years.
- India and four other countries were **removed as they only met one of the three criteria for two consecutive reports.**
- The report said that China still remains because of a broader lack of transparency around key features of its exchange rate mechanism and its failure to publish foreign exchange intervention.

❖ About the List

- The US Treasury Department is mandated to **assess the macroeconomic and exchange rate policies** of the **US' trading partners** for three specific criteria:
 - A **significant bilateral trade surplus** with the United States is a goods and services trade surplus that is at least \$15 billion.
 - A **material current account surplus** is one that is at least 3% of GDP, or a surplus for which Treasury estimates there is a material current account "gap" using Treasury's **Global Exchange Rate Assessment Framework (GERAF).**
 - **Persistent, one-sided intervention** occurs when net purchases of foreign currency are conducted repeatedly, in at least 8 out of 12 months, and these net purchases total at least 2% of an economy's GDP over a 12-month period.
- **Once on the list, an economy will remain there for at least two consecutive reports.**

ASEAN-India Friendship Year

❖ Context

- This year marks the **30th anniversary of ASEAN-India relations** and is being celebrated as the '**ASEAN-India Friendship Year**'.



❖ Key Highlights

- To mark the occasion, India's Vice President is representing India at the **19th ASEAN-India Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.**
- The two sides agreed to advance maritime ties and enhance cooperation against terrorism, transnational crimes & cybercrimes.
- They also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

❖ Brief History

- India began **formal engagement with ASEAN in 1992** as a "**Sectoral Dialogue Partner**" and subsequently as a "**Dialogue Partner**" in **1996.**
- The initial years as a Dialogue Partner (DP) entailed interaction at the **Foreign Minister level** which was further **upgraded to the Summit level in 2002**, when the first such Summit level meeting was held.
- At the 20 year Commemorative **Summit Meeting in New Delhi (December 2012)**, the Dialogue Partnership was further **elevated to a Strategic Partnership.** The '**Delhi Dialogue**' (DD) mechanism hosted by India annually, traditionally inaugurated jointly by India and ASEAN at the Foreign Minister's level, serves as the main **Track 1.5 mechanism** for engagement.
- It allows participation of think tanks, academics and prominent civil society persons from both India and the ASEAN region, in addition to government representatives.

News in Between the Lines

No Money for Terror Conference



❖ Context

- The **third NMFT conference** on November 18-19 is going to be hosted by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** in New Delhi.

❖ Key Highlights

- The first NMFT conference was held in **Paris in 2018** and the second was held in **Melbourne in 2019.**
- This Conference aims to progress the **discussions on combating terrorist financing** held by the international community in the previous two Conferences.
- India was host to two global events in October - the annual General Assembly of the Interpol in Delhi and a special session of the UN Counter Terrorism Committee in Mumbai and Delhi.

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India's Agriculture Exports

TABLE 1 INDIA'S AGRICULTURAL TRADE (IN \$ MN)				TABLE 2 INDIA'S TOP AGRI-IMPORT ITEMS (IN \$ MN)			
	Exports	Imports	Surplus		2021-22	Apr-Sep 2021	Apr-Sep 2022
2012-13	41.73	18.98	22.75	Vegetable oils	18991.62	8862.38	11097.72
2013-14	43.25	15.53	27.72	Fresh fruits	2460.33	1101.08	1237.86
2014-15	39.08	21.15	17.93	Pulses	2228.95	835.35	595.78
2015-16	32.81	22.58	10.23	Spices	1299.38	658.37	755.27
2016-17	33.70	25.64	8.05	Cashew	1255.46	755.62	1412.52
2017-18	38.90	24.89	14.01	Natural rubber	1032.71	442.99	542.18
2018-19	39.20	20.92	18.28	Alcoholic beverages	693.23	319.28	435.80
2019-20	35.60	21.86	13.74	Raw cotton	559.55	297.25	1081.16
2020-21	41.90	21.65	20.24				
2021-22	50.24	32.42	17.82				
Apr-Sep 21	22.98	15.12	7.86				
Apr-Sep 22	26.77	19.31	7.46				
				TOTAL*	32422.30	15119.78	19309.05

❖ Context

- India's agriculture exports have **grown 16.5% year-on-year** in April-September, and look set to surpass the record \$50.2 billion achieved in 2021-22 (April-March).

❖ Key Highlights

- Almost **60% of India's total agri imports** is accounted for by a single commodity: **vegetable oils**.
- 2021-22, registered both record exports (\$50.2 billion) as well as imports (\$32.4 billion).
- The resultant **surplus of \$17.8 billion** was much below the **\$27.7 billion** surplus in the previous all-time-high export year of 2013-14.
- The surplus in agricultural trade matters because this is one sector, apart from software services, where **India has some comparative advantage**.

DigiLocker



❖ Context

- DigiLocker, has successfully **completed its second-level of integration with Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**.

❖ Key Highlights

- DigiLocker had earlier **completed level 1 integration with ABDM** wherein the platform had added Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)
- DigiLocker **can be used now as a health locker** for storing and accessing health records such as vaccination records, doctor prescriptions, lab reports, hospital discharge summaries etc.

❖ About DigiLocker

- DigiLocker is a flagship **initiative of Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)** under Digital India programme.
- It is a **digital document wallet** where you can store your documents such as driving licence, PAN card, Voter ID, policy documents, etc.
- You can upload the documents and keep these safe when you sign up for a DigiLocker account.
- You get a **dedicated cloud storage space** that is **linked to your Aadhaar number**.
- DigiLocker **aims at 'Digital Empowerment' of citizen** by providing access to authentic digital documents to citizen's digital document wallet.

Ananta Siras

❖ Context

- India's first 3D-printed monument was unveiled at Chennai.

❖ Key Highlights

- Ananta Siras is a Sanskrit word meaning infinite wisdom.



Indian Skimmer



❖ Context

- **Indian skimmer is seen** in huge flocks during winter in **Coringa wildlife sanctuary (Kakinada)**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The Indian skimmer or Indian scissors-bill (**Rynchops albicollis**) is **one of the three species** that belong to the skimmer genus Rynchops in the family Laridae.
- **Characteristics** : They are very brightly marked in black, white and orange, making them difficult to miss.
- **Distribution and Habitat** : It is found on large rivers and lakes, swamps and coastal wetlands such as estuaries.
 - It is most common in freshwater, particularly during the breeding season.
 - In India, the **species can be sighted near the Chambal river** in Central India, in a few parts of Odisha and in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Conservation Status** : **IUCN Red List- Endangered**.
 - In 2020, **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)** has initiated a **'Guardians of the Skimmer'** programme, which a community-based conservation initiative

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