

Organic Aadhaar

❖ Context

- APEDA is now considering rolling out “Organic Aadhaar” for the farmers engaged in organic farming under the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP).

❖ Background

- The move is aimed to rule out any possibility of bogus enrollment.
- APEDA had recently taken action against errant certification agencies.
- There were some incidences of **chemical residues** being found in **organic sesame exported to Europe** last year, following which actions (categorisation as high risk, suspension and penalty) were taken against certification agencies by India and EU.
- Later, India’s **organic cotton exports** also came under a cloud due to **alleged data of some fake farmers’ groups**.
- The idea is to create an identity for the farmer, based on **Personal Aadhar and ULPIN**, for the organic certification process.
- The organic Aadhaar combined with Tracenet will create a robust system to effectively plan and monitor policy measures.
- In June 2021, APEDA had set up an expert committee to strengthen and simplify organic agriculture.

❖ Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme

- The government has been implementing a **14-digit identification number to every plot of land** in the country.
- The scheme was **launched in 10 States last year** and will soon be rolled out across the country.

❖ Tracenet

- The Tracenet system, **launched in 2009**, to provide **details of products exported from the country**.
- Through the system, **details about the farmer, his land and inputs** used in producing the product are made available.

Sedition Law

❖ Context

- Recently, NCP chief Sharad Pawar created a stir with his affidavit before the Bhima Koregaon inquiry commission, wherein he said that the **archaic sedition law should be repealed**.

❖ Key Highlights

- Sharad Pawar said there were acts like **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)** in place that could effectively deal with these activities.
- While giving notice to the central government on petitions pressing for the **removal of Section 124A**, the court had stressed that **it was deeply concerned about the misuse of the law** and the **lack of accountability of the investigating agencies**.

❖ Sedition Law

- **About:** Under **Section 124A of IPC**, the offense of sedition is committed when any person **by words or otherwise brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt**, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection **towards the government established by law**.
- **Punishment:**
 - Sedition is a **cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable offenses** under the law.
 - It entails **life imprisonment as maximum punishment**, with or without a fine.
 - A person charged under this law **can’t apply for a government job**.
 - They **have to live without their passport** and must present themselves in the court as and when required.
- It was **drafted by Thomas Babington Macaulay** and **included in the IPC in 1870**.

• **Concern:**

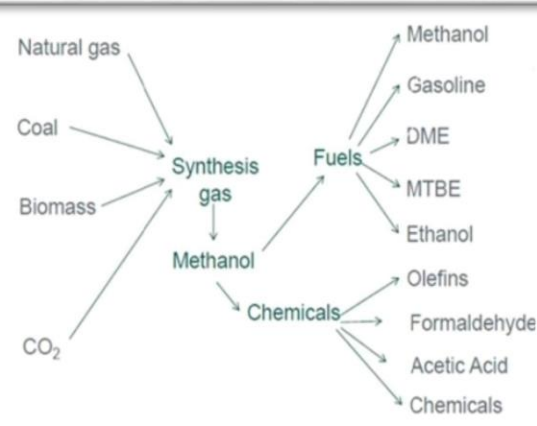
- This law is seen as a **limitation to individuals’ freedom of expression**.
- It falls short of the provisions of reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.
- **Supreme Court decisions on Sedition Law: Brij Bhushan vs the State of Delhi and Romesh Thappar vs the State of Madras (1950):**
 - The court ruled that restricted speech on the ground that it would disturb public order was unconstitutional.
 - Led to First Constitution Amendment, where Article 19 (2) was rewritten to replace “undermining the security of the State” with “in the interest of public order.
- **Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar (1962):**
 - SC upheld the constitutionality of sedition law, but restricted its application to “acts involving intention or tendency to create disorder, or disturbance of law and order, or incitement to violence”.
 - SC differentiated from “very strong speech” or the use of “vigorous words” strongly critical of the government.
- **Balwant Singh vs State of Punjab (1995):** SC ruled that mere sloganeering which evoked no public response did not amount to sedition.

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News in Between the Lines

M15 Petrol



❖ Context

- **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** rolled out M15 petrol - a 15 per cent blend of methanol with petrol - on a pilot basis in Assam's Tinsukia district.

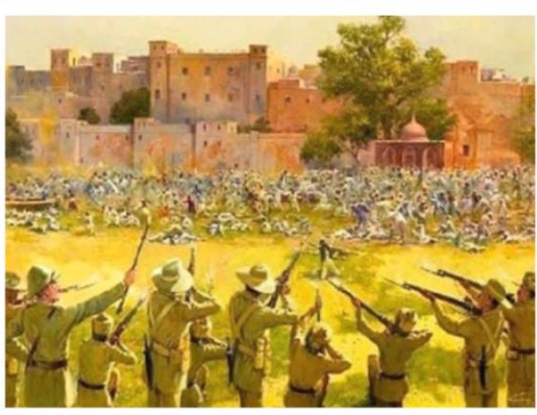
❖ Key Highlights

- The pilot rollout was done in Tinsukia by the company due to the ready availability of methanol, which is being manufactured by Assam Petrochemical Ltd, in the vicinity of Digboi refinery, from natural gas.
- The Bureau of Indian Standards had notified standards for 20 per cent blending of DME with LPG and for mixing 15 %, 85 % and 100 % methanol with diesel.

❖ Significance of Methanol

- **Important feedstock for chemical industry.**
- It **bettters diesel** by 99 per cent in SOx emissions, 60 per cent in NOx and 95 per cent in particulate matter.
- Unlike natural gas, it is a **liquid fuel**, so easy to transport.
- It is easy to blend methanol with petrol because it has a **high octane number** (100, compared with 85 of petrol), which means it can withstand more compression from piston before igniting and burns better.
- Methanol can be processed to make **di-methyl ether (DME)**, a liquid fuel that closely resembles diesel - existing diesel engines need to be modified only slightly (adjusting compression ratios) to use DME instead of diesel.

Anjala 1857 Mass Killing



❖ Context

- Latest DNA-based evidence confirm the **human remains** found dumped in an abandoned well in the Ajnala town of Punjab's Amritsar, eight years ago, belonged to **246 young Indian soldiers**.

❖ Key Findings Of The Study

- The remains are of Indian soldiers of the **26th Native Bengal Infantry regiment** of the British Indian Army who were **brutally killed** after they revolted against the British during the **1857 Indian uprising**.
- Belonged to the Gangetic plains - **UP, Bihar & WB**.
- The abandoned well-turned-dumping site in Ajnala had found a **detailed mention in a textbook** authored by the **then serving deputy commissioner of Amritsar in 1857**. The book narrated how British officers forcing the use of beef and pork-greased cartridges met with strong opposition from the Indian soldiers stationed at **Mian Mir cantonment (in present-day Lahore in Pakistan)**.

❖ Significance Of The Finding

- Archaeologists have called the site **the largest possessing skeletal remains linked to any single event** during the 1857 Indian rebellion.

Anang Taal



❖ Context

- The government is **planning to declare** the historic lake in south Delhi as **national monument**

❖ Key Highlights

- The lake is believed to have been built by **Tomar King, Anangpal II, the builder of Lal Kot, in 1060 AD**. Anang Tal has a strong Rajasthan connection as **Maharaja Anang Pal is known as nana (maternal grandfather) of Prithviraj Chauhan** whose fort Rai Pithora is on the list of the ASI.
- As per the website of the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), a government agency, Anang Tal is situated "to the north of Jog Maya temple and approximately 500 metres to the northwest of Qutub Complex".
- It is also said **Alauddin Khalji, in 1296-1316 AD, utilised the water of this tank when he built (Qutub) minar** and extended the Qutub-ul-Islam mosque.
- It is said to have been a place of a general resort but **now it is dried up and used for cultivation**. According to experts, until the water body is declared a protected monument, it will not survive..

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India's First Greenfield Grain-based Ethanol Plant



❖ Context

➤ The country's first greenfield grain-based ethanol plant was inaugurated in **Purnea, Bihar**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The **Rs 105-crore plant by Eastern India Biofuels Pvt Ltd** is the first one developed since the Centre gave a go-ahead to **Bihar's ethanol production and promotion policy-2021**.
- The plant, built with latest technology using zero waste discharge, will buy **130 tons of rice husk** and **145-150 tons of maize or rice** from farmers every day.
- The ethanol will be exclusively sold to **Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum** in the state and in neighbouring West Bengal and Jharkhand, for which a 10 year purchase agreement has been inked with the OMCs. **18 of 38 Bihar's districts fall in what is known as the corn belt**.
- The **state government** has proposed opening at least **17 ethanol plants over the next two years**. The plants are expected to benefit farmers, and generate employment for locals, especially in the **Seemanchal belt comprising Purnea, Kishanganj, Katihar and Araria districts**.
- **Bihar is the third highest maize producer in India** after Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. **Andhra Pradesh has the highest state productivity**.

FISME Lending Platform



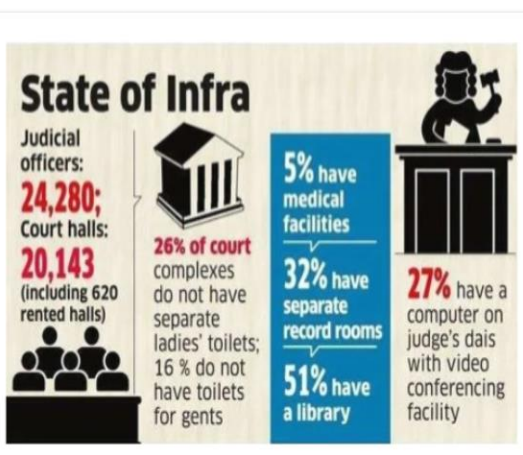
❖ Context

➤ A memorandum of understanding was signed by **Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME)** and a private company which is provider of financial guarantees to build a digital lending platform for **MSMEs**.

❖ Key Highlights

- It is aimed to fulfil the need of MSMEs of **urgent funds**. The **capital upto Rs. 25 lakh** will be provided through the platform **collateral free**. The service will be **essentially like an overdraft facility** which could be tapped anytime from anywhere by MSMEs. This is a **unique, first time in India initiative**, as lending has traditionally been collateral based. Lack of collateral is the single biggest bottleneck that small entrepreneurs face in accessing institutional funds.

National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI)



❖ Context

➤ Recently, CJI NV Ramana said that resolutions have been passed for the **creation of the National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI)**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The resolutions have been passed at the Joint Conference of Chief Ministers of States and the Chief Justices. In October last year, the **CJI had sent a proposal for the establishment of the NJIAI** to the Ministry of Law & Justice.

❖ About NJIAI

- It will be **formed along with complimentary State Bodies** as a special purpose vehicle for the creation of judicial infrastructure.
- The authority is **being created as chief coordinator and driving force for augmentation, creation of judicial infrastructure**. **NJIAI will take control of the budgeting and infrastructure development** of subordinate courts in the country. It **will not suggest any major policy change** but will give complete freedom to HCs to come up with projects to strengthen ground-level courts.
- It may **recommend a model structure** of how a court complex, courtroom or a waiting area for litigants should be.
- **Need for NJIAI:** Budgetary allocation for state judiciary often lapses since **there is no independent body to supervise and execute works** related to improving court premises. **NJIAI is expected to fill this vacuum** and overcome problems related to infrastructure.

BrahMos Anti-ship Missile

❖ Context

➤ Recently, India fired the **anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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- Last month, the Indian Navy successfully test-fired an advanced version of the Brahmos missile from a stealth destroyer in the Indian Ocean.

❖ Key Highlights

- The name BrahMos is a portmanteau formed from the **names of two rivers**, the **Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia** (A joint collaboration between India and Russia). It is capable of being **launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface- and sea-based targets**.
- The missile flies at a **speed of 2.8 Mach** or almost three times the speed of sound. It can **carry both conventional & nuclear warheads** of 300 kilograms.
- The range of the missile was originally capped at **290 km** as per obligations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).
- Following India's entry into the club in June 2016, the range would be extended to **450 km and to 600 km at a later stage**. Last December the air version of BrahMos was test fired from the Indian Air Force's Sukhoi 30 MK-I aircraft.
- Several Asian countries have shown a keen interest in BrahMos.

Wireless Jammers



❖ Context

- Recently, the **Central Consumer Protection Authority** has issued an advisory to e-commerce entities against the **illegal sale and facilitation of wireless jammers**.

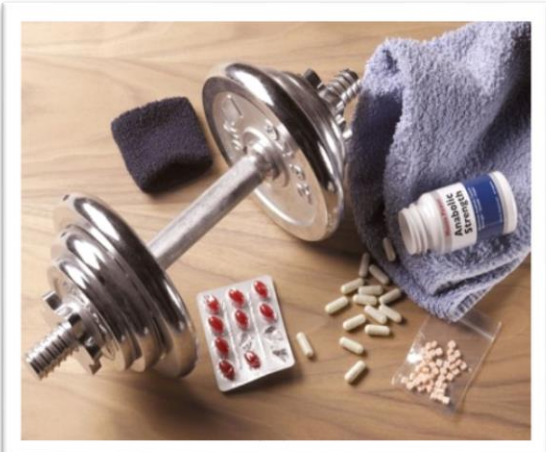
❖ Key Highlights

- **Sale and use of any wireless device without authorization and license** under the Indian Telegraph Act or Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act is **illegal**.
- Jammers may be **allowed only under exceptional circumstances**, only when authorized by the Secretary (Security) and Cabinet Secretariat.
- The Department of Telecommunication had also **issued an advisory in January this year with reference to illegal facilitation** and sale of wireless jammers on online platforms.

❖ About Wireless Jammers

- Jammers are a **signal blocking device** which **transmits synchronized radio waves at the same frequency as a device** like a cell phone or drone in order to blur its signal. Jammers are **usually undetectable**, and users may experience minimal effects such as poor signal reception.
- Jamming devices **may be used in any location but are typically deployed where cellphone use may be disruptive**, such as in libraries and restaurants.
- In many countries, **jammers are illegal, except in the military, law enforcement and other government agencies**.

Anabolic Steroids



❖ Context

- From two Tokyo Olympians being banned to Noida Police seizing fake drugs & supplements worth Rs 2 crore, **anabolic steroids have often been in news**.

❖ Anabolic Steroids

- Anabolic steroids are essentially **lab-made versions of the male hormone testosterone** and **have a similar effect** of increasing muscle mass as the natural hormone does. It also **increases male characteristics** in a person, such as facial hair and a deeper voice. These are very **different from the steroids that are prescribed by doctors** for inflammation or to suppress the body's immune system during a Covid-19 infection:
 - These medicines are called **corticosteroids**. They are **lab-made molecules that mimic the action of the hormone called cortisol** that controls the body's stress response, metabolism, and inflammation.
- Unlike corticosteroids, **anabolic steroids have limited medical use**.
- Anabolic steroids are mainly **misused by athletes and sportspersons nowadays**
 - Health Impacts:**
 - In the short-term it can cause **acne and hairfall**.
 - Extended misuse of the substance can also lead to **gynaecomastia (growth of breasts in men) and erectile dysfunction**.
 - In women, it can lead to **growth of facial hair**. It may also cause **extreme anger, paranoia, and impaired judgment**.
 - Long-term use can lead to **kidney disease and even failure**, liver damage and **tumors, enlarged heart, and high blood pressure**.

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