All about Jallikattu

Why in news?

The Supreme Court upheld the amendments made by the legislatures of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Karnataka to The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, allowing bull-taming sports and bullock-cart races.

What is jallikattu?

- The term Jallikattu is a union of two words - *'Calli'* (coins) and *'Kattu'* (tie), which denotes a bundle of coins tied to the bull's horns.
- Jallikattu is a 2,000 years old competitive ***bull taming sport*** in ***Tamil Nadu*** which contestants attempt to tame a bull for a prize, wherein if they fail, the bull owner wins the prize.
- It is celebrated in the second week of January at the time of the ***Pongal*** (harvest) festival.
- ***Kangayam, Pulikulam, Umbalachery, Bargur and Malai Maadu*** are among some native cattle breeds reared for Jallikattu.
- Its first references date back to a *seal discovered at Mohenjodaro*, which is dated between 2,500 BC and 1,800 BC.
- Back then, it was called ***Eru Thazuval,*** meaning "embracing the bull."
- Jallikattu also finds mention in *Silappadikaram*, one of the great Tamil epics from the Sangam age.
- The best guide to the cultural universe of Jallikattu is C S Chellappa's brilliant novella, *'Vaadivasal'* (Arena), written in the 1940s.

Sports involving Animals	
• **Jallikattu** - Tamil Nadu • **Rekla** – Tamil Nadu • **Bail Gadi Shariat** – Maharashtra • **Kambala** – Karnataka • **Maramudi Bull Surfing** – Kerala • **Dhirio bull fight** – Goa	• **Buffalo fight** during Bhogali Bihu festival - Assam • **Camel racing** – Rajasthan • **Bulbul fight** - Assam • **Cock fighting** - Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand

Why jallikattu is important to people of Tamil Nadu?

- **Tradition** - Jallikattu is a centuries-old tradition in Tamil Nadu.
- **Preservation of native breeds** - It has become a traditional way for the agriculturist community to preserve their pure-breed native bulls, which are otherwise used only for meat or ploughing.
- **A social identity** - Jallikattu is one of the few markers of their social standing and identity in a fast-changing world for agrarian communities.
- **Emotional connect** - The sport represents a cordial man-animal relationship, wherein

the owner strives to develop an emotional connect with the bull through the long process of rearing.

What is the controversy over jallikattu?

*The subject of preventing animal cruelty falls in the **Concurrent list** of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution.*

- **HC verdict** - In 2006, a Madras High Court barred the conduct of events such as *rekla* race (a kind of bullock cart race) and *jallikattu*.
- **Tamil Nadu Regulation of Jallikattu Act** – It was enacted in 2009 by adopting regulations and safety measures during jallikattu.
- **MoEFCC notification -** In 2011, Union Ministry of Environment and Forests issued a notification which included 'bulls' in a list of animals that are prohibited from being exhibited or trained for any performance.
- Efforts to organise the sport as a regulated event failed and Jallikattu could not take place for some years.

What led to massive agitations in Tamilnadu?

- **SC judgement –** In the landmark *Welfare Board of India vs A. Nagaraja (2014),* the SC imposed a ban on jallikattu and similar sports involving animals citing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960.
- The court cited 'Five Freedoms' recognised for animals by the World Health Organization for Animal Health.
    1. Freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition
    2. Freedom from fear and distress
    3. Freedom from physical and thermal discomfort
    4. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
    5. Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour
- These freedoms flow from the *Fundamental Duties (Art 51A(g)),* which imposes a duty on citizens to protect and improve the natural environment and to have compassion for living creatures.
- **Agitation in Tamilnadu** - A massive agitation broke out in 2017 against the government's failure to facilitate the conduct of jallikattu for successive years.
- Tamil Nadu government obtained the President's prior instruction to issue an ordinance that sought to remove the basis for the 2014 Supreme Court judgment.
- The ordinance, which was replaced by an Act, was adopted as a State-specific amendment to the PCA Act, 1960.
- The amendment defines the practice of jallikattu as an event involving bulls conducted with a view to follow tradition and culture.
- It added the sport as another exception to the list of acts that do not amount to cruelty

(other exceptions include dehorning, castration and destruction of stray dogs and other animals).

Article 29 (1) states that "any section of citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same."

Article 48 of the Constitution urges the state to endeavor to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines.

Art 51A(g)) imposes a duty on citizens to protect and improve the natural environment and to have compassion for living creatures.

What is the argument for and against the ban of jallikattu?

What is the recent Supreme Court judgement about?

- The court ***upheld the amendments*** made by Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Karnataka to PCA Act, 1960, allowing bull-taming sports like jallikattu, kambala, and bullock-cart races.
- The Constitution Bench has accepted jallikattu as a part of the cultural heritage of Tamils.
- It observed that the judiciary cannot examine the question whether something was part of tradition and culture.
- As the State amendment has been followed up with stringent regulations for conducting jallikattu, the court held that there are no statutory violations now that warrant a ban on jallikattu.

Quick Facts

Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)

- AWBI is a statutory advisory body set up under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 under ***Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.***
- Shrimati Rukmini Devi Arundale pioneered the setting up of the Board, with its Headquaters at ***Chennai.***
- **Chair** - *A senior MoEFCC official.*
- The Board consists of 28 Members.
- The term of office of Members is for a period of 3 years.
- Functions performed by AWBI
    - To advice the Central Government on the matters relating to the medical care provided in animal hospitals.
    - To advice the Government related to the design of slaughter houses and vehicles to lessen the burden on draught animals.

- To give financial assistance to animal welfare organizations, rescue establishments and animal hospitals

References

1. The Hindu | About Jallikattu
2. The Indian Express | Issues Over Jallikattu
3. Outlook | Jallikattu
4. AWBI | AWBI

