Ban on traditional buffalo and bulbul (songbird)

Why in News?

The Gauhati High Court reintroduced a ban on traditional buffalo and bulbul (songbird) fights during Magh Bihu Assam, quashed the Assam government's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of the previous year

- **Buffalo fight -** Traditional buffalo fights are popularly known as ***Moh Jooj*** in Assam.
- It was introduced to Assamese culture by the 30th Ahom King, ***Swargadeo Rudra Singha***, nearly 200 years ago.
- It is celebrated as a sport, the riverside town of Ahatguri has been hosting buffalo fight tournaments as part of the Magh Bihu celebrations since 1972.
- It is against the provisions of
    - Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960,
    - The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and
    - The Supreme Court's 2014 judgement which outlawed the use of bulls as performing animals in jallikattu, kambala and bullock cart races.
- **Magh Bihu** – It is also known as Bhogali Bihu or Maghar Domahi, is an Assamese winter ***harvest festival*** observed in January or February.
- The buffalo and bulbul fights are part of the folk culture associated with this harvest festival.
- **Bulbul fight –** In some parts of Assam starved and intoxicated bulbuls were made to fight over food.

Red-vented Bulbul	Wild water buffalo
• **Scientific Name -** Pycnonotus cafer • It is a dark, sleek, medium-sized bird with a black crest and a white rump. The red color under the tail is often difficult to see. • **Habitat -** It often seen high in trees or perched on wires in urban and rural areas; generally prefers scrubby edge habitat instead of dense forest. • **Distribution -** Native to South and Southeast Asia. • **Conservation status** • IUCN Red List - Least Concern • Schedule II of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972	• **Scientific Name -** Bubalus arnee. • It is also called Asian buffalo and Asiatic buffalo. • Wild water buffalo are larger and heavier than domestic buffalo. • It is a large bovine native to the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia. • In India, they are largely restricted to in and around Kaziranga, Manas and Dibru-Saikhowa National Parks, Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary and Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary and in a few scattered pockets in Assam; and in and around D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. • It is listed as ***Endangered*** in the IUCN Red List

References

1. The Indian Express | Ban on buffalo and bulbul fights
2. Hindustan Times | Gauhati HC bans buffalo and bulbul fights

