Camel Culling in Australia

Why in news?

Australia began a five-day cull of up to 10,000 camels, using sniper fire from helicopters.

What is the move?

- The exercise is taking place in Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (called APY Lands) in South Australia state.
- The animals there will be killed according to the "highest standards of animal welfare".
- The animals are to be killed away from communities.
- Their carcasses will be burnt, unless they fall in remote and inaccessible locations.

How did camels find presence in Australia?

- Camels in Australia were first brought to the continent in the late 19th century from India.
- It was the time when Australia's massive interior region was first being discovered.
- Over 20,000 were imported from India between the 1840s and the 1900s.
- Australia is now believed to have the largest population of wild camels in the world - over 10 lakh, which is rapidly growing.

Why is the decision now to kill them?

- The APY Lands is located in Australia's southeast and home to about 2,300 Aboriginal Australians.
- In the past, the inhabitants used to gather the camels and sell them.
- But, the recent drought spell has caused an unmanageable number of animals to turn up.
- The herds roam in the country's inland deserts, and are considered a pest, as they foul water sources and trample native flora.
- Unless their breeding is controlled, the camel population doubles every 9 years.
- The animals also have a massive carbon footprint, each camel emitting methane equivalent to one tonne of carbondioxide a year.

- The year 2019 was the driest and hottest on record in Australia.
- A catastrophic bushfire season, that began months before usual, has left many dead. (Click here to know more)
- It has also burned over 1.5 crore acres of land, killing an estimated 100 crore animals.
- The acute drought has pushed massive herds of feral or wild camels towards remote towns looking for water.
- This has endangered the indigenous communities.
- Some camels have died of thirst or trampled each other as they rushed to find water.
- The camels have been threatening scarce reserves of food and water.
- Besides, they have been damaging infrastructure and creating a hazard for drivers.
- Some in the APY Lands are now demanding legislation that would allow them to legally cull the animals, which could help offset greenhouse emissions.

Source: Indian Express

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering