NSA for Cattle Offences - Madhya Pradesh Case

What is the issue?

- The Madhya Pradesh government recently detained five people under the National Security Act (NSA) for allegedly committing offences related to cattle laws.
- The use of the National Security Act for cattle offences seems contentious, given its purpose and intent.

What are the recent cases?

- In one case in Khandwa district, the police, who recovered a cow carcass, traced three men who had allegedly killed the animal.
- In another case, authorities in Agar Malwa district claim there was some disturbance due to two men who were allegedly transporting cows.
- The stated reason to book them under the NSA is that they were likely to cause disruption of peace.

Why is it contentious?

- The police could have prosecuted them under laws that ban cow slaughter.
- The NSA provides for a maximum of one year in prison through an executive order without trial or bail.
- The recent case is possibly the first time when this law is being used against those suspected of offences against cows.
- The act amounts to gross misuse of a law meant solely to prevent activities that endanger the country's security or public order.
- There was no evidence of security or order being under grave threat, in this case.

What are the larger concerns?

- India has become habituated to the abuse of preventive detention laws.
- In recent times, they have been wrongly invoked against political dissenters and vocal critics, with total disregard for constitutional freedoms.
- The present move would imply a breach of limits by the law-enforcers to demonstrate ideological adherence to majoritarian beliefs.
- It is a threat to the freedom of movement and vocation, and the dietary

choices, of those who do not share the majority community's reverence for cow.

- The Supreme Court too had earlier warned against the dangers of a socio-political framework based on disrespect for an inclusive social order.
- It issued some guidelines and wanted the states to take preventive and remedial measures against mob violence and public lynching.

Source: The Hindu

