Relaxing Liquor Ban

Why in news?

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The Supreme Court has exempted Arunachal Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands from the court's ban on sale of liquor within 500 metres of National and State Highways.

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What were the impacts of liquor ban in Arunachal?

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- 80% of Arunachal’s roads are national highways.
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- Arunachal Pradesh had lost 50% of its revenue following the ban which earmarked 500 metres alongside highways as liquor-free zones.
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What was the court’s rationale?

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- The Supreme Court took note of the geographical locations of Arunachal Pradesh and the A&N islands.
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- It concluded that they “deserved parity” with Sikkim and Meghalaya.
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- Recently, Sikkim and Meghalaya got a full exemption from the 500-m no-liquor zone ban.
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- Sikkim and Meghalaya were exempted on the grounds that 82% and 69% of their area respectively were covered by forests.
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- Over 90% of their liquor shops would be closed if the ban was imposed as it is.
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- The court also relaxed the liquor-free zone along highways from 500 m to 220 m in areas with a population of 20,000 or less.
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Source: The Hindu

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