



Current Affairs of the Day

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Tamil Nadu govt. gives go-ahead for jallikattu

Highlights:

1. The Tamil Nadu government has permitted jallikattu to be held across the state during the coming Pongal season. But the bull-taming sport would be subject to fresh restrictions in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. All the spectators would have to undergo thermal screening before entering the venue. To ensure adherence to physical distancing norms, the number of spectators would be limited to 50% of the venue's capacity.
3. All bull tamers taking part in jallikattu events have to get a certificate from a government-recognised lab, stating that they have tested negative for COVID-19.

Background:

1. Jallikattu is an old tradition. An ancient reference to bull taming is found in a seal discovered at Mohenjodaro, which is dated between 2,500 BC and 1,800 BC. The sport was called Eru thazuval or "embracing the bull".
2. The term 'jallikattu,' comes from Tamil terms 'salli kaasu' which means coins and 'kattu' which means a package tied to the horns of bulls as prize money.
3. So, in this popular bull-taming sport held alongside annual harvest festivities in rural Tamil Nadu young men demonstrate their valour by pouncing on fleeing bulls.

Ethics and Culture:

1. In 2014, the Supreme Court had banned the event after a plea filed by the Animal Welfare Board of India and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
2. However, the state government insisted that Jallikattu is a crucial part of its culture and identity. The ban was lifted in January 2017 after massive protests in Chennai.
3. Although there are systems in place to check the treatment of the bulls and ensure the safety of participants and spectators, activists allege that animal cruelty still continues.



4. Kambala is a traditional bull buffalo race which generally takes place in coastal Karnataka from November to March. PETA has alleged that Kambala too involves acts of cruelty on animals which are not physiologically suited for racing.

Apex Court

1. In 2014 the SC had banned Jallikattu after declaring it to be an act of “inherent cruelty”. The Bench said “taming a bull” to perform in an event runs counter to the concept of welfare of the animal.
2. Animal welfare is the basic foundation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960.
3. Also, the Article 51A of the constitution which includes our fundamental duties and states that citizens should safeguard the wildlife and forests and have compassion for living creatures.
4. The court threw out Tamil Nadu’s argument that the ban affected the fundamental right to religion under Article 25.

Cabinet nod for 100% FDI in DTH service

Highlights:

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in direct-to-home (DTH) services, an extension of the licence period from 10 years to 20 and a reduced licence fee.

Cabinet approves merger of four film and media units

Highlights:

1. The Cabinet on Wednesday approved the merger of four government-run film and media units — the Films Division, the Directorate of Film Festivals, the National Film Archives of India and the autonomous body Children’s Film Society — with the National Film Development Corporation.
2. A statement from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said that the merger of Film Media Units under one corporation will lead to convergence of activities and resources and better coordination, thereby ensuring synergy



and efficiency in achieving the mandate of each media unit. This will lead to a reduction in duplication of activities and direct savings to the exchequer.

3. The Films Division, established in 1948 and the oldest of the four units, was created primarily to produce documentaries and news magazines as publicity for government programmes and to keep a cinematic record of Indian history.
4. The National Film Archives of India was established in 1964 with the primary objective of acquiring and preserving Indian cinematic heritage. The Directorate of Film Festivals was set up in 1973 to promote Indian films and cultural exchange.
5. The merger also brings into the fold an autonomous organisation, the Children's Film Society, which was founded in 1955 with the specific objective of providing children and young people value-based entertainment through the medium of films.

Nepal SC forwards petitions to Constitutional Bench

Highlights:

1. The Supreme Court of Nepal on Wednesday started hearing writ petitions filed against the dissolution of the House of Representatives by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari. The court then forwarded the petitions to a Constitutional Bench.
2. The Bench will examine the constitutionality of the decision to dissolve the House especially as the 2015 Constitution does not allow for such a move for political necessities.

Britain, France reopen cross-Channel travel

Highlights:

1. France and Britain reopened cross-Channel travel on Wednesday after a 48-hour ban to curb the spread of a new coronavirus variant but London has warned it could take days for thousands of trucks blocked around the port of Dover to get moving.



2. The major transit hub reopened following an agreement between London and Paris to allow hauliers stranded in the U.K. to leave the country if they could produce a negative coronavirus test that was less than 72 hours old.
3. Much of Europe had swiftly banned British travellers following the emergence of a more transmissible variant of COVID-19 in Britain, and France's decision to block freight movements sparked fears of food shortages.

Reliance plans 'largest zoo' in Jamnagar

Highlights:

1. Reliance Industries Ltd will build the world's largest zoo, a top executive of the company has confirmed. The zoo will come upon 280 acres of land near Reliance's refinery at Moti Khavdi near Jamnagar.
2. The wildlife to be displayed at the zoo will be from across India, Africa and South America.
3. It noted that the concept of private zoos was an old one since one of India's oldest zoos in Kolkata, the Zoological Garden, was also private.
4. In March 2018, Down To Earth (DTE) had done a story on the state of Indian zoos of all types. We had noted that the conditions of zoos were pitiable in India despite the setting up of the Central Zoo Authority nearly three decades back.
5. In a recent blog published on our website by internationally-known zoo expert Shubhobroto Ghosh, the very concept of keeping animals in captivity had also been questioned.