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Assam Cattle Protection (Amendment) Act, 2021

- A recent cow protection law (Assam Cattle Protection (Amendment) Act, 2021) which was enacted by Assam a year ago has created an acute beef crisis in Meghalaya.
- It is important to note that the north-eastern states like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland do not have any such law governing the slaughter of cattle.

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Salient features

- This act prohibits the slaughter of cows.
- It allows the slaughter of other cattle (bulls, bulls and buffaloes) if the cattle are more than 14 years of age or have become permanently disabled due to injury or deformity. **The Hindu Analysis**
- It also prohibits inter-state and inter-state transport of cattle and sale of beef, except in permitted places.
- The concerned authority can inspect and confiscate cattle and vehicles used for offenses under the Act.
- On conviction, the seized cattle and vehicles will be handed over to the state government.

Major challenges : The Hindu Analysis

- The Act unreasonably limits the transport of cattle in the North-Eastern region of India due to restrictions on transport through Assam.
- The Act prohibits animal transport from Assam to states where animal slaughter is not regulated.
- It may be difficult for the accused to pay the cost of maintenance of the confiscated cattle during the trial.
- The ban on the places where beef can be sold may actually be similar and much broader than the ban on the sale of beef across the state.

Why ban on cow slaughter? Today Current Affairs

- The Directive Principles of State Policy under the Constitution (Article 48) provide that the State shall endeavor to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines, shall take steps to improve the breeds and the slaughter of cows, calves and other milch animals. Will ban and prepare animal draft.
- In this sequence, more than 20 states have passed laws limiting the slaughter of cattle (cows, bulls and bullocks) and buffaloes to different levels.

Judiciary's opinion : The Hindu Analysis

- The extent of prohibition under these state laws over time has been guided by Supreme Court decisions.
- Earlier laws of states like Madhya Pradesh (1949), Bihar (1955) and Uttar Pradesh (1955) had completely banned the slaughter of cattle.
- Examining these three laws in the year 1958, the Supreme Court held that the complete ban on the slaughter of cattle violates the fundamental right of the butcher to practice his trade or profession.
- It was recognized that while a complete ban on the slaughter of cows was constitutionally valid, the ban on the slaughter of bullocks, bullocks and buffaloes could be limited only to a certain extent, or based on their usefulness (milk, for breeding). **The Hindu Analysis**
- In 1994, Gujarat passed an amended law to ban the slaughter of bullocks and bullocks of all ages.
- In 2005, a seven-judge Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the complete ban on the slaughter of bullocks and bullocks under the Gujarat Amendment Act, contrary to the earlier judgments of the courts.

- In recent years, states such as Chhattisgarh (2004), Madhya Pradesh (2004), Maharashtra (2015), Haryana (2015) and Karnataka (2021) have also banned the slaughter of bulls and bullocks of all ages.

Initiatives for Cow Protection : The Hindu Analysis

- Rashtriya Gokul Mission
- Gokul Gram
- Animal lifesaving
- National Bovine Productivity Mission

Coir industry

- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises inaugurated the 'Enterprise India National Coir Conclave 2022' in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.
- The event is being organized as a coordinated effort between the State and Central Governments to promote the production of coir and coir products and identify new areas of their application.
- 'Run for Coir' is also being organized on 6th May, 2022 to promote the use of coir as a naturally degradable, eco-friendly product. Over a thousand people are expected to participate in the race including dignitaries, college students and the general public.

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Coir:

- It is a substance abundantly produced by the 'coconut palm' found in nature as a byproduct of coconut.
- It is a naturally occurring fibrous material found on the outside of the coconut shell that is processed for use naturally.
- Coir has been used for centuries by sailors for tying goods in the form of rope and for ship cables.
- Today coir is used for an assortment of products, from rugs and doormats to plant pots and hanging basket liners, horticultural materials used in agriculture, and mesh sheets used to control soil erosion. Coir is also used in some potting mix products.

Status of Coir Industry in India : The Hindu Analysis

- The Coir Board was established by the Government of India under the Coir Industries Act, 1953 for the overall sustainable development of the coir industry in the country.
- The functions of the Board are to undertake, assist and encourage scientific, technical and economic research, modernization, quality improvement, human resource development, market promotion and welfare of all those engaged in this industry. **The Hindu Analysis**
- The mandates under the Coir Industries Act are implemented by the Coir Board through various schemes/programmes, including research and development activities, training programmes, providing financial assistance for setting up coir units, developing domestic and export markets.

Importance:

Employment : The Hindu Analysis

- Coir industry provides employment to more than 7 lakh people in rural areas of coconut producing states.
- Interestingly, 80% of these artisans are women, but its production so far is confined to the southern coconut producing states/UTs of the country.

Export : The Hindu Analysis

- Exports of coir and coir products from India during the year 2020-21 registered an all-time high of Rs 3778.98 crore with an increase of over Rs 1021 crore over the previous year.

Domestic consumption : The Hindu Analysis

- More than 50% of the world's annual production of coir fiber is consumed mainly in India.
- Increasing awareness towards eco-friendly products has increased the demand for coir and coir products in domestic and foreign markets.

Environmentally friendly : The Hindu Analysis

- Coir products are eco-friendly in nature and have been certified with “Eco Mark” by the Ministry of Forest and Environment, India.
- Coir products save the environment and help reduce global warming.
- New end use applications of coir such as use of coir geotextiles to prevent soil erosion, conversion of coir pith into a valuable bio-fertilizer and soil conditioner and coir garden products have gained popularity in India and abroad.

Venus Mission

- Recently the new chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has announced that the Venus mission will be launched by December 2024.
- The objective of this mission is to study the sulfuric acid clouds present in the atmosphere of Venus, which are toxic and corrosive in nature.
- Earlier, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced two new robotic missions to Venus (DaVinci Plus and Veritas).

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Major Objectives of the Mission:

- To investigate surface process and shallow sub-surface stratigraphy.
- No prior observations of the subsurface of Venus have been made so far.
- Stratigraphy is a branch of geology that studies the formation of layers and layers of rocks.
- To study the composition, composition and dynamics of the atmosphere.
- To investigate the interaction of the solar wind with the Venusian ionosphere.

Importance of Mission : The Hindu Analysis

- The mission will help to know how Earth-like planets move and what conditions exist on Earth-sized exoplanets (planets orbiting a star other than our Sun).
- It will help in modeling the Earth’s climate and act as a warning about how dramatically a planet’s climate can change.

Mission Challenges : The Hindu Analysis

- Venus presents different challenges than Mars, given its dense atmosphere and surface activity, which makes it a complex planet.
- To understand deeply the instruments need to be carried deep through the atmosphere.
- Among the instruments the space agency plans to use on the spacecraft is a high resolution Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) that will probe the surface of Venus despite the clouds (which reduce visibility) around the planet.
- It refers to a technique for producing high-resolution images. Because of the accuracy the radar can penetrate clouds and darkness, which means it can collect data day and night in any weather.

Prior Missions : The Hindu Analysis

America:

- Mariner series 1962–1974, Pioneer Venus 1 in 1978 and Pioneer Venus 2, Magellan in 1989.

Russia:

- Venera series of spacecraft 1967–1983, Vegas 1 and 2 in 1985.

Japan:

- Akatsuki in the year 2015.

Europe:

- Venus Express in the year 2005.

Venus Planet : The Hindu Analysis

- It is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty. It is the second largest planet in terms of distance from the Sun and the sixth largest in mass and size.
- It is the second-brightest natural object in the night sky after the Moon, which is probably why it was the first planet known for its motion in the sky in the second millennium BC.
- Unlike the other planets in our solar system, Venus and Uranus rotate on their axis clockwise.

- It is the hottest planet in the solar system due to its high concentration of carbon dioxide which produces an intense greenhouse effect. **Today Current Affairs**
- A day on Venus is longer than a year on Earth. Venus takes longer to rotate on its axis than it does to complete one orbit around the Sun.
- That is, the longest rotation of any planet in the Solar System with one rotation in 243 Earth days.
- Only 224.7 Earth days to complete one orbit around the Sun. **The Hindu Analysis**
- Venus has been called Earth's twin sister because of its similarity in mass, size and density and its relative locations in the Solar System.
- No planet gets closer to Earth than Venus; at its closest level, it is the nearest largest body to Earth other than the Moon.
- The atmospheric pressure of Venus is 90 times greater than that of Earth.

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