



## Jallikattu

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### Why in News

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As the assembly polls are to be held in Tamil Nadu in 2021, the **Pongal festival** and **Jallikattu**, the traditional bull-taming sport, have caught the attention of the Political Parties in the country.

### Key Points

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- **About Jallikattu:**
  - **Traditional:**
    - A tradition over 2,000 years old, Jallikattu is a **competitive sport** as well as an event to honour **bull owners** who rear them for mating.
    - It is a violent sport in which contestants try to tame a bull for a prize; if they fail, the bull owner wins the prize.
  - **Areas of Sport:**

It is popular in **Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Theni, Pudukkottai and Dindigul** districts of Tamil Nadu known as the **Jallikattu belt**.
  - **Time of Event:**

It is celebrated in the **second week of January, during the Tamil harvest festival, Pongal**.
  - **Importance in Tamil Culture:**
    - Jallikattu is considered a traditional way for the peasant community to preserve their **pure-breed native bulls**.

At a time when cattle breeding is often an artificial process, conservationists and peasants argue that Jallikattu is a way to **protect these male animals** which are otherwise used only for meat if not for ploughing.
    - Kangayam, Pulikulam, Umbalachery, Bargur and Malai Maadu are among the **popular native cattle breeds used for Jallikattu**. The owners of these premium breeds **command respect locally**.

- **Legal Interventions on Jallikattu:**

- In 2011, the Centre added bulls to the **list of animals whose training and exhibition is prohibited.**
- In 2014, the Supreme Court banned the bull-taming sport, ruling on a petition that cited the **2011 notification.**

- **Current Legal Position on Jallikattu:**

- The state government has legalised these events, which has been challenged in the court.
- In 2018, the Supreme Court referred the Jallikattu case to a Constitution Bench, where it is pending now.

- **Conflict to be Resolved:**

Whether the Jallikattu tradition can be protected as a **cultural right of the people of Tamil Nadu which is a fundamental right.**

- **Article 29 (1) against Rights of animals.**
- Article 29 (1) mandates that “any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same”.

- **Position in Other States for Similar Sports:**

- Karnataka too passed a law to save a similar sport, called **Kambala.**
- Except in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where bull-taming and racing continue to be organised, these sports remain **banned in all other states** including Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra due to the 2014 **ban order from the Supreme Court.**



**Source: IE**