MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS

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LOK ADALAT

CONTEXT

➢ The National Lok Adalat on December 9, organised by the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority disposed of 2,24,080 pending cases in a single day.

ABOUT

➢ Lok Adalat is a statutory organization under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 and serves as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism in India.

➢ It is a forum where cases pending on panchayat or at a pre-litigation stage in a court of law are settled.

OBJECTIVES

➢The main objectives of Lok Adalats are to settle disputes amicably through compromise, save time and money for the parties and reduce the burden on courts.

➢Tiers: Constituted at different levels namely, National Lok Adalat, State Authority level, High court level, District level and Taluk level.

➢Powers: Have the same powers as are vested in a Civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure(1908).

➢Decisions/Awards are final and binding on all parties.

➢No appeal shall lie to any Court against it's award.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. With reference to Lok Adalat, consider the following statements:

1. Lok Adalat can deal only with civil matters, not criminal matters.

2. Lok Adalat was first set up in Gujarat.

3. Only judicial officers can be appointed in the Lok Adalat.

Select the correct statements:

(A) 1 and 2

(B) 2 only

(C) 2 and 3

(D) All of the above

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION®

Q. Discuss the significance of Lok Adalat as an effective dispute resolution mechanism
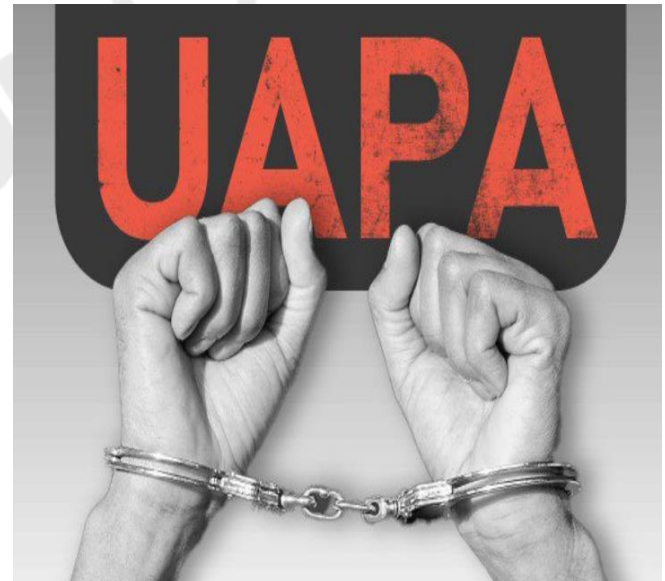
LOK SABHA SECURITY BREACH

CONTEXT

➤ A major security breach occurred in the Lok Sabha on December 13, 2023, during the 22nd anniversary of the deadly attack on the parliament.

➤ In this context, four people were charged under the anti-terror Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and were arrested later and their belongings were confiscated.

UAPA

➢ UAPA was passed in 1967.

➢ It aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.

➢ Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.

PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

➤The Act confers ultimate authority upon the central government. If the Center deems an activity illegal, it can officially declare it as such through an Official Gazette.

➤The most severe penalties under the Act include the death penalty and life imprisonment.

➤ Both Indian and foreign nationals can face charges under UAPA. The law applies to offenders in a consistent manner, even if the crime is committed on foreign soil outside India.

➤ Under the UAPA, the investigating agency can file a charge sheet in maximum 180 days after the arrests and the duration can be extended further after intimating the court.

AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT ®

➢The 2004 amendment, added "terrorist act" to the list of offences to ban organisations for terrorist activities, under which 34 outfits were banned.

➢In August, Parliament cleared the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.

CRITICISMS ASSOCIATED WITH UAPA

➤Lack of Clarity in Definitions:

The Act's definitions of terms like "unlawful activity" and "terrorist act" are ambiguous, providing room for subjective interpretation and potential misuse.

➤Impact on Judicial Independence:

There are concerns that the Act might compromise judicial independence, as it allows for the admissibility of confessions made to police officers, which could be obtained under duress.

➢Impact on Human Rights:

The Act has faced criticism for its potential to infringe upon human rights, including the right to a fair trial and the prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY 2023

World Health Organization

Global status of road safety

CONTEXT

➤ The World Health
Organization's Global Status
Report on Road Safety for
2023 revealed a decrease in
worldwide road fatalities in
2021. Conversely, India saw an
increase in road fatalities
during the same period.

KEY FACTS

➢ Between 2010 and 2021, there was a 5% decrease in global road traffic deaths, totaling approximately 1.19 million fatalities annually.

➢ Remarkably, ten countries achieved a reduction of over 50% in road traffic deaths during this period.

➢ These countries include Belarus, Denmark, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela, among others.

SCENE IN INDIA

➢ India, however, registered a 15% increase in fatalities.

➢ Total number of road traffic fatalities went up from 1.34 lakh in 2010 to 1.54 lakh in 2021.

INDIAN FOREST & WOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEME (IFWCS)

CONTEXT

➢ The Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS), introduced by India's Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, promotes sustainable forest management and agroforestry.

KEY TERMS

➢ **Sustainable Forest Management**: Involves responsible and balanced use of forest resources to fulfill current needs while preserving resources for future generations.

➢ **Agroforestry Integration**: Combines trees/shrubs with crops/livestock on the same land for environmental, economic, and social benefits

THREE CERTIFICATION TYPES

➤ Forest Management Certification

➤ Tree Outside Forest Management Certification

➤ Chain of Custody Certification (for tracing forest products)

KEY FACTS

➤ Aim: To incentivize entities like state forest departments, farmers, and wood industries to adopt responsible forest and agroforestry practices.

➤ Standards: Based on the Indian Forest Management Standard and a new Trees Outside Forests Standard.

➤ Applicability: Nationwide, in forest areas and TOF plantations on government, private, agroforestry, and other lands. Covers timber and non-timber forest produce.

➤ Nodal Agency: Overseen by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (advisory role) and managed by the Indian Institute of Forest Management.

➤ Working Mechanism: Independent audits by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies under the Quality Council of India to ensure compliance. Compliant agencies receive third-party certification and can access incentives based on their certification.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. The oldest agroforestry system is –

(A) Alley cropping

(B) Taungya system

(C) Home Gardens

(D) Shifting cultivation

By the Officers,

For the Officers