Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT)

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Why in News?

The AFT has stayed the retirement of Colonel Shrikant Prasad Purohit, acquitted in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, pending a decision on his statutory complaint on promotion and service benefits.

- **AFT –** It is an Indian Military tribunal established *under the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007*.
- **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Defence.
- **Bench** – Armed Forces Tribunal has its Principal Bench at New Delhi & eight Regional Benches at Jaipur, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Guwahati, Kolkata, Chennai, Kochi and Mumbai.
- **Composition** – Each bench typically consists of Judicial and Administrative Members.
    - **Judicial Members** – Retired High Court Judges.
    - **Administrative Members** – Retired Members of the Armed Forces who have held the rank of Major General/ equivalent or above for a period of three years or more; or
    - Judge Advocate General (JAG), who have held the appointment for at least one year, are also entitled to be appointed as the Administrative Member.
- **Appeals & Procedures –** The Tribunal shall transact its proceedings as per the *Armed Forces Tribunal (Procedure) rules, 2008*.
- **Language** – All proceedings in the Tribunal will be in *English*.
- **Procedure** – It is closely aligned with *High Court practices*, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- **Dress code** – The dress as mandated for the officials of the Tribunal, including the bar, will be a white shirt, collar band and a black coat/ jacket.

Functions

- **Service Matters** – It has been set up to provide for the adjudication or trial of disputes and complaints with respect to commission, appointments, enrolment and conditions of service in respect of persons subject to
    - The Army Act, 1950,
    - The Navy Act, 1957, and
    - The Air Force Act, 1950.
- **Appeals** – It can further provide for appeals arising out of orders, findings or sentences of courts-martial held under the said Acts and for matters connected

therewith or incidental thereto.

- **Exclusion** – It does not have jurisdiction over paramilitary forces (like the BSF or CRPF).
- **Sentence Review** – It may remit, mitigate, commute, or enhance sentences.
- **Grant of Bail** – The Tribunal can grant bail to persons in military custody, with or without conditions.

References

1. The Hindu | AFT stays retirement of Colonel Purohit, acquitted in 2008 case
2. Armed Forces Tribunal | AFT

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