Prelim Bits 08-04-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Lok Adalat

Lok Adalat proceedings are not judicial in nature: Karnataka High Court.

- The Kalaburagi bench of the Karnataka HC was hearing a case where the petitioner had challenged the decree of the Lok Adalat.
- The bench dismissed the decree and placed the matter before the civil court.
- The Court observed that the proceedings of a Lok Adalat overseen by a judicial officer are not judicial in nature as the officer is not entitled to discharge the job of a judge and his role is only that of a conciliator.
    - Conciliator is a person who acts as a mediator between two disputing people or groups.

Lok Adalat

- **NALSA –** The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) along with other Legal Services Institutions conducts Lok Adalats.
- **ADR –** Lok Adalat is one of the Alternative Dispute Redressal (ADR) mechanisms.
- It is a forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/compromised amicably.
- **Status –** Lok Adalats have been given statutory status under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- **Decree –** Under the said Act, the award (decision) made by the Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties and no appeal against such an award lies before any court of law.
- **Appeal –** If the parties are not satisfied with the award of the Lok Adalat there is no provision for an appeal against such an award.
- However, they are free to initiate litigation by approaching the court of appropriate jurisdiction.
- This can be done by filing a case by following the required procedure, in exercise of their right to litigate.
- **Fee –** There is no court fee payable when a matter is filed in a Lok Adalat.
- If a matter pending in the court of law is referred to the Lok Adalat and is settled subsequently, the court fee originally paid in the court on the complaints/petition is also refunded back to the parties.
- **Conciliators –** The persons deciding the cases in the Lok Adalats are called the Members of the Lok Adalats, they have the role of statutory conciliators only and do not have any judicial role.
- Therefore they can only persuade the parties to come to a conclusion for settling the dispute outside the court in the Lok Adalat and shall not pressurize the parties to compromise matters.

- **Nature of cases to be referred to Lok Adalat –**
    1. Any case pending before any court.
    2. Any dispute which has not been brought before any court and is likely to be filed before the court.
    3. Provided that any matter relating to an offence not compoundable under the law shall not be settled in Lok Adalat.
- **National Lok Adalat –** They are held for at regular intervals where on a single day Lok Adalats are held throughout the country, in all the courts right from the Supreme Court till the Taluk levels.
- **Permanent Lok Adalat –** It is organised under Section 22-B of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- Permanent Lok Adalats have been set up as permanent bodies with a Chairman and two members.
- The members provide compulsory pre-litigative mechanism for conciliation and settlement of cases relating to Public Utility Services like transport, postal, telegraph etc.
- The Award of the Permanent Lok Adalat is final and binding on all the parties.
- The jurisdiction of the Permanent Lok Adalats is upto Rs. Ten Lakhs.
- **Mobile Lok Adalats –** They are organised in various parts of the country which travel from one location to another.

References

1. The Indian Express – Lok Adalat proceedings are not judicial in nature
2. Times of India – Karnataka HC defines limits of Lok Adalat's powers
3. NALSA – Lok Adalat

Important IVC Sites

In the latest revisions that the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has added the Rakhigarhi findings and dropped the references on Narmada Dam.

- NCERT has stated that study of ancient DNA from archaeological sources in Rakhigarhi, Haryana suggests that the genetic roots of the Harappans go back to 10,000 BCE.
- The DNA of the Harappans has continued till today and a majority of the south Asian population appears to be their descendants.
- Due to trade and cultural contacts of the Harappans with distant regions (such as IVC) there is a mixture of genes in small quantity.

Important Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) Sites		
Site	**Location**	**Discovery**
Banawali	Haryana	• From Banawali and sites in the desiccated Sarasvati River valley came terra-cotta models of plows, supporting the earlier interpretation of the field pattern. • Of excavated sites in Punjab, Banawali is an important major settlement, surrounded by massive brick defenses.

Dholavira	Gujarat	• Artifacts that were found here include terracotta pottery, beads, gold and copper ornaments, seals, fish hooks, animal figurines, tools, urns, and some imported vessels. • Remains of a copper smelter indicate Harappans, who lived in Dholavira, knew metallurgy.
Mohenjo Daro	Pakistan	• A wide pool known as The Great Bath was found in Mohenjo-Daro. • Apart from that beads, stones, and many other artefacts were found in Mohenjo-Daro.
Ropar	Punjab	• A new form of ceramics and ornaments has been discovered. • Characteristic Harappan pottery cert blades, beads, faience decorations, brus Celts, terracotta calies, and an engraved seal with typical information pictographs were discovered.
Kalibangan	Rajasthan	• At Kalibangan, fire altars have been discovered, similar to those found at Lothal. • These altars suggest fire worship. • It is the only Indus Valley Civilization site where there is no evidence to suggest the worship of the mother goddess.
Chanhudaro	Pakistan	• Evidence of shell craftsmanship and manufacture of bangles and ladles were discovered. • Harappan seals were typically created in larger towns such as Harappa, Mohenjo Daro, and Chanhudaro, which were part of the administrative network.
Surkotada	Gujarat	• The most controversial and sought after animal in Indian archaeology has been the horse. • Bones of horse have been recovered from these sites.
Sutkagan Dor	Iran-Pakistan Border	• Stone vessels, stone arrowheads, copper arrowheads, shell beads, pottery, and various other items were found. • A copper-bronze disc probably associated with the Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) was also discovered there.
Rangapur	Gujarat	• A vast number of plant fragments were found at Rangpur. • Rice, bajra, and millet have all been found.
Rakhigarhi	Haryana	• Fire altars and apsidal structures were revealed in Rakhigarhi. • Cotton cloth traces preserved on silver or bronze objects were known from Rakhigarhi, Chanhudaro and Harappa. • An impressive number of stamps seals were also found at this site.
Lothal	Gujarat	• Excavations have revealed the world's oldest known artificial dock, Lothal, which was connected to an old course of the Sabarmati River. • Artefacts like Jewellery, pottery, seals, religious symbols, and objects of daily use were found in Lothal.

Alamgirpur	Uttar Pradesh	• Typical Harappan pottery was found and the complex itself appeared to be a pottery workshop. • Ceramic items found included roof tiles, dishes, cups, vases, cubicle dice, beads, terracotta cakes, carts and figurines of a humped bull and a snake.
Harappa	Pakistan	• Excavations at Harappa have yielded new troves of information about ancient Indus life, craft production, and preceding cultures like the Ravi Phase. • Similar seals at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were discovered.
Kot Diji	Pakistan	• The site revealed that it was a forerunner of the Indus Civilisation. • The occupation of this site is attested already at 3300 BCE. • The remains consist of two parts; the citadel area on high ground and outer area.

References

1. The Hindu – Rakhigarhi findings in NCERT books added
2. Deccan Herald – NCERT revisions to Class 12 history text book
3. Hindustan Times – Harappan civilisation is 7,000 to 8,000 years' old

Jenu Kuruba Community (Kattunayakkars)

Decades after independence, basic facilities are still distant dream to Jenu Kuruba settlement in Kodagu.

- **Jenu –** Jenu in Kannada means honey and Kuruba is the caste.
- As the name suggests, they are a traditional honey gathering tribe.
- **Other Name –** Kattunayakkars (King of the forest)
- **Habitat –** They are among the original inhabitants of the forests of the Western Ghats that stretch over three states, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- Majority of the Jenu Kurubas are from Karnataka and post 1970s, they are relocated around Nagarhole and Bandipur forests to enable tiger conservation project.

Bidru Kotta, a bamboo percussive instrument is played by the tribe.

- **Occupation –** The main occupation used to be food gathering in the forests, collection of minor forest produce in the forests, collection of minor forest produce including honey.
- **Lifestyle –** They live in small settlements called Hadi.
- They practice agriculture as a subsidiary occupation.
- Instead of ploughing the field, they scratch the surface with a sort of bamboo spear.

In Karnataka, Jenu Kuruba and Koraga stand out as the most vulnerable among the 50 tribal communities.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- **Dhebar commission –** In 1973, it created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- **PVTGs –** In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

There are 75 PVTGs out of 705 STs, spread over 18 states and 1 Union Territory (A&N Islands) with around 27.6 lakh as per 2011 Census.

- **Features –** They are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, and have absence of written language.
- **Statistics –** Highest PVTGs is present in Odisha (13) followed by Andhra Pradesh (12).

PM JANMAN is designed for 75 PVTG communities who have been left out by the schemes of various Ministries/Departments and therefore need to be supported through this Mission.

- **Pradhan Mantri PVTGs Development Mission –** It was introduced in the Union Budget 2023-24.
- It aims to improve the socio-economic status of PVTGs and bridging gaps in health, education, livelihoods, and basic infrastructure.

List of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
In Tamil Nadu
• Kattu Nayakans, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyans, Todas.
In Kerala
• Cholanaikayan (a section of Kattunaickans), Kadar, Kattunayakan, Kurumbas, Koraga.
In Karnataka
• Jenu Kuruba and Koraga.

References

1. Deccan Herald – Kattunayakkars
2. The Hindu – PM-JANMAN to cover Jenu Kurubas
3. The Hindu – Tribal hamlet gets power connection after independence

New Features of UPI

RBI introduces two new UPI Features, from Cash Deposit to PPI Wallet Interoperability.

Unified Payment Interface (UPI)

• UPI is the indigenous digital payment system in India that was conceptualized and operated by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2016.
• It powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.
• **UPI Lite –** UPI Lite will be an on-device wallet functionality that will enable offline transactions of smaller values.
• UPI Lite will work via the wallet system.
• **Transaction limit –** Funds have to be added in the UPI Lite wallet and which can be used to make small payments under Rs 200.
• **Wallet limit –** There is an Rs 2,000 limit on the amount of money you can have in this UPI Lite wallet.
• The users will not be required to enter their UPI PIN while confirming UPI Lite payments.

- The new features added to the UPI are part of RBI's monetary policy statement.
- The two new UPI features allow users to deposit cash at Cash Deposit Machines using UPI and also make UPI payments from Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) using third party apps.

Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs)	Cash Deposit
• **PPIs –** At present, UPI payments from Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) can be made only by using the web or mobile app provided by the PPI issuer. • It is now proposed to permit the use of third-party UPI apps for making UPI payments from PPI wallets. • This will further enhance customer convenience and boost adoption of digital payments for small value transactions. • This new directive allows PPI wallet holders (such as PhonePe, Freecharge, etc.) to link their wallets with third-party UPI apps for transactions.	• **CDMs –** Customers will be able to deposit cash at cash deposit machines (CDMs) in banks and ATMs through the UPI app. • This new UPI cardless cash deposit method is expected to mirror the existing UPI cardless cash withdrawal process, according to experts. • Currently, cash deposits at CDMs primarily require the use of a debit card, whether at banks or ATMs. • However, with the introduction of UPI cardless cash deposit, individuals will no longer need to carry a debit card to deposit cash at CDMs in ATMs.

Reference

Times of India – RBI introduces two new UPI features

Reversal of Arctic Polar Vortex

Scientists discovered that the Earth's polar vortex has mysteriously reversed.

- **Polar vortex –** The polar vortex sits in the stratosphere, which starts at around 6–20 kilometers above the planet's surface and reaches roughly 50 kilometers above.
- The polar vortex is a large area of low pressure and cold air surrounding both of the Earth's poles.
- It always exists near the poles, but weakens in summer and strengthens in winter.
- **Vortex –** The term vortex refers to the counter-clockwise flow of air that helps keep the colder air near the Poles.
- Many times during winter in the northern hemisphere, the polar vortex will expand, sending cold air southward with the jet stream.

- Polar Vortex is not a feature that exists at the Earth's surface.
- Weather forecasters examine the polar vortex by looking at conditions tens of thousands of feet up in the atmosphere.

- **Arctic Polar Vortex –** The Arctic polar vortex is a band of strong westerly winds that forms in the stratosphere between about 10 and 30 miles above the North Pole every winter.
- The winds enclose a large pool of extremely cold air.

There is an even stronger polar vortex in the Southern Hemisphere stratosphere in its winter.

- The stronger the winds, the more the air inside is isolated from warmer latitudes, and the colder it gets.
- **Reversal of Arctic Polar Vortex –** During the summer months in the Northern Hemisphere, the vortex's circulating winds slow down and start spinning easterly (clockwise around the Arctic) too.
- Reversals from westerly to easterly during the winter months can have significant impacts.
- **Rossby Waves –** Atmospheric waves called Rossby waves push up and weaken the polar vortex, causing some of that cold air to spill out.
- This is known as a Sudden Stratospheric Warming event, and this is what has happened now.

References

1. Science Alert – The Polar Vortex has shifted into reverse
2. India Today – Earth's polar vortex has mysteriously reversed
3. NDTV – Earth's Polar Vortex Spins Backwards