

Supreme Court Begins Week-Long Special Lok Adalat Drive for Amicable Dispute Resolution

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What's in today's article?

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- What is Lok Adalat?

Why in News?

The Supreme Court of India commenced a special Lok Adalat drive as part of its 75th anniversary celebrations.

From 2 p.m., the first seven Benches of the court, including a five-member Bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, transformed into Lok Adalats to amicably settle long-pending disputes. The Lok Adalats started hearing these cases after the judges concluded their regular Bench duties for the day.

This initiative, running until August 3, aims to expedite the resolution of various cases such as matrimonial disputes, property disputes, motor accident claims, land acquisition, compensation, and service and labour disputes.

What is Lok Adalat?

- **Background:**

- National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**, and the **Chief Justice of India** is the Patron-in-Chief of NALSA.
- It aims to provide **free Legal Services** to the weaker sections of the society and **to organise Lok Adalats** for amicable settlement of disputes.
- Hence, the Lok Adalats have been given **statutory status** under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

- **About:**

- **Lok Adalat** as the very name suggests means **people's court** (Lok – people, Adalat – court).
- It is one of the **alternative dispute redressal mechanisms**, a forum where disputes or cases are settled or compromised amicably.
- In a nutshell, it is a form of **party-based** (parties involved in the dispute) justice in which people and judges work together to resolve problems by **discussion, persuasion and mutual consent**, in order to provide **affordable and timely justice**.

- **Organization of Lok Adalat:**

- The State authority or district authority or the High Court legal services committee or Tehsil legal services committee (as the case may be) may organize Lok Adalat at such intervals and places as it thinks fit.
- **National Lok Adalats** are held at regular intervals, with Lok Adalats held throughout the country on a single day, in all courts from the Supreme Court to the Taluk Levels, where cases are disposed of in large numbers.

- **Composition:**

- Every Lok Adalat organised for an area shall consist of –
 - Serving or retired judicial officers.
 - Other persons as may be specified by the state/district authority or the High Court/Tehsil legal services committee or as the case may be, organising such Lok Adalats.
- The persons deciding the cases in the Lok Adalats are called the **Members of the Lok Adalats**. Role played by these members –
 - They have the **role of statutory conciliators only** and do not have any judicial role.
 - This means, they can **only persuade** (and shall not pressurise or coerce) the parties.
 - As a result, the Lok Adalat will not decide the subject on its own initiative, but rather on the basis of a **compromise or settlement** reached between the parties.
 - The members will assist the parties in reaching an amicable settlement of their dispute in an **unbiased and impartial way**.

- **Types of cases at Lok Adalat:**

- Transfer or change of land title cases, compoundable criminal offences, family disputes, encroachment on forest lands, land acquisition disputes, motor accident claims and cases which are not sub-judice.
- Provided that the Lok Adalat shall have no jurisdiction in respect of any matter or case relating to an offence not compoundable (can't be quashed) under any law.

- **Powers:** Under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 –
 - Lok Adalats shall have jurisdiction to determine and to arrive at a compromise or settlement between the parties to a dispute in respect of –
 - Any case pending before the court.
 - Any matter which is falling within the jurisdiction of and is not brought before any court for which the Lok Adalat is organised (pre-litigation stage).
 - The award (decision) made by the Lok Adalats is deemed to be **a decree of a civil court**.
 - Such award is **final and binding** on all parties and **no appeal** against such an award lies before any court of law.
 - However, in exercising their right to litigate, the parties involved are free to approach the court with relevant jurisdiction and file a case by following the required procedure.
 - **Court fee:**
 - There is **no court fee** payable when a matter is filed in a Lok Adalat.
 - The court fee originally paid in the court on the complaints or petition is also **refunded back** to the parties if a matter pending in the court of law is referred to the Lok Adalat and is later settled.
 - **Difference between Lok Adalat and a law court:**
 - In general, Lok Adalat is not a court in the traditional sense.
 - Lok Adalat is **a forum established by the people or interested parties** such as legal aid providers and public-spirited individuals to allow ordinary residents to air their grievances against state agencies or other citizens and seek an equitable resolution.
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Q.1. What is National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)?

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) of India was established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Its mission is to provide free legal services to the underprivileged and organize Lok Adalats for amicable dispute resolution, ensuring justice is accessible, affordable, and timely for all citizens.

Q.2. What is alternate dispute redressal mechanisms?

Alternate dispute redressal mechanisms are methods for resolving disputes outside traditional courts. These include mediation, arbitration, and conciliation, offering faster, cost-effective, and amicable solutions. These processes involve neutral third parties and aim to reduce the burden on courts while providing parties with mutually agreeable resolutions.

Source: [Supreme Court begins week-long special Lok Adalat drive](#) | [NALSA](#) | [Legal Service India](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/supreme-court-begins-week-long-special-lok-adalat-drive-for-amicable-dispute-resolution/>

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