

UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES PREVENTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

Prelims: Governance- Policies, Institutional Reforms

Mains: GS-III- Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The Lok Sabha has passed the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill 2019, in a move that gives a big push to India's internal security machinery.
- ▶▶ The move comes after amendment to the NIA Bill.

UAPA:

- ▶▶ The UAPA is an upgrade on the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act TADA, which was allowed to lapse in 1995 and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) was repealed in 2004.
- ▶▶ It was originally passed in 1967 under the then Congress government led by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- ▶▶ Till 2004, "unlawful" activities referred to actions related to secession and cession of territory. Following the 2004 amendment, "terrorist act" was added to the list of offences.

Why Amendment?

- ▶▶ The Bill amends the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, providing special procedures to deal with terrorist activities, and individuals and groups that foster terrorism in India.

Highlights:

- ▶▶ The proposed amendments to the existing Act redefine "Who may commit terrorism", establishing that under the Act, the Centre may designate an organisation as a terrorist organisation if it commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for terrorism, promotes terrorism, or is otherwise involved in terrorism.
- ▶▶ The Bill also additionally empowers the government to designate individuals as terrorists on the same grounds.
- ▶▶ The Bill also paves the way for the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to seize property as part of investigations into terror cases.

- ▶▶ At the same time, while the existing Act provides for investigation of cases to be conducted by officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above. The proposed amendment additionally empowers the officers of the NIA to investigate cases — of the rank of Inspector or above.
- ▶▶ Further, the International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005) has also been added in the Second Schedule through this Amendment.

Need for Amendments:

- ▶▶ It is often accused that UAPA Act assigns absolute power to the central government to declare someone as terrorist.
- ▶▶ Terrorism is not just fostered by the gun. Terrorism is also the spread of hate and radicalism.
- ▶▶ If the bill is passed, a person can be declared a terrorist when they take part in terror activities, or provide funds, or harbour a terror theory and then spread it among youth.

