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## Rajya Sabha Passes Amendments to Anti-Corruption Law

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Rajya Sabha has passed the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2013. The Bill amends the archaic Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

### Highlights of the Bill

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- The Act covers the offence of giving a bribe to a public servant under abetment. The Bill makes specific provisions related to giving a bribe to a public servant, and giving a bribe by a commercial organisation.
- A commercial organisation shall be guilty of an offence and shall be punishable with fine if any person associated with the commercial organisation, gives or promises to give, any undue advantage to a public servant. The Special Judge shall ensure the completion of the trials within a period of two years from the date of filing of the case.
- The Bill redefines criminal misconduct to only cover misappropriation of property and possession of disproportionate assets. Earlier, the Act also defined criminal misconduct to cover offences including abuse of position, use of illegal means and disregard of public interest.
- The Bill modifies the definitions and penalties for offences related to taking a bribe, being a habitual offender and abetting an offence. Bribe givers will be punished with imprisonment of up to a maximum of seven years.
- Powers and procedures for the attachment and forfeiture of property of public servants accused of corruption have been introduced in the Bill.
- The Act requires prior sanction to prosecute serving public officials. The Bill extends this protection to former officials. A police officer will have to take prior permission from appropriate authorities while pursuing cases.