



Draft Explosives Bill 2024

For Prelims: [Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation](#), [Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade](#), Explosives Act of 1884, Arms Act, 1959

For Mains: Regulation of explosives, Enhancing national security and mitigating risks associated with explosives

Source: [BS](#)

Why in News?

The Government of India aims to replace the [Explosives Act 1884](#) with the new Explosives Bill 2024.

- The [Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade \(DPIIT\)](#) has proposed the draft bill.
- The key objectives are to raise fines for regulatory violations and enhance the efficiency of licensing procedures.

What are the Key Provisions of the Proposed Explosives Bill 2024?

- **Designation of Licensing Authority:** Under the proposed bill, the Union government will designate the authority responsible for **granting, suspending, or revoking licences**.
 - Currently, the [Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation \(PESO\)](#) operates under the DPIIT and serves as the regulatory body.
- **Specified Quantity in Licences:** Licences will specify the quantity of explosives that a licensee can manufacture, possess, sell, transport, import, or export for a specified period.
- **Penalties for Violations:** The proposed bill outlines stricter penalties for violations. Offenders may face **imprisonment for up to three years, a fine of Rs 1,00,000, or both** for manufacturing, importing or exporting explosives in violation of regulations.
 - Possession, use, sale, or transportation of explosives in violation may lead to imprisonment for up to two years, a fine of Rs 50,000, or both, whereas the **current fine stands at Rs 3,000**.
- **Streamlined Licensing Procedures:** Efforts are underway to enhance the efficiency of licensing procedures, making it easier for businesses to obtain necessary permits while maintaining stringent safety standards.

Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO)

- The **PESO**, formerly known as the **Department of Explosives**, since its inception in 1898, has been serving the nation as a nodal agency for regulating the safety of hazardous substances such as explosives, compressed gas and petroleum.
- PESO's major work is to administer the responsibilities delegated under the **Explosives Act 1884 and Petroleum Act 1934** and the Rules made thereunder related to the manufacture, import, export, transport, possession, sale and use of Explosives, Petroleum products and Compressed

gases.

- It operates under the **DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The organisation has provided training to law enforcement, security, and intelligence personnel in handling explosives safely, filling a critical gap in the country's training resources.

What is the Explosives Act of 1884?

- **Historical Context:** Enacted during British colonial rule, the Explosives Act of 1884 aimed to regulate various aspects of explosives.
- **Safety Regulations:** The Act applies to various types of explosives, including **gunpowder, dynamite, nitroglycerin, and other similar substances**.
 - The Act mandated safety standards and procedures to mitigate risks associated with explosives, encompassing handling, transportation, and storage guidelines to prevent accidents.
 - The Act empowers the Central Government to make rules regulating the **manufacture, possession, use, sale, transport, import, and export of explosives**.
 - These rules govern the issuance of licences, fees, conditions, and exemptions.
- **Prohibition of Dangerous Explosives:**
 - The Central Government can prohibit the manufacture, possession, or importation of especially dangerous explosives in the interest of public safety.
- **Exemption:**
 - The Act does not affect the provisions of the [Arms Act, 1959](#), and provisions are made for licences issued under the Explosives Act to have the effect of licences under the Arms Act.
 - The Arms Act of 1959 regulates the possession, acquisition, and carrying of ammunition and firearms. It also aims to curb illegal weapons and violence. **The act replaced the Indian Arms Act of 1878.**
- **Evolution and Amendments:** Over time, the Explosives Act underwent several amendments to adapt to technological advancements and emerging challenges, primarily focusing on enhancing safety standards and regulatory mechanisms.

Note:

- The Kodavas, a martial race in Kodagu (Coorg) district, are **one of the few tribes in India allowed to possess a gun without a licence**.
 - **The Kodavas, exempted from the Indian Arms Act since 1834**, are known for their valiant support to the **British against Tipu Sultan**, and they are **required to obtain an exemption certificate** from the government.

Popular Explosives:

- **Dynamite:**
 - Dynamite is a type of explosive mainly made **by mixing nitroglycerin** with an absorbent material such as clay.
 - This mixture stabilises the **highly volatile nitroglycerin**, making it safer to handle and transport.
- **Ammonium Nitrate:**
 - Ammonium nitrate is an inorganic compound consisting of ammonium ions (NH₄) and nitrate ions (NO₃).
 - It's commonly used as an agricultural fertiliser, but it can also be used as an **explosive in certain conditions, particularly when combined with a fuel source**.
- **TNT (trinitrotoluene):**
 - TNT is an organic compound derived from toluene, an aromatic hydrocarbon.
 - TNT is a yellow, odourless solid that is relatively stable and insensitive to shock and friction, making it a popular choice as an **explosive used in military shells, in industrial uses, and in underwater blasting**.

- **TNE (Trinitroethylen):**
 - TNE is an **organic nitrate compound**. It has been used as an explosive but is less common compared to other explosives like **TNT**.
- **RDX (Royal Demolition explosive):**
 - **RDX is an organic compound**, in appearance it is a **white powder** and is very explosive widely used in **military and civilian applications** due to its high explosive power and stability.
 - It is also known as **cyclonite or hexogen**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Analyse the impact of colonial-era legislation, such as the Explosives Act of 1884, on India's current regulatory landscape for explosives and hazardous materials.

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