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## Weapons of Mass Destruction

### Context:

The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022 has been unanimously passed in Lok Sabha.

### Relevance:

GS III- Security Challenges, GS II- Government Policies and Interventions

### Dimensions of the Article:

1. Need of the Amendment
2. Weapons of Mass Destruction
3. Control over use of WMDs

### Need of the Amendment

- The Bill seeks to amend **The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005**, to provide against the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in line with India's international obligations.
- The 2005 Act prohibited the manufacturing, transport, and transfer of weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery.
- According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, the need to amend the Act has arisen from the fact that "in recent times, regulations relating to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems by international organisations have expanded", and "the United Nations Security Council's targeted financial sanctions and the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force have mandated against financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery



## Weapons of Mass Destruction

- While there is no single, authoritative definition of a WMD in international law, the expression is usually understood to cover **nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons**.
- According to the United States Department of Homeland Security, “A weapon of mass destruction is a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, or other device that is intended to harm a large number of people.”

India’s 2005 WMD Act defines:

- **“Biological weapons”** as “microbial or other biological agents, or toxins...of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes; and weapons, equipment or delivery systems specially designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict”;
- **“Chemical weapons”** as “toxic chemicals and their precursors” except where used for peaceful, protective, and certain specified military and law enforcement purposes; “munitions and devices specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals”; and any equipment specifically designed for use in connection with the employment of these munitions and devices.

## Control over use of WMDs

- The use of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons is regulated by a number of international treaties and agreements.
- Among them are the **Geneva Protocol, 1925**, that banned the use of chemical and biological weapons; and the **Biological Weapons Convention, 1972, and Chemical Weapons Convention, 1992**, which put comprehensive bans on the biological and chemical weapons respectively.
- **India has signed and ratified both the 1972 and 1992 treaties**. There are very few non-signatory countries to these treaties, even though several countries have been accused of non-compliance.



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-Source: Indian Express

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