



Bill Summary

The Piracy Bill, 2012

- The Piracy Bill, 2012 was introduced in Lok Sabha on April 24, 2012 by the Minister of External Affairs, Shri S.M. Krishna.
- According to the statement of objects and reasons, piracy as a crime is not included in the Indian Penal Code (IPC). This has led to problems in prosecution of pirates presently in the custody of Indian police authorities. The Piracy Bill intends to fill this gap and provide clarity in the law.
- The Bill prescribes that its provisions shall also extend to the Exclusive Economic Zone of India¹.
- The Bill defines ‘piracy’ as any illegal act of violence or detention for private ends by the crew or passengers of a private ship or aircraft on high seas or at a place outside the jurisdiction of any State. It also prescribes that any act which is held to be ‘piratical’ under international law shall be included in the above definition.
- The Bill seeks to punish piracy with imprisonment for life. In cases where piracy leads to death, it may be punished with death. The Bill also lays down punishments for attempts to commit and abet piracy. Such acts shall be punishable with imprisonment up to 14 years and a fine.
- The Bill provides that if arms/ ammunition are recovered from the possession of the accused, or if there is evidence of threat of violence, the burden of proof for proving innocence shall shift to the accused.
- The Bill empowers the government to set up designated courts for speedy trial of offences and authorizes the court to prosecute the accused regardless of his/ her nationality. It also provides for extradition.

¹ The ‘Territorial Water, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976’ defines the ‘Exclusive Economic Zone’ of India. It is a seazone over which India has sovereign rights for exploration and use of marine resources. It stretches outward from the coastal baseline, up to 200 nautical miles into the sea.

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