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MAGAZINE NOTES

The SHANTI Act 2025 — Nuclear Privatisation

15 January 2026 ·

ENVIRONMENT

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The SHANTI Act 2025 — Nuclear Privatisation

🌱 Down to Earth Chapter 1 · 2 min read

🔗 WHY IN NEWS

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025 repeals the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, opening India's nuclear fuel cycle to private and foreign entities.

About the Act

- **Repeals:** Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010
- **Key change:** Ends government monopoly on nuclear power — opens uranium mining, reactor construction, operation, manufacturing to private and foreign participation
- **FDI permitted:** Up to **49%**
- **Nuclear Energy Mission:** **100 GW** installed capacity by 2047

India's Nuclear Status (mid-2025)

- Installed capacity: **8.8 GW** (~3% of total generation)
- Capacity increase since 2014: **71%**
- Reactors under construction: **10 (8 GW)**
- Additional reactors in pre-project stages: **10**
- Projected capacity by 2031-32: **22.5 GW**

Reactor Types

- Boiling Water Reactor, Fast Breeder Reactor, PHWR, Light Water Reactor
- **Bharat Small Reactor (BSR):** Compact 220 MW PHWRs with private sector participation
- **Bharat Small Modular Reactor (BSMR):** ~200 MWe using PWR technology

Critical Safety Concerns (DTE Analysis)

- **Liability cap:** Only **300 million SDRs** (~₹3,864 crore) — a fraction of potential disaster costs (Fukushima cost **\$140 billion**)
- **Supplier liability removed:** No statutory recourse against foreign suppliers for faulty equipment (Section removed from 2010 Act)
- **Regulatory independence questioned:** AERB board members appointed by Union government — conflict of interest

- **Section 39:** Restricts nuclear information publication, **overriding RTI Act**
- **Section 44:** Allows exemptions for “insignificant risk” — term left **undefined**; bypasses strict environmental safeguards
- **Seven reactors** in “suspended operation” or “long-term outage” but counted in installed capacity figures

Mains Analysis

- **Moral Hazard:** Capping liability and eliminating supplier recourse creates incentives for cost-cutting over safety
- **Way Forward:** AERB must be made strictly independent; reinstate absolute liability principles to ensure corporate profit does not trump public safety

UPSC Angle

- **GS3:** Nuclear energy, science & technology, energy security
- **GS2:** Government legislation, regulatory governance, safety vs development



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