Empowering the National Human Rights Commission

Why in news?

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Union Cabinet has approved the Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill, 2018

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What is National Human Rights Commission all about?

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- National Human Rights Commissions (NHRC) is an autonomous public body constituted under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance.
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- It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.
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- NHRC is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the Act as rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants.
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What are the concerns with NHRC?

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- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has been often described as a paper tiger.
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- It is unable to protect ordinary citizens from human rights violations, committed at times by the state machinery.
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- In one such case, the NHRC, disillusioned by its helplessness in bringing justice in the alleged extrajudicial killings of 1,528 persons in Manipur.
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What is Protection of Human Rights bill about?

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- Union Cabinet recently approved the Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill in order to protect and promote better human rights in India.
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- For more inclusiveness the bill proposes to include one member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights within its fold as a deemed member as well as a woman member.
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- It proposes to enlarge the scope of eligibility and selection of the Chairperson of the NHRC as well as of State Human Rights Commissions.
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- It also proposes to incorporate a mechanism to look into cases of human rights violations in Union Territories.
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- Further, it proposes to amend the term of office of the Chairperson and members of the NHRC and the State Human Rights Commissions.
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What is the significance of this bill?

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- The Amendment Bill seeks to strengthen human rights institutions so that they can discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively.
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- The amended Act will be in sync with the agreed global standards and benchmarks on ensuring rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of individuals in the country.
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- The amendment to the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 will make the NHRC and State Human Rights Commissions more compliant with the Paris Principle.
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- Which is based on concerning its autonomy, Independence, pluralism and wide-ranging functions in order to effectively protect and promote human rights".
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Source: The Hindu

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