Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2018

Why in news?

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The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2018 was recently introduced in the Lok Sabha.

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What are the key features?

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- The Bill amends the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.
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- The Act provides for a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), State Human Rights Commissions (SHRC), as well as Human Rights Courts.
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- **Composition** - Now, the chairperson of NHRC is to be a person who has been a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
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- The Bill provides for the chairperson to be a person who has been Chief Justice of India, or a Judge of the Supreme Court.
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- Similarly, for SHRC, a person who has been Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court can be the chairperson.
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- The Act provides for two persons having knowledge of human rights to be appointed as members of the NHRC.
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- The Bill amends this to allow three members to be appointed, of which at least one will be a woman.
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- Also, the chairpersons of various commissions such as the National Commissions for Scheduled Castes, for Scheduled Tribes, and for Women are members of the NHRC.
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- The Bill widens this to National Commissions for Backward Classes, for Protection of Child Rights, and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with

Disabilities.
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- **Term of office** - Now, the chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC are to hold office for 5 years or till the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.
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- The Bill reduces this to 3 years or till the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.
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- The Bill also allows for the reappointment of chairpersons of the NHRC and SHRCs.
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- **Powers** - Now, the Secretary-General of the NHRC and a Secretary of a SHRC exercise powers as may be delegated to them.
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- The Bill amends this and allows the Secretary-General and Secretary to exercise all administrative and financial powers.
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- This is, however, except the judicial functions, and also subject to the respective chairperson's control.
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- **Union Territories** - The Bill provides for the central government to confer on a SHRC the human rights functions being discharged by Union Territories.
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- Functions relating to human rights in the case of Delhi will be dealt by the NHRC.
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Source: PRS India

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