Significance of NCBC Bill

Why in news?

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The Lok Sabha unanimously passed the Bill for constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

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What is NCBC?

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- National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) is a body set up under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.
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- It has the power to examine complaints regarding inclusion or exclusion of groups within the list of backward classes, and advise the central government in this regard.
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- The central and state governments will be required to consult with the NCBC on all major policy matters affecting the socially and educationally backward classes.
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What is NCBC bill?

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- The Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill, 2017 was passed in Lok Sabha, seeks to grant the National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status.
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- This at par with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.
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- Currently, under the Constitution the NCSC has the power to look into

complaints and welfare measures with regard to Scheduled Castes, backward classes and Anglo-Indians.
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- The Bill seeks to remove the power of the NCSC to examine matters related to backward classes.
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What is the significance of this bill?

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- The Bill seeks to establish the NCBC under the Constitution, and provide it the authority to examine complaints and welfare measures regarding socially and educationally backward classes.
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- The Constitution Amendment Bill states that the President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the various states and union territories.
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- He may do this in consultation with the Governor of the concerned state, however a law of Parliament will be required if the list of backward classes is to be amended.
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- The NCBC will comprise of five members appointed by the President, their tenure and conditions of service will also be decided by the President through rules.
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- The duties of the NCBC will include:
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1. Investigating and monitoring how safeguards provided to the backward classes under the Constitution and other laws are being implemented.
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2. Inquiring into specific complaints regarding violation of rights.
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3. Advising and making recommendations on socio-economic development of such classes.
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- Under the Constitution Amendment Bill, the NCBC will have the powers of a civil court while investigating or inquiring into any complaints.
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- These powers include - Summoning people and examining them on oath, requiring production of any document or public record and receiving evidence.
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Source: The Hindu, PRS India

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