The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Why in News?

- The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed in Lok Sabha recently.
- The Bill amends the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

What is the Act about?

- The Act provides for the following,
    1. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC),
    2. State Human Rights Commissions (SHRC),
    3. Human Rights Courts.

What are the provisions of the Act?

- **Composition of NHRC:** The chairperson of the NHRC is a person who has been a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
- The Act provides for 2 persons having knowledge of human rights to be appointed as members of the NHRC.
- Members of the NHRC: The chairpersons of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, and National Commission for Women.
- **Chairperson of SHRC:** A person who has been a Chief Justice of a High Court.
- **Term of office:** The chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC will hold office for 5 years or till the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.
- The Act allows for the reappointment of members of the NHRC and SHRCs for a period of 5 years.
- **Powers of Secretary-General:** The Act provides for a Secretary-General of the NHRC and a Secretary of a SHRC, who exercise powers as may be delegated to them.

What are the amendments made?

- **Composition of NHRC:** The Bill provides that a person who has been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or a Judge of the Supreme Court can be the chairperson of the NHRC.
- The Bill allows 3 members to be appointed, of which at least one will be a

woman.

- Members of the NHRC: The chairpersons of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, and National Commission for Women, National Commission for Backward Classes, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities.
- **Chairperson of SHRC:** The Bill provides for a person who has been Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court can be chairperson of a SHRC.
- **Term of office:** The Bill reduces the term of office to 3 years or till the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.
- The Bill removes the five-year limit for reappointment found in the act.
- **Powers of Secretary-General:** The Bill allows the Secretary-General and Secretary to exercise all administrative and financial powers (except judicial functions), subject to the respective chairperson's control.
- **Union Territories:** The Bill provides that the central government may confer on a SHRC human rights functions being discharged by Union Territories. Functions relating to human rights in the case of Delhi will be dealt with by the NHRC.

Source: PIB, PRS

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering