

## **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) (Amendment) Bill**

### **Why in news?**

The central government is expected to reintroduce the AMASR (Amendment) Bill in Parliament during the second half of the Budget Session.

### **What is the AMASR (Amendment) Bill?**

- The AMASR Act was passed by the Parliament in 1958.
- **Aim of AMASR** - It aims protection and preservation of archaeological and historical monuments and sites.
- It also provides for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for protection of sculptures, carvings and other such objects.
- **Amendments to AMASR** - It includes, allowing the construction of public works in prohibited areas, and the approval and impact assessment of such public works.
- The *original Act prohibits construction* in an area of *100 metres* around protected monuments, and the central government can extend this area beyond 100 metres.
- Now, the government will be allowed to take up infrastructure projects for public works in this prohibited area.
- **Public Works** - The Bill introduces a definition of public works.
- It defines public works as the construction works related to infrastructure financed.
- Such work should be carried out by any department of the central government for public purposes, such as the safety or security of the public at large.
- **Assessment** - The Bill seeks to add the archaeological impact, visual impact and heritage impact assessment of the proposed public works to the functions and powers of the authority.

### **What qualifies as an Ancient Monument (AM) and Archaeological Sites (AS) and remains?**

- **Ancient Monument** - AM is defined as any structure, erection, or monument, or tumulus, or cave, rock-sculpture, inscription, or monolith which is of historical, archaeological, or artistic interest.
- Such things should have been in *existence for not less than 100 years*.
- **Archaeological Sites** - AS mean any area which contains ruins or relics of historical or archaeological importance which have been in existence for not less than 100 years.

### **Why does the government want to amend the AMASR Act?**

- The prohibition of new construction within prohibited areas of a protected monument is adversely affecting the various public works and developmental projects of the

central government.

### **What is the current status of the Amendment Bill?**

- The Amendment Bill was introduced in 2017 and was passed in the Lower House in 2018 and later referred to a Select Committee.
- **Report of the Committee** - It recommended deciding the area limit for prohibiting construction on a *case-by-case basis* rather than drawing a blanket limit of 100 metres.
- The committee also *questioned the definition of public works* specified in the Amendment.
- The committee noted that the *definition does not cover public utility projects*, like Metro construction, that do not specifically fall under safety and security.
- The committee recommended the passage of the Act after consultation with central and State governments and various relevant departments.

### **References**

1. [The Hindu | What is the AMASR \(Amendment\) Bill?](#)
2. [The Hindu | AMASR to be reintroduced in Budget session](#)

