
Assam's new bill mandates Marriage registration for Muslims to curb Child Marriage

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Authorities in Assam, a state in northeastern India, have introduced a bill requiring Muslims to register their marriages and divorces, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stating the move aims to prevent child marriages. The Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill is viewed as a precursor to the Indian government's proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC), which is opposed by Muslim activists who see it as an infringement on their religious practices.

Currently, India's personal laws—covering marriage, divorce, and inheritance—vary across different communities and faiths, unlike the common criminal law that applies nationwide. In

Assam, registration of marriages with civil authorities is already mandatory for other religions.

Sarma emphasized that the bill would not interfere with religious rituals but would ensure legal recognition of marriages and divorces. He argued that the legislation would provide protections and benefits, particularly for women, and address the issue of child marriage.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has voiced support for a UCC, which he argues would unify and modernize India's legal system by eliminating laws that divide the country based on religion. However, this has sparked anxiety among India's Muslim population of over 220 million, who fear that such a move would undermine their religious laws. Modi, who secured a third term in office in June, insists that a UCC would promote equality and fairness across all communities.