Maharashtra Social Boycott Bill

Why in news?

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President has given his assent to the Maharashtra social boycott bill.

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What is social boycott?

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- A social boycott is an act of voluntary and intentional abstention from dealing with a person, organization, as an expression of protest, usually for social, political reasons.
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- In India, it is frequent that particular Indudival or group of Indudival are boycotted by other set of majority in the name of caste, religion, rituals, and traditions.
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- It was categorically stated that social boycott for reasons such as religious rituals, inter-caste marriage, lifestyle, dress or vocation are happening.
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What are the highlights of the bill?

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- Maharashtra is the first state in the country to formulate a law to punish social boycott.
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- The objective of the bill is to of uproot social evils in the name of caste panchayats.
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- Punishment for an offence includes a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh and imprisonment of up to seven years or both.
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- Social boycott will be treated as a crime.
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- There is a provision for victims or any member of the victim’s family to file a complaint either with the police or directly to the magistrate.
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- Earlier social boycott was not clearly defined in existing laws, which often saw perpetrators using loopholes to escape punishment.
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- A monitoring mechanism has been provided through social boycott prohibition officers.
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- Speedy trial within six months of filing of the charge sheet.
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Source: The Hindu

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