The Marriage Bill

Why in news?

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The Marriages (Compulsory Registration and Prevention of Wasteful Expenditure) Bill was introduced by private members in the Lok Sabha.

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What is a private member’s bill?

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- Members of parliament other than ministers are called private members and bills presented by them are known as private member's bills.
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- It can be introduced only with one month's prior notice.
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- Money bill canot be introduced by a private member, but a constitutional amendment bill can be introduced by a private member.
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- Till date, only 15 private members' bills have ever been passed by the Indian Parliament. Six of these were in 1956 alone.
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- The Rights of Transgender Persons Bill passed in 2015 was the first private member's bill to get the upper house's approval in the past 45 years.
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- In the current Lok Sabha, 588 private bills have already been introduced. Only 11 of them have actually come up for discussion.
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What does the bill say?

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- The aim of the bill is to **“prevent extravagant and wasteful**

expenditure” in weddings.
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- The bill states that, if a family spends above Rs 5 lakh on a wedding, it should contribute 10% of that amount to a welfare fund that is to be used to facilitate marriages of girls from poor families.
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- It seeks to limit the number of guests one can invite and dishes that can be served in weddings.
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What are the advantages?

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- The intention behind is undoubtedly a noble one if the govt welfare fund stays free of corruption and mishandling.
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- It could provide the much needed relief to low income families in doing **social justice** to their key life events.
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- It will **encourage simplicity** because weddings in India perpetuates a negative social pressure of spending more to show value.
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- It would **ease some pressure of the paying parties** i.e usually the bride’s family, who could possibly be under pressure to spend beyond their comfort levels.
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- Much of the food and other perishables used in weddings so waste. This undermines the food security of the country.
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What are the disadvantages?

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- An enforcement on how to celebrate a wedding is not democratic in nature.
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- A legal solution for a social issue is often seen as an aggressive policy.
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- It will be seen as unnecessary and unwarranted **government**

interference in private affairs.
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- The mandatory 10% contribution would be perceived as yet another tax levied on the citizens.
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- The cap of 5 lakhs is a very low amount even to an average urban middle class standards.
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- The enforcement of the law would also be extremely difficult as it is likely to result in complications of tracking expenses and thus evading the 10% payment.
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- Regulations will be hard to manage and it will call for a significant state apparatus.
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- The scope for loopholes is huge. e.g It would be difficult to distinguish weddings from engagements and receptions which are held at an earlier or later date.
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- Some families see weddings as a perfect occasions for reunions and don't mind investing heavily for once in providing for their guests.
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- The bill does not account for the fact that **weddings are an economic activity for many** who work in the supply chain towards organizing them.
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Source: The Indian Express

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