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Topics Covered

- Assam proposes jail term, heavy fines for polygamy
- Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India
- Custodial torture: SC raps govt. over CCTV compliance
- Air quality issue

Assam proposes jail term, heavy fines for polygamy

Banning polygamy

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Here is a timeline of the new Bill:

- **August 21:** Assam government seeks public opinion by August 30, through email or by post, on a law to end polygamy in the State
- **November 9:** The Assam Cabinet approves a new legislation to outlaw polygamy
- **November 25:** The Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025, is tabled in the 126-member Assembly



Assam proposes jail term, heavy fines for polygamy

Bill, tabled in Assembly, seeks to 'protect women, streamline society'; it covers residents entering such marriages outside State, but doesn't apply to Scheduled Tribes and Sixth Schedule areas

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

An anti-polygamy Bill tabled by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in the State Assembly on Tuesday prescribes imprisonment and heavy fines for people entering into, or hiding, a second marriage while the first continues to be valid.

The Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025, makes polygamy a criminal offence, punishable with up to seven years in jail and a fine, and up to 10 years in jail if a person enters into a marriage while concealing an existing one. The punishment will be doubled for repeat offenders, it says. Barring the Sixth Schedule areas, the draft law will be applicable across the State and will not cover members of the Scheduled Tribes under Article 342 of the Constitution. Customary laws of some tribes in Assam allow

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multiple marriages. According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the Bill seeks to "prohibit and eliminate practices of polygamy", protect women from hardship and "streamline the society".

Other offenders

It brings village heads, qazis (Muslim clerics who solemnize marriages), parents, and legal guardians of people indulging in poly-

gamy under its scope. Anyone who "willfully hides, neglects or unreasonably delays" information to the police about such marriages may be punished as the main offenders and jailed for up to two years and fined up to ₹1 lakh.

The fine may extend to ₹1.5 lakh for any priest or qazi who solemnises a marriage contrary to the provisions of the law knowingly and willingly.

A provision covers any resident of Assam who willingly and knowingly enters into a polygamous marriage outside the State, as well as people who live outside Assam but own immovable property in the State or receive State-funded benefits, subsidies, or welfare support.

The Bill seeks to make people convicted under the law ineligible for government-funded or aided jobs and benefits under any government scheme, and bar them from contesting any election.

The draft law also provides a mechanism for compensation to women affected by polygamous marriages.

Polygamous marriages contracted before it comes into force will not be affected, as long as they follow existing personal or customary laws and have valid proof. It also gives police officers the power to intervene before a prohibited marriage takes place.

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- The punishment will be doubled for repeat offenders, it says.
- Barring the Sixth Schedule areas, the draft law will be applicable across the State and will not cover members of the Scheduled Tribes under Article 342 of the Constitution.
- Customary laws of some tribes in Assam allow multiple marriages
- It brings village heads, Qazis (Muslim clerics who solemnize marriages), parents, and legal guardians of people indulging in polygamy under its scope.
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- The fine may extend to {1.5 lakh for any priest or Qazi who solemnizes a marriage contrary to the provisions of the law knowingly and willingly. Penalties have been prescribed for other abettors, too.
- A provision of the anti-polygamy Bill expands the scope of its jurisdiction beyond residents of the State.

Key Takeaways from the Article

- Polygamy comes from two words: “poly,” which means “many,” and “gamos,” which means “marriage.” As a result, polygamy relates to marriages that are several.
- Thus, polygamy is marriage in which a spouse of either sex may have more than one mate at the same time.
- Traditionally, polygamy - mainly the situation of a man having more than one wife - was practiced widely in India. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 outlawed the practice.
- The Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954 allows individuals to perform inter-religious marriages, but it forbids polygamy. The Act has been used by many Muslim women to help them stop practicing polygamy.

Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India

Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India: MEA

India dismisses China's response to detention of an Indian citizen at the Shanghai airport, says Chinese authorities have still not been able to explain their actions, which are in violation of several conventions governing international air travel

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after an Indian citizen from Arunachal Pradesh was detained at the Shanghai international airport as Chinese officials refused to recognise her Indian passport, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India had taken up the case with Chinese authorities “strongly” and reiterated that Arunachal Pradesh is an “inalienable” part of India.

“Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India, and this is a self-evident fact. No amount of denial by the Chinese side is going to change this indisputable reality,” said Mr. Jaiswal after the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said

the individual concerned – Prema Wangjom Thongdok – was treated as per Chinese laws.

Ms. Thongdok, a principal regulatory consultant working in financial services and based in London, had said on social media that she was detained at the airport.

“I was held at Shanghai airport for over 18 hrs on 21st Nov, 2025 on claims by China immigration & @chinaeasternair. They called my Indian passport invalid as my birthplace is Arunachal Pradesh which, they claimed, is Chinese territory,” she wrote.

Significantly, China Eastern Airlines started its Shanghai-Delhi service on November 9 reviving air connectivity after a gap of five years. Officials got into action as Ms. Thongdok's



Prema Thongdok

ordeal came to light and on Monday they told *The Hindu* that a “strong demarche” had been issued by the Government of India to the Chinese side. She was transiting through the airport to Japan when the reported incident took place.

“The detention issue has been taken up strongly with the Chinese side. Chinese authorities have still not been able to explain

their actions, which are in violation of several conventions governing international air travel. The actions by the Chinese authorities also violate their own regulations that allow visa-free transit up to 24 hours for nationals of all countries,” Mr. Jaiswal said.

Arunachal CM's plea

Earlier, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu called for urgent intervention by the Centre over the incident. Mr. Khandu said the woman was subjected to appalling “humiliation and racial mockery”, despite holding a valid Indian passport.

China has refuted the allegations that the Indian woman was harassed at Shanghai airport, saying that the actions taken by

the Chinese immigration officials were as per laws and regulations.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning claimed that the woman was not subjected to any compulsory measures, detainment or harassment as alleged by her. The airline also provided food, drink, and a place to rest for the person concerned, Ms. Mao said.

“We learnt that China's border inspection authorities have gone through the whole process according to the laws and regulations and fully protected the lawful rights and interests of the person concerned,” Ms. Mao said.

She also reiterated China's claims over Arunachal Pradesh, which it calls Zangnan or South Tibet.

(With inputs from PTI)

Key Takeaways from the Article



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- “Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India, and this is a self-evident fact. No amount of denial by the Chinese side is going to change this indisputable reality,” said Mr. Jaiswal after the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said the individual concerned - Prema Wangjom Thongdok — was treated as per Chinese laws.
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- She also reiterated China's claims over Arunachal Pradesh, which it calls Zangnan or South Tibet.
- The India-China border dispute refers to the long-standing and complex territorial disputes along their shared border of 3,488 kilometers. The main areas of dispute are Aksai Chin, located in the western sector, and Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern sector.
- Aksai Chin: China administers Aksai Chin as part of its Xinjiang region, while India considers it part of its UT of Ladakh. The region holds strategic significance due to its proximity to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its potential as a military route.
- Arunachal Pradesh: China claims the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh, referring to it as "South Tibet". India administers this region as a northeastern state and considers it an integral part of its territory.
- No Clear Demarcation: The border between India and China is not clearly demarcated throughout and there is no mutually agreed Line of Actual Control (LAC) along certain stretches. LAC came into existence after the 1962 Indo-China war.

Custodial torture: SC raps govt. over CCTV compliance

Custodial torture: SC raps govt. over CCTV compliance

The court is re-examining level of compliance shown by States and Centre to a 2020 judgment, making CCTV cameras mandatory at police stations and offices of law enforcement agencies

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

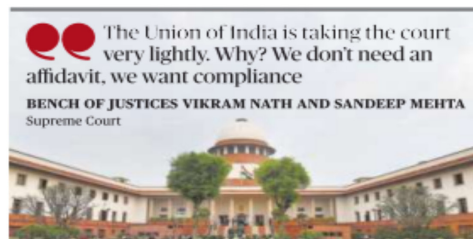
The Centre's lack of response to a judicial direction to install CCTV cameras in the offices of agencies like the CBI, ED, and the NIA to prevent custodial torture prompted the Supreme Court on Tuesday to ask if it was taking the top court "very lightly".

It has been five years since a Supreme Court judgment made it mandatory for the police and Central probe agencies to fix and maintain CCTV cameras at police stations and offices of Central law enforcement agencies with powers of "interrogation".

The court was shocked to discover that custodial cruelty had far from faded, with reports of 11 custodial deaths in eight months in Rajasthan.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta chose to *suo motu* re-examine the level of compliance shown by States, Union Territories, and the Centre to the 2020 judgment of the court.

However, the Bench on



Tuesday found that the response to its concern from the States and Union Territories was at best lukewarm, with only 11 of them condescending to even file compliance reports. The Centre did not file one.

"The Union of India is taking the court very lightly. Why?" Justice Nath asked.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, vehemently denied, saying "not at all... The Union is not taking the court lightly, 'very' or any other way. We will file an affidavit".

Justice Mehta corrected him, saying "not an affidavit, but compliance". Justice Mehta referred to the custodial death statistics from Rajasthan, saying "no-

body will tolerate that now".

Mr. Mehta agreed, but submitted that CCTVs outside police stations could also prove counter-productive. He seemed to be presenting the security point of view. Justice Mehta said police stations were live-streamed in the United States. The Solicitor-General replied that there were also "private resort-type jails in America".

Sarcastic comment

"Mr. Mehta is being sarcastic," Justice Nath noted. The court pointed to more open correction centres or jails to shrink over-crowding and reduce the financial burden of running prisons. The top law officer said he

would consult the American system. Justice Mehta responded that the ideas already enumerated in India were quite sufficient. The Solicitor-General was given further time to file a response. The court ordered that the Directors of the three Central agencies and Principal Home Secretaries of the remaining States and Union Territories would have to personally respond if compliance is not filed before the next hearing on December 19.

In 2020, a three-judge Bench headed by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman (now retired), in *Paramvir Singh Saini versus Baljit Singh*, had directed the Centre to compulsorily install CCTV cameras and recording equipment in police stations as a deterrent against custodial torture.

The court had ordered similar surveillance in the offices of central agencies which conducts any kind of interrogations.

The CCTVs and recording equipment, the court had reasoned in 2020, would be used as a safeguard to protect the fundamental right to dignity and life.

Key Takeaways from the Article

- The Centre's lack of response to a judicial direction to install CCTV cameras in the offices of agencies like the CBI, ED, and the NIA to prevent custodial torture prompted the Supreme Court on Tuesday to ask if it was taking the top court "very lightly".
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Air quality issue

- Air quality issue requires engagement with citizens, not intimidation
- Emissions from industry, power generation, transport and agriculture circulate in this shared airshed.
- Delhi's middle class has usually responded with air purifiers, closed windows, vacations and private dissatisfaction — but apparently not anymore.
- Long-term analyses of particulate pollution, such as the Air Quality Life Index, have shown that unsafe air is now the norm for most of India - and that present regulation, monitoring, and enforcement arrangements are insufficient across States and sectors.



Losing the plot

Air quality issue requires engagement with citizens, not intimidation

In November 24, the Delhi government confronted a small and peaceful crowd near India Gate, that had gathered to express its concern about the city's air quality index hovering near 400, with a heavy police presence. The question practically wrote itself: was the threat being managed here public safety or political embarrassment? Air quality in North India in winter is often discussed as a Delhi issue, yet monitoring stations have revealed a continuous zone of foul air from around Islamabad to Bhatnagar. Emissions from industry, power generation, transport and agriculture circulate in this shared airshed. This is why the India Gate protests are politically significant. Delhi's middle class has usually responded with air purifiers, closed windows, vacations and private dissatisfaction — but apparently not anymore. And the state has responded by policing rather than engagement. Deploying Rapid Action Force units shows that the government treats these gatherings as a law-and-order rather than a governance problem. North India's winter smog is the most visible part of a wider national crisis. Long term analyses of particulate pollution, such as the Air Quality Life Index, have shown that unsafe air is now the norm for most of India — and that present regulation, monitoring, and enforcement arrangements are insufficient across States and sectors. Treating the problem as a seasonal emergency, in the face of evidence pointing to a permanent condition demanding permanent institutions, has encouraged only bursts of action. The airshed is the primary unit of governance.

Today, authority is split among central ministries, State departments, municipal bodies and specialised regulators, each with partial jurisdiction and mixed incentives. The Commission for Air Quality Management was created to address this fragmentation and is empowered to direct emission control, coordinate among States and agencies, and impose sanctions. Yet, its interventions have not matched the scale or persistence of the problem. Its task now is to use its mandate to require time-bound sectoral plans from governments and major entities, track compliance through continuous monitoring, and ensure data is in public. Governments should also abandon technical quick fixes. These measures consume public funds and administrative bandwidth while leaving the main sources of emissions intact. The focus should be on interventions in power, industry, transport, construction and agriculture, with tighter norms and real enforcement, time-bound retirement or retrofitting of polluting plants, support for cleaner fuels and technologies and credible alternatives for farmers burning crop residue. These solutions will take time to manifest but only they will lead to lasting changes. And they need to be backed by a courageous political vision rather than heavy-handedness.

Key Takeaways from the Article

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