

France's draft law against Islamism

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In news

Recently, the French cabinet presented a draft law that targets “radical Islamism” although the word “Islamist” is not part of the text.

Key provisions of the bill

- It is called a “to reinforce Republican principles”
- The draft bill **envisages a range of measures, including school education reforms to ensure Muslim children do not drop out**, stricter controls on mosques and preachers, and rules against hate campaigns online.
- As per French secularism laws, or laïcité, there is already a ban on state employees displaying religious symbols that are “conspicuous”, such as the crucifix or hijab. This ban would now be extended beyond government bodies to any sub-contracted public service
- If the law comes into effect, French mosques could see increased surveillance of their activities, such as financing.
 - The government would be able to exercise supervision over the training of imams, and have greater powers to shut down places of worship receiving public subsidies if they go against “republican principles” such as gender equality
- Under the proposed law, moderate community leaders targeted by an extremist “putsch” could receive protection
- Once the proposed law comes into force, there would also be a clampdown on home-schooling for children over age three, with parents from to be dissuaded from enrolling

them in underground Islamic structures

- Under the draft law, doctors who issue “virginity certificates” would be fined or jailed. And officials would be banned from granting residency permits to polygamous applicants.
- As per the draft law, couples would be interviewed separately by city hall officials prior to their wedding to find out if they have been forced into marriage.
- The draft law says that stricter punishments would be introduced for online hate speech

Criticisms of the bill

- Turkish President Recep Erdogan, who has been strongly criticising French President Emmanuel Macron in recent months, has called the proposed law an “open provocation”
- The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Egypt’s top cleric, has called Macron’s views “racist”
- However, there both supporters and opposers to the draft bill in France.