



## Draft Anti-Conversion Bill: Haryana

**For Prelims:** States that have passed anti conversion laws, Constitutional provisions on freedom of religion, Article 21 of the Constitution.

**For Mains:** Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religious Bill, 2022, Anti-conversions laws and associated issues, Related Supreme Court judgements.

### Why in News?

Recently, the Haryana government released the draft of the **Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religious Bill, 2022**.

- The bill aims at prohibiting religious conversions which are affected through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage by making it an offense.
- Other States like **Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** have also passed laws restricting religious conversion.

### What is the Need for Anti-Conversion Laws?

- **No Right to Proselytize:** The Constitution confers on each individual the fundamental right to profess, practice and propagate his religion.
  - The individual right to freedom of conscience and religion cannot be extended to construe a collective right to proselytize.
  - For the right to religious freedom belongs equally to the person converting and the individual sought to be converted.
- **Fraudulent Marriages:** In the recent past, several instances have come to the notice that whereby people marry persons of other religion by either misrepresentation or concealment of their own religion and after getting married they force such other person to convert to their own religion.
- **SC Observations:** Recently, the Supreme Court also took judicial notice of such instances.
  - According to the court, such incidents not only infringe the freedom of religion of the persons so converted but also militate against the secular fabric of our society.

### What are the Provisions of the Draft Bill?

- The Bill provides for greater punishment for such conversions in respect of minors, women, Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
- It also provides that the burden of proof as to whether a conversion was not affected through misrepresentation, use of force, under threat, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage for the purpose of carrying out conversion lies on the accused.
- Every individual converting from one religion to another shall submit to the prescribed authority a declaration that the conversion affected through was not by any fraudulent means.

- Besides, it provides for declaring marriages null and void, which were solemnized by concealment of religion.

## What is the Status of Anti-Conversion Laws in India?

- **Constitutional Provision:** The Indian Constitution under **Article 25 guarantees the freedom to profess, propagate, and practise religion**, and allows all religious sections to manage their own affairs in matters of religion; subject to public order, morality, and health.
  - However, **no person shall force their religious beliefs** and consequently, no person should be forced to practice any religion against their wishes.
- **Existing Laws:** There has been **no central legislation** restricting or regulating religious conversions.
  - However, since 1954, on multiple occasions, [Private Member Bills](#) have been introduced in (**but never approved by**) the **Parliament**, to regulate religious conversions.
  - Further, in 2015, the Union Law Ministry stated that **Parliament does not have the legislative competence** to pass anti-conversion legislation.
  - Over the years, **several states have enacted 'Freedom of Religion' legislation** to restrict religious conversions carried out by force, fraud, or inducements.

## What are the Issues Associated with Anti-Conversion Laws?

- **Uncertain and Vague Terminology:** The uncertain and vague terminology like **misrepresentation, force, fraud, allurements presents a serious avenue for misuse**.
  - These terms leave room for ambiguities or are too broad, extending to subjects far beyond the protection of religious freedom.
- **Antithetical to Minorities:** Another issue is that the present anti-conversion laws focus more on the prohibition of conversion to achieve religious freedom.
  - However, the broad language used by the prohibitive legislation might be used by officials to oppress and **discriminate against minorities**.
- **Antithetical to Secularism:** These laws may pose a threat to the **secular fabric of India** and the **international perception** of our **society's intrinsic values and legal system**.

## What are Supreme Court Judgements on Marriage and Conversion?

- **[Hadiya Judgement 2017:](#)**
  - Matters of dress and of food, of ideas and ideologies, of love and partnership are within the central aspects of identity.
  - Neither the State nor the law can dictate a choice of partners or limit the free ability of every person to decide on these matters.
  - The principle that the right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to [Article 21](#).
- **[K.S. Puttaswamy or 'privacy' Judgment 2017:](#)**
  - Autonomy of the individual was the ability to make decisions in vital matters of concern to life.
- **Other Judgements:**
  - The SC in its various judgments, has held that **faith, the state and the courts have no jurisdiction over an adult's absolute right** to choose a life partner.
  - India is a **"free and democratic country"** and any interference by the State in an adult's right to love and marry has a **"chilling effect"** on freedoms.
  - Intimacies of marriage lie within a **core zone of privacy**, which is inviolable and the choice of a life partner, whether by marriage or outside it, is part of an **individual's "personhood and identity"**.
  - The absolute right of an individual to choose a life partner is **not in the least affected by matters of faith**.

## Way Forward

- The governments implementing such laws need to ensure that these do not curb one's Fundamental Rights or hamper the national integration instead, these laws need to strike a

balance between freedoms and malafide conversions.

[Source: TH](#)

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## Misuse of Section 498A IPC

**For Prelims:** Section 498A IPC

**For Mains:** Section 498A IPC and its Misuse, Violence against woman (VAW), Acts of Domestic Violence

### Why in News?

The Supreme Court in a recent judgement highlighted the **growing misuse of Section 498A IPC**, with friction rising in marriages.

- The **incorporation of section 498A was aimed at preventing cruelty committed upon a woman** by her husband and her in-laws by facilitating rapid state intervention.
- The court held that there is an increased tendency to employ provisions such as **Section 498A IPC as instruments to settle personal scores against the husband and his relatives.**

### What is Section 498A IPC?

- Section 498A of the **Indian Penal Code 1860** was passed by the Indian Parliament in 1983.
- The section of 498A of the Indian Penal Code **is a criminal law.**
- It is defined that if the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjected such woman towards cruelty would be punished with imprisonment for a term which might extend to **3 years and may also be liable for fine.**
- Section 498 A of Indian Penal Code is one of the greatest rescues for **Violence against Woman (VAW)**, which is a reflection of the pathetic reality of the domestic violence occurring within the four walls of a house.

### What are Acts of Domestic Violence?

- **Physical violence**, such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating.
- **Sexual violence**, including forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion.
- **Emotional (psychological) abuse**, such as insults, belittling, constant humiliation, intimidation, threats of harm, threats to take away children.
- **Controlling behaviors**, including isolating a person from family and friends, monitoring their movements and restricting access to financial resources, employment, education or medical care.

### What are Indian laws that help curb the instances of violence against women?

- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013

## How Section 498A is Misused?

- **Against Husband & Relatives:** With the rise in the rate of education, financial security, and modernization, the more independent and the radical feminists have made **Section 498A of IPC as a weapon in their hands than a shield.**
  - Due to this, many helpless husbands and their relatives have become the victims of the vengeful daughters-in-law of their house.
- **Blackmail Attempts:** These days in many cases where Section 498A is invoked, they turn out to be **false cases as they turn out to be mere blackmail attempts by the wife** (or her close relatives) when troubled with a stressed marriage.
  - Due to this, in most cases the Section 498A complaint is generally followed by the demand of a huge amount of money to settle the case outside the court.
- **Degradation of Marriage:** The court held specifically that there is misuse and exploitation of the provisions to such an extent that it was **hitting on the basis that is the foundation of marriage itself.**
  - This has ultimately proved to be not a good sign for the **health of society for the public at large.**
  - Women have begun misusing Section 498 of IPC as this law is a tool for their **vengeance or to get out of wedlock.**
- **Malimath Committee Report, 2003:** Similar views were also expressed by the **2003 Malimath Committee report** on reforms in the criminal justice system.
  - The committee noted that the "**general complaint**" of Section 498A of the IPC to be a subject to gross misuse.

## Way Forward

- It is important to note that the domestic violence and abuse by the spouse and family members are very complex behaviors and the social organization of courts, legal cultures, and the police systematically tend to devalue several domestic violence cases.
- Therefore the perspective of the state and the people needs to change from potential "misuse" of the concerned laws of domestic violence to that of implementing it for their real purpose.

[Source: IE](#)

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## Central Media Accreditation Guidelines 2022

**For Prelims:** Central Media Accreditation Guidelines, contempt of court, defamation

**For Mains:** Freedom of Media & Democracy, Fourth Pillar of Democracy

## Why in News?

Recently, the Central government has released the **Central Media Accreditation Guidelines-2022.**

- Applications for accreditation are vetted by a **Central Press Accreditation Committee** headed by the DG, PIB.
- At present, there are 2,457 PIB-accredited journalists in the country.

## What are the Provisions under Guidelines?

- **Provisions to Withdraw/Suspend Accreditation:**
  - If a journalist acts in a manner prejudicial to the country's security, sovereignty and integrity, friendly relations with foreign States, public order or is charged with a serious cognisable offence.
  - If **actions are prejudicial to decency, or morality**, or in relation to **contempt of court, defamation** or incitement to an offence.
    - **Accredited media persons** have been prohibited from using the words **"Accredited to the government of India"** on public/social media profile, visiting cards, letter heads or on any other form or any published work.
- **Provisions for Granting Accreditation:**
  - Accreditation is **only available for journalists living in the Delhi NCR region**. There are multiple categories.
  - A journalist **needs to have a minimum five years' professional experience** as a full-time working journalist or a cameraperson in a news organisation, or a minimum of 15 years as a freelancer to become eligible.
    - **Veteran journalists**, with over 30 years of experience, and who are older than 65 years of age, too are eligible.
  - A **newspaper or a periodical** needs to have a **minimum daily circulation of 10,000**, and news agencies must have at least 100 subscribers. Similar rules apply for foreign news organisations and foreign journalists.
  - Journalists working with **digital news platforms** are also eligible, provided the website has a **minimum of 10 lakh unique visitors per month**.
  - **No accreditation** will be granted to freelance journalists working for foreign news media organisations.
- **Central Media Accreditation Committee (CMAC):**
  - The Government shall **constitute a Committee** called the **Central Media Accreditation Committee**.
  - The Committee will be chaired by the **Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau (PIB)** and composed of up to **25 members** nominated by the government to discharge the functions laid down under these guidelines.
  - The CMAC would **function for a period of two years** from the date of its first meeting and shall **meet once in a quarter or more frequently**, if necessary.

## What are the associated Concerns?

- The guidelines leave it to the **discretion of government nominated officials** to assess **what is defamatory or prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of India** while deciding on whether a journalist's accreditation should be suspended or withdrawn.
  - One of the **core responsibilities of a journalist** is to **expose wrongdoing**, whether by public officials, politicians, big businessmen, corporate groups, or other people in power.
  - This could result, at times, in such powers trying to intimidate journalists or to block information from coming out.
- Journalists often **report on issues and policy decisions** that the government may not like.
- Any investigative story on sensitive issues could be held to be in violation of any of these provisions.

## How does Accreditation Help?

- **Allow Access to Big Events:**
  - In certain events where VVIPs or dignitaries such as the President, the Vice President or the Prime Minister are present, only accredited journalists are allowed to report from the premises.
- **Help in Protecting Identities:**
  - Second, accreditation ensures that a journalist is able to **protect the identity of his or her sources**.
    - An accredited journalist **does not have to disclose who he or she intends to**

**meet** when entering offices of union ministries, as the accreditation card is “**valid for entry into buildings under MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) security zone**”.

▪ **Benefits the Journalist:**

- Accreditation **brings certain benefits for the journalist** and his or her family, like being included in the **Central Government Health Scheme**, and some concessions on railway tickets.

## What are the Constitutional Provisions related to Freedom of Press?

- The Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression under **Article 19**, which deals with **Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech**, etc.
- Freedom of the press is **not expressly protected by the Indian legal system** but it is impliedly protected under article **19(1) (a) of the constitution**.
  - However, Freedom of the press is also **not absolute**.
  - A law could impose only those restrictions on the exercise of this right, it faces certain restrictions under **article 19(2)**, which is as follows:
    - Sovereignty and integrity of India, Security of the State, Friendly relations with foreign States, Public order, decency or morality or in Contempt of court, Defamation, Incitement to an offence.

[Source:TH](#)

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## Marine Heatwaves

**For Prelims:** Marine Heatwaves, Gulf of Mannar, ocean currents, El Niño, Great Barrier Reef, ocean acidification.

**For Mains:** Marine Heatwaves, its impacts and reasons for the its causes.

## Why in News?

According to a study, marine heatwaves — or the ones that form on oceans — have been on the rise in the waters around India.

- Emerging studies have **reported their occurrence** and impacts in the global oceans, but are little understood in the **tropical Indian Ocean**.
- Also, according to the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) Sixth Assessment Report \(AR6\)](#), the **sea surface temperature over the Indian ocean** is likely to **increase by 1 to 2 °C** when there is 1.5°C to 2°C global warming.

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# MARINE HEATWAVES

MHW are extended periods of regional ocean warming. They have major impacts on marine life and human society.

## EXTREME WEATHER

Warm waters increase tropical storms and hurricanes



## INCREASED OCEAN STRESSORS

- Stratification
- Acidification
- Deoxygenation



## BIODIVERSITY & HABITAT LOSS

- Habitat compression
- Food web disruption
- Species migration
- Mass mortalities



## ECONOMIC LOSS

Increased mortality of economically important species



**10x** intensity compared to pre-industrial times

**50%** increase in MHWs in the past 10 years

**20-50** more MHWs by 2100

## What are the Findings of the Study?

- The **Western Indian Ocean region** experienced the **largest increase** in marine heatwaves at a rate of about **1.5 events per decade**, followed by the **north Bay of Bengal** at a rate of 0.5 events per decade.
- The **marine heatwaves in the Western Indian Ocean** and the **Bay of Bengal** increased drying conditions over the central Indian subcontinent.
- Correspondingly, there is a **significant increase in the rainfall** over south peninsular India in response to the heatwaves in the north Bay of Bengal.
  - From **1982 to 2018**, the Western Indian Ocean had a total of 66 events, while the Bay of Bengal had 94 events.
  - These changes are in **response to the modulation** of the monsoon winds by the heatwaves.
  - This is the **first time** that a study has demonstrated a **close link between marine heatwaves and atmospheric circulation and rainfall**.

## What are Marine Heatwaves?

- Marine heatwaves are **periods of extremely high temperatures** in the ocean.
- These events are linked to **coral bleaching, seagrass destruction, and loss of kelp forests**, affecting the **fisheries sector** adversely.
  - Study showed that **85% of the corals** in the **Gulf of Mannar** near the Tamil Nadu coast got bleached after the **marine heatwave in May 2020**.
- The **most common drivers of marine heatwaves** include **ocean currents** which can build up areas of warm water and air-sea heat flux, or warming through the ocean surface from the atmosphere.
  - Winds can enhance or suppress the warming in a marine heatwave, and climate modes

like [El Niño](#) can change the likelihood of events occurring in certain regions.

## What are the Impacts of Marine Heatwaves?

- **Affect Ecosystem Structure:**
  - Marine heat waves **affect ecosystem structure**, by supporting certain species and suppressing others.
  - It has been **associated with the mass mortality of marine invertebrates**, and may force species to change behaviour in a way that puts wildlife at increased risk of harm.
- **Change Habitat Ranges of Certain Species:**
  - Marine heatwaves can **change the habitat ranges of certain species**, such as the spiny sea urchin off southeastern Australia which has been expanding southward into Tasmania at the expense of kelp forests which it feeds upon.
- **Economic Losses:**
  - Marine heatwaves can **cause economic losses** through impacts on fisheries and aquaculture.
- **Affect Biodiversity:**
  - Biodiversity can be **drastically affected by marine heatwaves**.
    - In 2016, marine heatwaves across northern Australia led to severe bleaching of the [Great Barrier Reef](#).
- **Increase the Risk of Deoxygenation and Acidification:**
  - Often they occur alongside other stressors such as [ocean acidification](#), **deoxygenation, and overfishing**.
  - In such cases, MHWs not only further damage habitats, but also **increase the risk of deoxygenation and acidification**.

## Way Forward

- Since the frequency, intensity, and area covered by the marine heatwaves are increasing, it is **needed to enhance the ocean observational arrays to monitor these events accurately**, and update our weather models to skillfully predict the challenges presented by a warming world.
- Effective responses to MHWs **require action from a broad range of stakeholders:** policymakers, researchers, the private sector (fisheries, aquaculture, ecotourism), conservationists, and civil society.
  - **Local management agencies** should therefore **raise awareness across all stakeholders and implement forecast systems** to help achieve a coordinated response.
- **National and sub-national governments should design and implement measures** to protect communities and build regional ocean resilience.

[Source: TH](#)

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## China and Russia Relations

**For Prelims:** Location on Maps, South China Sea, Cold War, NATO, SCO, BRICS, Ukraine Crisis, Belt and Road Initiative, Eurasian Economic Union

**For Mains:** India and its Neighbourhood, Bilateral Groupings & Agreements, Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests, India-Russia- China Relations and way forward for India.

## Why in News

Recently, in a joint statement, **China and Russia** affirmed that their new relationship is superior to any political or military alliance of the **Cold War** era.

- The statement comes amid **Russia's standoff with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) on Ukraine.**



## What are the Historical Dynamics of China- Russia Relations?

- Despite being together in rejecting US unipolarity, the relationship between **Russia and China is complex and layered.**
  - Each has its **distinct worldview and specific interests in its geographical region**, and its own battles to fight.
- Relations between **China and the former Soviet Union were frosty, marked by mistrust and doctrinal differences for most of the Cold War decades.**
- The **change came in 1989**, when Mikhail Gorbachev became the first Soviet leader to visit China since Nikita Khrushchev in 1958.
- Russia and China declared **“mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence”** as the basis of their bilateral relations.
- A decade after the Soviet Union broke up, **disappointed and humiliated by the way the West had downgraded it**, and deep in economic crisis, Russia turned to China.
- In 2001, the two countries signed the **Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation**, paving the way for expanding economic and trade ties, including sales of defence equipment and energy by **Russia to China, and Russia’s backing for China’s position on Taiwan.**
- In June 2021, **the two countries extended the treaty at a virtual meeting** where Russia claimed that **“Russian-Chinese coordination plays a stabilising role in world affairs”.**

## What are the Current Developments in China- Russia Relations?

- Russia's 2014 [annexation of Crimea in Ukraine](#) led to a sharp downturn in Russia's ties with the US, NATO, and [European Union \(EU\)](#).
  - This was also the **turning point in Russia's ties with China**, which revealed the possibilities, potential, and the limits of the relationship.
- When the US, EU, and Australia imposed **sanctions on Russia**, Russia turned reflexively to China.
- **Russia opened its doors wide for Chinese investments**, and struck a **USD 400 billion deal for Gazprom, the Russian state monopoly gas exporter**, to supply 38 billion cubic metres (bcm) annually to China for 30 years from 2025.
- Earlier in January 2022, the two countries **signed a deal for another pipeline, Power of Siberia 2**, which will add 10 bcm of gas to the annual supply for 30 years.
- Since 2016, **trade between the two countries has gone from USD 50 bn to over USD 147 bn**.
- China is now Russia's **largest trading partner**. Towards a modus vivendi in Central Asia, the two countries agreed to work towards speeding up the linking of the [Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union](#) and the Chinese [Belt and Road Initiative](#).
- With their ties closer than ever before, the crisis in Ukraine has been an opportunity for each country to express **solidarity with the other's grievance against the US**.
  - Should the West impose financial and banking sanctions on Russia, **China is expected to assist Russia, perhaps with alternative payment methods**.
- The recent joint statement backed the Russian opposition to any expansion of the Western military alliance in Europe.
- Russia **reaffirmed support for the [One-China principle](#)**, and opposed any form of independence for Taiwan.
- The statement also **hit out "against the formation of closed bloc structures and opposing camps in the Asia-Pacific region" and "the negative impact" of the US's Indo-Pacific strategy**.

## How is Russia & China's Interest Different?

- As several observers have pointed out, the **China-Russia compact is not yet a formal security alliance against the West, nor is it an ideological partnership**.
- Back in March 2014, in the **vote on UN Security Council resolutions on the referendum in Crimea**. China had abstained — and despite the recent bonhomie, **has not recognised Crimea's accession to Russia**.
- China's main **security interests** lie in Asia; Russia's are in Europe. From Russia's demands in ongoing negotiations with the West, it is clear that **Russia is seeking the restructuring of European security**.
- Russia, which wants to be recognised as a great power once again, **has positions independent of China on many issues** — including on the **relationship with India**.
- As the smaller economy — **Russia's [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#) is a tenth of China's** — but with a strong memory of its lost superpower status, Russia is not willing to become China's junior partner.
- China drives a hard bargain. Russia is conscious that its **gas exports to Germany and the rest of Europe gets much more revenue** — and that China anyway has other pipelines to tap. Also, despite talk of Russia-China co-operation in Central Asia, **Russia still sees the region as part of its sphere of influence**.
- For China, war in Ukraine is the least suitable of options. **It would take US military energies away from the [South China Sea](#)**, but might also stall talks to resolve trade issues.
- **China and the EU are each other's biggest trading partners** — China's trade with Russia is small by comparison. China will not fight the war if it breaks out, but it will nonetheless find it messy and complicated to negotiate.
- As for Ukraine, it is a crucial link in Xi's BRI project. **China is also Ukraine's biggest trading partner** — and its agricultural exports, particularly corn, have sustained China during its trade war with the US.

## What Policy Should India Follow?

- India's best bet would be to **treat its relations with both countries and the US separately** — or it runs the risk of shrinking its own space.

- India's relationship with Russia is not what it used to be, but there is much that **both sides continue to see as mutually beneficial.**
  - The Russia-China statement did not mention China's border dispute with India; it only made a reference to developing cooperation among the three countries.
  - After the Russian-linked Redfish media teased a documentary that drew parallels between Kashmir and Palestine, **the Russian embassy clarified that Redfish was not official media, and reiterated that Kashmir was an issue for India and Pakistan to resolve bilaterally.**
- The structural constraints posed by the great power dynamic and vastly different appreciation of the **regional security environment could be reduced if matters improve between the US and Russia.**
  - A **less conflictual relationship between the two will be a huge relief for India.**
  - Also, the US-China quest for power or Russia's deepening ties with China would have mattered less to India if its relations with China were more peaceful and stable.
- India should also **promote mutually beneficial trilateral cooperation between Russia, China and India** that could contribute towards the reduction of mistrust and suspicion between India and China.
  - In this context, the [BRICS](#), [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#) and [RIC trilateral forum](#) must be leveraged.

[Source: IE](#)

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## Falkland Islands Issue

**For Prelims:** Location of Falkland Island and its Neighborhood, Conflict of Falkland Islands.

**For mains:** Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests, India and its Neighborhood, Conflict of Falkland Islands.

## Why in News

Recently, **Britain rejected a statement from China that affirmed it's support for Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands.**

- Earlier, China and Argentina issued a joint statement that said China **"reaffirms its support for Argentina's demand for the full exercise of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands (Falkland Islands),"** using the Argentine name for the territory.



## What and Where is Falkland Island?

- Falkland Islands, also called Malvinas Islands or Spanish Islas Malvinas, **internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom** in the South Atlantic Ocean.
- It lies about **300 miles northeast of the southern tip of South America** and a similar distance east of the **Strait of Magellan**.
- The capital and major town is Stanley, on East Falkland, **there are also several scattered small settlements as well as a Royal Air Force base** that is located at Mount Pleasant.
- The two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, and about 200 smaller islands. The **government of the Falkland Islands also administers the British overseas territory of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands**, including the Shag and Clerke rocks.

## What is the History of the Falkland Islands?

- The **British, in 1765, were the first to settle West Falkland**, but they were **driven off in 1770 by the Spanish**, who had bought out the **French settlement about 1767**.
- The **British outpost** on West Falkland was **restored in 1771** after threat of war, but then the **British withdrew from the island in 1774** for economic reasons, without renouncing their claim to the Falklands.
- Spain maintained a settlement on East Falkland (which it called Soledad Island) until 1811.
- In **1820 the Argentina Government, which had declared its independence from Spain in 1816, proclaimed its sovereignty** over the Falklands.
- In 1831 the **US warship destroyed the Argentine settlement** on East Falkland in reprisal for the arrest of three US ships that had been hunting seals in the area.
- In early **1833, a British force expelled the few remaining Argentine officials** from the island without firing a shot. In 1841, a British civilian lieutenant governor was appointed for the Falklands, and by 1885 a British community of some 1,800 people on the islands was self-supporting.
  - **Argentina regularly protested** Britain's occupation of the islands.
- After **World War II** (1939-45) the issue of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands shifted to the **United Nations (UN)** when, in 1964, the islands' status was debated by the UN committee on decolonization.
- In **1965, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution inviting Britain and Argentina to hold discussions** to find a peaceful solution to the dispute.
- These protracted discussions were still proceeding in February **1982, but in April Argentina's military government invaded the Falklands**.
- This act started the **Falkland Islands War**, which ended 10 weeks later with the **surrender of the Argentine forces at Stanley to British troops who had forcibly reoccupied the islands**.
- Although Britain and Argentina reestablished full diplomatic relations in 1990, **the issue of sovereignty remained a point of contention**.
- In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century **Britain continued to maintain some 2,000 troops on the islands**.

- In January **2009 a new constitution came into effect that strengthened the Falklands' local democratic government** and reserved for the islanders their right to determine the territory's political status. In a referendum held in March 2013, **islanders voted nearly unanimously to remain a British overseas territory.**

## What is the Basis of Different Claims on the Island?

- **Argentina** based its **claim** to the Falklands based on an official document of 1493 modified by the **Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)**, by which Spain and Portugal had divided the New World between themselves; on succession from Spain; on the islands' proximity to South America, and on the need to end a colonial situation.
- **Britain** based its **claim** on its "open, **continuous, effective possession, occupation, and administration**" of the islands since 1833 and its determination to apply to the Falklanders the principle of self-determination as recognized in the United Nations Charter.
  - Britain asserted that, far from ending a colonial situation, Argentine rule and control of the lives of the Falklanders against their wishes would in fact create one.

[Source: IE](#)

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## Nai Roshni Scheme

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Minority Affairs** has informed the Rajya Sabha that the Government has sanctioned Rs 26 crore under the **Nai Roshni scheme** in the **last three years (2018-19 to 2020-21)** through which **around one Lakh women have been trained.**

### What is the Nai Roshni Scheme?

- **Nai Roshni-a Leadership Development Programme for Minority Women** is a [Central Sector Scheme](#) for women belonging to minority communities in the **age group of 18 to 65 years.**
- It was **started in 2012-13.**
- The **objective of the scheme** is to empower and instil confidence among minority women, including their neighbours from other communities living in the same village/locality, by providing knowledge, tools and techniques for interacting with Government systems, banks and other institutions at all levels.
- It is **run with the help of** NGOs, Civil societies and Government Institutions all over the country.
- It includes **various training modules** like Leadership of women, Educational Programmes, Health and Hygiene, Swachch Bharat, Financial Literacy, Life Skills, Legal Rights of Women, Digital Literacy and Advocacy for Social and behavioral change.

### What is the Significance of the Scheme?

- Empowerment of women per se is not only essential for equity, **but also constitutes a critical element in our fight for poverty reduction**, economic growth and strengthening of civil society.
- Women and children are **always the worst sufferers** in a poverty stricken family and need support. Empowering women, especially mothers, is **even more important as it is in homes that she nourishes**, nurtures and molds the character of her offspring.
- It helps embolden **minority women to move out of the confines of their home** and community and assume leadership roles and assert their rights, collectively or individually, in accessing services, facilities, skills, and opportunities besides claiming their due share of

development benefits of the Government for improving their lives and living conditions.

## What are the other schemes related to Minority Women?

- [Garib Nawaz Employment Scheme](#)
- Seekho aur Kamao
- Begum Hazrat Mahal Girls scholarships
- [Nai Manzil](#)
- Usttad (Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development)

[Source: PIB](#)

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## Fairbanks Disease and Acromegaly Disorder

### Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare has informed the Rajya Sabha that Fairbanks Disease and Acromegaly Disorder's patients are getting treatment **at various tertiary health facilities like Medical Colleges, Central Institutes like AIIMS** at free or subsidized rates besides in tertiary care private hospitals.

### What is Fairbank Disease?

- Fairbanks disease or **multiple epiphyseal dysplasia (MED)** is a rare genetic disorder (dominant form--1 in 10,000 births) which **affects the growing ends of bones.**
- Bones **usually elongate by a process that involves the depositing of cartilage at the ends of the bones, called ossification.**
- This cartilage then mineralizes and hardens to become bone. In MED, this process is defective.
- The Fairbank's disease (Multiple epiphyseal dysplasia) patient usually **requires management of pain and orthopedic procedures,** for which facilities are available at tertiary care institutions in India.

### What is Acromegaly Disorder?

- Acromegaly is a hormonal disorder that leads to the **abnormal growth of hands, feet and face.**
- This disorder is **mainly caused due to the excessive production of the Growth Hormone (GH)** produced by the Pituitary gland.
  - The pituitary gland, a small gland situated at the base of your brain and called the Master Gland, as it synthesizes some of the important hormones in the body.
  - Due to the excessive growth of this gland, the surrounding nerve tissues and optic nerves get compressed. This results in the growth of the bone and the enlargement of organs.
- **Symptoms:** Sleeplessness, Excess fatigue, A hoarse voice, Profuse sweating, Frequent headaches, Abnormal weight gain, Develop odour in the body, Enlargement of jaws or tongue etc.

[Source: PIB](#)

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