

Uganda makes it a crime to identify as LGBTQ

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In news— Uganda's parliament passed a Bill recently making it illegal to identify as an LGBTQ person, going several steps ahead of neighbouring countries in the African continent which outlaw same-sex relationships and marriages.

About the bill-

- The new law, if passed, will be the **first to outlaw merely identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ)**.
- In addition to same-sex intercourse, the law bans "promoting and abetting" homosexuality as well as "conspiracy to engage in homosexuality".
- Violations under the law draw severe penalties, including death for so-called aggravated homosexuality and life in prison for gay sex.
- Aggravated homosexuality involves gay sex with people under the age of 18 or when the perpetrator is HIV positive, among other categories, according to the law.

Status of LGBTQ rights in Africa-

- **More than 30 of Africa's 54 countries, including Uganda, already ban homosexuality.**
- **Additionally, of the 69 countries that have laws criminalising homosexuality,** nearly half are in Africa.
- **Angola in February 2023 brought into effect revised penal code to allow same-sex relationships** and banned discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
- **Gabon reversed a law that had criminalised homosexuality** and made gay sex punishable with six months of imprisonment.
- Meanwhile, **Botswana's High Court ruled in favour of**

decriminalising homosexuality in 2019 and

- **Mozambique and the Seychelles scrapped anti-homosexuality laws.**
- A Trinidad and Tobago court ruled that laws banning gay sex were unconstitutional.

Status of LGBTQ rights in India-

- The Supreme Court recently referred to a five-judge Constitution Bench the petitions seeking legal recognition to same-sex marriages, saying the matter raises questions of “seminal importance”.
- In its order, a three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, said the submissions on the issue involve the interplay between constitutional rights and specific legislative enactments, including the Special Marriage Act, besides the rights of transgender couples.
- **In 2018, the Supreme Court had repealed Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which criminalises homosexuality.**
- **However, there is no legal approval for adoption of children by same-sex couples and blood donation by LGBTQ people is banned.**

Status of LGBTQ rights in rest of the world-

- According to Pew Research Center, **62 countries criminalise consensual same-sex acts by law, while 129 countries don't criminalise them.**
- **Only 28 countries in the world recognise same-sex marriages,** and 34 others provide for some partnership recognition for same-sex couples, according to International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA).
- **Death penalty is the legally prescribed punishment for homosexual acts in Brunei, Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.**

- In the US, more than 450 anti-LGBTQ Bills have been introduced in various states, said White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre, who pointed to a proposed Florida Bill that would give the state the right to separate transgender children from their parents.
- **Homosexual activity is legal in all 27 member states of the European Union, and in Central America.**
- All but five nations in the Caribbean and Guyana in South America also legally allow same-sex consensual activity.
- **Iraq is one of three Arab-majority countries in the Middle East that doesn't explicitly criminalize same-sex relationships.** The others are Jordan and Bahrain.
- However, the region largely remains opposed to the idea of homosexuality, which is evident in instances like Saudi government's campaign to remove rainbow-colored toys from shelves, a state clampdown and threats from a militant Christian group directed at LGBTQ communities in Lebanon, and a hashtag campaign that originated in **Egypt recently that uses "fetrah," the Arabic word for "instinct," to insist that there can only be two genders.**
- In the Asian subcontinent, **Afghanistan is the only country that has a death penalty in force for homosexuality**, but strict punishments are awarded in Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Malaysia and Brunei.
- On the brighter side, **Singapore repealed a law that criminalised sex between men**, while Vietnam declared that conversion therapy would be banned.