

GUARDIAN OF FOOTBALL OR ITS PROBLEM?

Context

- On August 15, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) was suspended by the global governing body for football, FIFA owing to the rationale that a temporary Committee of Administrators (CoA) appointed by the Supreme Court constituted ‘third-party interference’.
- AIFF is the governing body of football in India and this is the first time AIFF has been suspended since the federation was formed in 1937.
- This suspension also took away the country’s rights to hold the FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup 2022, scheduled to be held from October 11-30.

Background

- **Genesis:** The current set of troubles for Indian football began after the erstwhile AIFF president, Praful Patel, refused to relinquish his post as the head of football in the country.
 - Patel had completed his three terms and 12 years as AIFF president in December 2020.
 - However, the polls could not take place because of pending cases in the SC regarding the constitution of AIFF.
- **SC intervention:** On May 18, the Supreme Court intervened, and removed Patel from his post.
- **Unease over Committee of Administrators:** The SC appointed a Committee of Administrators (CoA) to run the AIFF which was considered third-party interference as per FIFA statutes and eventually led to the ban.
- **Not immediate ban:** Only after CoA altered the executive committee of the AIFF, its mode of formation, the FIFA banned the CoA as these major changes were considered as third-party interference.

About FIFA

- **Description:** FIFA or the Federation Internationale de Football Association is the highest governing body of football in the world. FIFA is a non-profit organization, headquartered in Zurich.

- **Sports:** It is the international governing body of association **football, futsal (Indoor Football),** and **beach soccer.**

- **History:** Founded in **1904,** FIFA now comprises **211 member nations.**

Cleaning up football administration

- **SC observation:** The SC took cognisance of the fact that a **private society,** registered and operating in India, the activities of which are of **public significance** and are partially funded by **public money,** was not being run in compliance with the law.

- Hence, CoA was requested to draft a new constitution for the federation in terms of the National Sports Code, conduct elections under the said constitution and to then hand over control to the newly elected body.

- **Significance:** It was incumbent upon the court to intervene, particularly where public money is concerned. The CoA was therefore meant to **bring in reform along the lines of the BCCI reforms** for cricket starting in 2015.

The ‘third party’ excuse

- **Parity in voting rights:** The draft constitution, submitted by CoA to SC, states the electoral college had representatives from 36 State associations and 36 eminent football players, 24 male and 12 female.

- As a result, **36 state associations** with voting rights would now have to contend with **36 eminent players** who would have the **same voting rights.**

- **Adherence to National Sports Code:** The binding National Sports Code issued by the central government also requires players to be a part of the electoral college (a minimum of 25% is prescribed).

- **FIFA’s own mandate:** Although the world body agreed to 25% player representation in the committee, no changes were recorded on paper. FIFA’s own statutes also require player representation in the electoral college.

- But in a series of letters addressed to AIFF, FIFA made it clear that it did not want players in the electoral college.

- The obvious inference is that **FIFA did not want the unpredictability** of several new voters during the **elections.**

- With upcoming elections to FIFA itself, it wouldn't want to set a precedent for other member nations to follow.

FIFA lifted ban now

- **FIFA conditions to lift ban:** FIFA has said that two main concerns need to be addressed in order for the ban to be lifted.
 - **Repeal CoA:** First, the mandate of the CoA would have to be repealed in full.
 - **Give charge back to AIFF:** Second, the AIFF administration would need to be completely in charge of its day-to-day running once again.
 - **Mode of AIFF constitution:** FIFA also stated that it wanted the AIFF constitution to be revised on the terms of FIFA policies, and for the election to be held on current AIFF membership structures that are based on state associations only.
- **Ban lifted now:** FIFA lifted the suspension imposed on AIFF after it received confirmation that the **mandate** of the **CoA** that was set up to assume the powers of the **AIFF Executive Committee** had been **terminated** and that the **AIFF administration had regained full control** of the AIFF's daily affairs.

Hope for reform

- In light of the suspension, the Supreme Court acted in the interest of the sport in India by modifying its previous orders and letting the **ongoing elections** be conducted **without players** in the electoral college.

PAK MAY IMPORT FOOD ITEMS FROM INDIA: FM

In News:

- Pakistan's finance minister said the government can consider importing vegetables and other edible items from India following the destruction of standing crops due to massive floods.
- Pakistan had suspended bilateral trade with India in 2019 after India abolished Article 370 thereby ending the special status accorded to J&K.

Trade and Economic Relations between India and Pakistan

Statistics

- Bilateral trade reached its peak of \$ 2.7 billion in 2013-14. Since then, it gradually declined till Pakistan decided to suspend bilateral trade with India in 2019.
- In FY19, total exports to Pakistan were \$2.06 billion, while imports were \$495 million.
- In the first quarter of FY20, India's exports to Pakistan were \$452.5 million and imports were \$7.13 million.
- India's major items of export are organic chemicals, cotton, plastics and dyes, while imports are fruit and edible nuts, and mineral fuels.
- Export of tomatoes to Pakistan had stopped long ago.

Reasons for low volume of trade

- Border tensions
- Pakistan's reluctance to accord India the MFN status,
- Pakistan allowing only 137 items for trade through Wagah/ Attari land route,
- Failure to provide Non-Discriminatory Market Access (NDMA) on a reciprocal basis etc.

Suspension of bilateral trade

- In August 2019, Pakistan decided to suspend trade relations with India in a five-point plan.
- Pakistan's share of exports to India has been less than 2% of its total exports, and for India, imports from Pakistan are not even 0.5% of its total imports.
- Since then, Pakistan had made only two exceptions. These were:
 - for the import of pharmaceutical products during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - for India to ship 50,000 tonnes of wheat as humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

LoC Trade between J&K and PoJK

- The LoC trade was meant to facilitate exchange of goods of common use between local populations across the LoC in Jammu & Kashmir.
- This allowed trade through two Trade Facilitation Centres located at Salamabad, Uri, District Baramulla and Chakkan-da-Bagh, District Poonch.
- It was based on Barter system and zero duty basis.
- However, in April 2019, India suspended LoC trade in Jammu & Kashmir.

- This action was taken based on reports that the Cross LoC trade routes are being misused by the Pakistan for funnelling illegal weapons, narcotics and fake currency etc.

Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Status

- A Pakistan cabinet decision of November, 2011 to accord India the MFN status remains unimplemented.
- Pakistan, however, substituted, in March 2012, a positive list of a little more than 1950 tariff lines, permitted for import from India, by a Negative List of 1209 lines that cannot be imported from India.
- India, on the other hand, had accorded MFN status to Pakistan in 1996. However, in February 2019, after Pulwama terror attack, India decided to withdraw the status.

News Summary

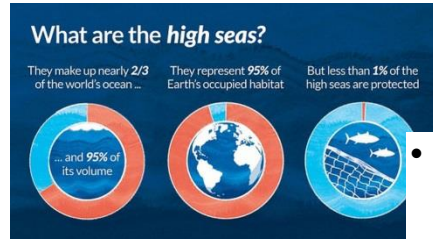
- Given the extent of the calamity, the Pakistani government could consider reversing its three-year-old ban on trade with India, and open trade routes for vegetables and other essential commodities.
- Pakistan is witnessing a massive surge in the prices of vegetables and fruits as the supply from Balochistan, Sindh and south Punjab has been badly affected.
- As per the govt officials of Pakistan, nearly a third of the country is under water due to the incessant rain.

India's response

- In a rare outreach to the neighbouring country, PM Modi has extended heartfelt condolences to victims of the floods in Pakistan.
- Pakistan had so far not requested aid from India, nor had it been offered unilaterally by India.
- Currently, it is unclear whether the Indian government will take forward the suggestion to reopen trade or extend aid to Pakistan as it had done with Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in recent months.
- However, highlighting India's strong support for regionalism and its policy of being more generous and more non reciprocal, experts feel that India might extend help to Pakistan.

[UN HIGH SEAS TREATY](#)

Negotiations involving 168 countries, including the European Union, to agree on a UN treaty for protecting oceans failed on August 27.



What is the proposed UN High Seas treaty?

- Also referred to as the 'Paris Agreement for the Ocean', the treaty to deal with Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction has been under discussion for several years.
- The proposed treaty concerns the ocean existing beyond the Exclusive Economic Zones that lie from the coast of a country to about 200 nautical miles or 370 km into the sea, till where it has special rights for exploration. Waters beyond that are known as open seas or high seas.
- The treaty was to be negotiated under the United Nations Convention on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 which governs the rights of countries regarding marine resources.
- As there is no treaty for conserving the health of vast swathes of the earth's oceans, a UN resolution in 2017 had decided to rectify this while setting 2022 as the deadline.

How are the world's oceans regulated as of now?

- Some treaties, along with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), regulate the conduct of actors on the high seas.
 - UNCLOS defines distance of 12 nautical miles (approx. 22 km) from the baseline as Territorial Sea limit and a distance of 200 nautical miles distance as Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) limit.
 - It also created the International Seabed Authority and other conflict-resolution mechanisms.
- But a treaty dedicated to protecting ocean health does not exist as of now.

Why we need such treaty?

- Currently, every country has the right to access open seas and there is no treaty specifically dedicated to protecting the ocean health.
 - This has resulted in large-scale drilling and trawling operations for catching fish and other animals for commercial purposes.

- In June 2022, UN Secretary-General had declared an **ocean emergency** at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, citing threats to the world’s oceans.
- 90% per cent of global warming is occurring in the ocean, according to the NASA website.
- The effects of ocean warming include sea level rise due to thermal expansion, coral bleaching, accelerated melting of Earth’s major ice sheets, intensified hurricanes, and changes in ocean health and biochemistry.
- Excessive fishing has increased manifold over the years, and a third of species such as sharks and rays are at the risk of extinction, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

STANDALONE 5G ARCHITECTURE

India’s largest telecom company Reliance Jio announced the launch of its 5G services in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai by Diwali this year, with an aim to expand and cover the entire country by December 2023.



About:

- The company said it will launch its 5G services on a “standalone” 5G architecture, against the “non-standalone” approach that other operators are betting on.
- 5G networks are deployed mainly on two modes: standalone and non-standalone.
- In the standalone mode, which Jio has chosen, the 5G network operates with dedicated equipment, and runs parallel to the existing 4G network, while in the non-standalone mode, the 5G network is supported by the 4G core infrastructure.
- The standalone mode provides access to full 5G capabilities and new network functionalities such as slicing that provides greater flexibility to operators to efficiently use their spectrum holdings.
- Non-standalone networks are generally considered to be a stepping stone, and global precedent suggests operators that have launched non-standalone 5G networks eventually transition to standalone networks. The non-standalone mode, however, lets operators maximise the utilisation of their existing network infrastructure with relatively lower investment.

LIGHT COMBAT HELICOPTERS (LCHs)

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to formally raise its first unit of indigenous Light Combat Helicopters (LCHs) in Jodhpur in the first week of October coinciding with Air Force Day on October 8.



About:

- Ten LCHs will be inducted in the first batch completing one unit.
- The IAF is still working out the total number of LCHs to be acquired, the official stated.
- The IAF operates the older Russian Mi-25 and Mi-35 attack helicopters, of which one squadron has been phased out following the induction of 22 Boeing AH-64E Apache attack helicopters.
- The existing Mi-35 squadron is in the process of being sent for overhaul which will extend its life by many years.
- The Army had already raised its first LCH squadron on June 1 in Bengaluru. The unit will move to the Eastern Command along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on completion of the raising next year.
- The Army plans to acquire 95 LCHs of which seven units, each having 10 helicopters, are planned to be deployed for combat role in the mountains.
- The LCH is the first dedicated attack helicopter of the Army, which otherwise operates 75 Rudra helicopters, the weaponised variant of the indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter.

FRAUD REGISTRY

The Reserve Bank is considering setting up a fraud registry to create a database of fraudulent websites, phones and various modus operandi used for digital fraud.



About:



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- Such a database would help prevent fraudsters from repeating the offence as the websites or phone numbers would be blacklisted, RBI executive director Anil Kumar Sharma said on Monday.
 - There is no definite timeline for setting up of the fraud registry.
 - Payment system participants would be provided access to this registry for near-real time fraud monitoring. The aggregated fraud data would be published to educate customers on emerging risks.
 - Sharma also said that the customers of the Credit Investment Company (CIC) would come under the Reserve Bank — Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS), 2021.
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