



UWW Suspends of Wrestling Federation of India

For Prelims: Wrestling Federation of India, United World Wrestling, Wrestling

For Mains: Role of the Indian government in ensuring the smooth functioning of national sports federations, Discuss the role of sports in enhancing a nation's image and reputation internationally.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

The **Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)**, the national governing body for wrestling, has been provisionally suspended by the **United World Wrestling (UWW)**, for not conducting its elections on time.

- This has serious implications for the Indian wrestlers, who will not be able to compete under the **national flag in the upcoming World Championships in Serbia**.

Why was the WFI Suspended by UWW?

- The UWW has suspended the WFI for violating its constitution, which mandates that **all member federations must hold their elections every four years**.
 - The WFI was supposed to hold its **elections in February 2023**, but they were delayed due to various reasons, including [allegations of sexual harassment](#), intimidation, financial irregularities, and administrative lapse against the former WFI president and others by some prominent wrestlers.
- The UWW also wanted to protect the athletes and make the federation work properly again.

What are the Other Sports Bodies in India Facing Similar Conflicts?

- [FIFA \(Fédération internationale de Football Association\)](#), the global governing body of football, **suspended All India Football Federation of India due to delayed elections in 2022, The ban was lifted subsequently**.
- The [International Olympic Committee \(IOC\)](#) and [International Hockey Federation \(FIH\)](#) also warned of potential bans for Indian sports bodies for similar reasons.
- In June 2020, the Indian government revoked recognition of **54 national federations for non-compliance with the National Sports Development Code of India 2011**.

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)

- The WFI is the governing body of wrestling in India. It is **headquartered in New Delhi**.
- It is recognized by the **Government of India and the Indian Olympic Association**.
- It organizes various national and international wrestling events, such as the **Pro Wrestling League, the National Wrestling Championship, and the Asian Championships**.

- The WFI also **supports and trains Indian wrestlers who participate in the Olympic Games.**

United World Wrestling (UWW)

- UWW is the international governing body for the sport of amateur wrestling. It oversees wrestling at the **Olympics and the World Championships.**
- **UWW is headquartered in Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland.**
- UWW was founded in 1912 as the **International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles (FILA).** It changed its name to United World Wrestling in 2014.
- UWW has a vision to be globally recognized as an inspiring, innovative, and leading Olympic Federation³. Its mission is to lead the growth of wrestling around the world.

History of the Game of Wrestling in India

- Wrestling in India dates back to the **5th millennium B.C.**
- Ancient India practised wrestling known as **MallaYudha.**
- **Bhima from Mahabharata was a renowned wrestler,** along with Jarasandha, Keechaka, and Balrama.
- Ramayana also mentions wrestling, with **Hanuman as a notable wrestler.**
- Wrestling is referred to as "**Dangal**" in India and is a basic form of wrestling tournament. It's called "**kushti**" in Punjab and Haryana regions.
- **Originally a fitness activity and entertainment for royals, wrestling has evolved into a professional sport.**

What is the Impact of the Suspension?

- **Wrestlers' Participation:**
 - According to the UWW, wrestlers and their support personnel can still participate in **UWW-sanctioned events, but under the UWW flag rather than the national flag.**
- **UWW Events:**
 - Indian wrestlers will be unable to compete under the national flag in UWW events, including the **upcoming World Championships in Belgrade, Serbia.** Additionally, no **Indian national anthem will be played if a wrestler secures a gold medal.**
 - WFI cannot **receive any financial or technical assistance from the UWW.**
- **Indian Wrestling:**
 - The suspension tarnishes **India's image and reputation in the international wrestling community.** It also demoralizes and disheartens the Indian wrestlers, who have worked hard to prepare for the World Championships and other events.
 - Suspension of WFI hinders wrestler's qualification chances for the **2024 Paris Olympics, as the World Championships are a qualifying event.**
 - The suspension is a major setback for Indian wrestling, which has been one of the most successful sports for India in recent years. India has **won four Olympic medals, 19 World Championship medals, and 69 Asian Championship medals in wrestling since 2008.**

Way Forward

- The immediate solution is to **conduct the WFI elections as soon as possible** and submit the results to UWW for approval.
- The long-term solution is to **reform and restructure the WFI,** which has been plagued by various problems and controversies for a long time. The WFI should adopt a **professional and accountable approach to its functioning,** with proper **checks and balances, financial audits, grievance redressal mechanisms, etc.**
- The WFI should also foster a **healthy and harmonious relationship with UWW** and other

international bodies, and abide by their rules and regulations. The WFI should also cooperate with other national federations and regional associations, and **promote the growth and popularity of wrestling in India and abroad.**

Legal Insight: [Interim Bail in Wrestler Case](#)

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