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1. What is the Right-To-Match option at IPL auctions, and how it played out this year**Overview**

In one of the most fascinating moments of the Indian Premier League auctions — which took place in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah — Mumbai Indians owner Akash Ambani walked over to Royal Challengers Bengaluru's table and shook hands. This happened after RCB chose not to play the Right-To-Match option for English batter Will Jacks, and MI got their man.

This was just one of the many intriguing calls over the two days surrounding the RTM rule that was brought back this year, but with a twist.

What is RTM?

Right-To-Match, as the name suggests, allows franchises to bring back a player they had released before the retention deadline. Every three years, there is a mega auction in the IPL that allows franchises to reset and level the playing field. The more successful teams have reportedly not been in favour of mega auctions because they want to retain as many players

as they can.

So, ahead of this year's auction, the league announced that the franchises could retain six players from their existing squad. This could be either via retention at fixed-price slabs or by using the RTM option at the auction. Teams tend to use RTM if they believe they can get a player cheaper than through their existing contracts.

How was it different this year?

The RTM was used at the mega auctions before IPL 2014 and IPL 2018, but scrapped before the 2022 edition. It made a comeback this year but with a modified clause. In the past, if the franchise used RTM after another team's successful bid for one of their released players, it was enough to sign them back. But this time, after a franchise used RTM, the highest bidder was allowed to name an improved one-time price, which the older franchise had to match or let the player go.

Ahead of the auctions, KKR and RR retained all six players, and so didn't have any RTM option available.

How did it play out early in the auction?

The modified RTM rule made for interesting dynamics, going both ways for franchises.

The very first player to be signed on Day 1 of the auction was through RTM. Punjab Kings had retained only two players ahead of the auction, so had four RTM options to use. So when Arshdeep Singh's name came up, with his rise in international cricket as India's foremost wicket-taker in this format, the bidding war was intense. First CSK and DC, then came GT. Later RCB, RR, and SRH. The winning bid was deemed to be SRH's Rs 15.75 crore. But PBKS played their RTM as expected, and it was SRH's turn to name a new price as per the new rule. SRH raised the amount to Rs 18 crore, and PBKS decided to match that and brought back their player. Interestingly though, PBKS could have easily retained Arshdeep at that price before the auction.

What happened with Will Jacks?

As mentioned at the start, when Will Jacks' name came up, there was a general expectation that RCB would use the RTM to bring back the English opener, who impressed in the 2024 edition with a century that drew admiration from Virat Kohli too. But when RCB said they weren't going to match MI's bid at Rs 5.25 crore, the Mumbai owners couldn't hide their happiness. So much so that Akash Ambani had to go thank RCB personally.

Were there RTMs that didn't work out?

Rishabh Pant's bidding war wasn't a surprise. Widely expected to be the most expensive purchase at these auctions, Pant generated serious interest, especially from LSG who eventually got the winning bid at Rs 20.75 crore. But there was a twist. When Pant was let go by Delhi Capitals, there were murmurs that he wasn't wholly happy with certain aspects of the management. But rather surprisingly, DC played the RTM option at Rs 20.75 crore. After a quick huddle, LSG owner Sanjeev Goenka decided to break the bank and gestured that the new price would be a whopping Rs 27 crore. The deal was sealed, in typical Pant style, with a maximum (increase of just Rs 6 crore) at the end.

How many RTMs were used finally?

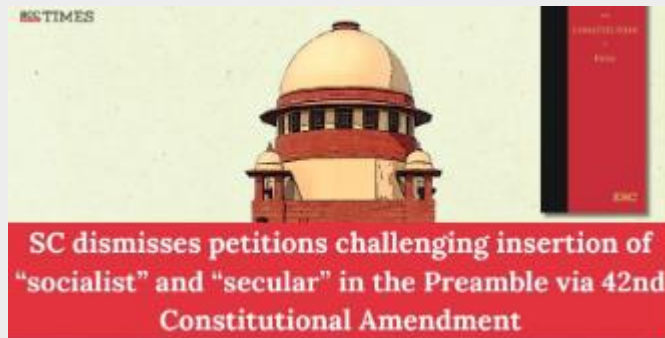
A total of 8 players were brought back by franchises using the RTM option. On Day 1, apart from Arshdeep Singh to PBKS, three other players saw the use of RTM. Australia's highly-rated aggressive opener Jake Fraser-McGurk came back to DC at Rs 9 crore. Uncapped Punjab player Naman Dhir, who impressed for Mumbai Indians in brief cameos, came back for Rs 5.25 crore. Rachin Ravindra was signed up once again by CSK at what could be seen as a steal at Rs 4 crore. On Day 2, Mukesh Kumar went to DC for Rs 8 crore, while GT got R Sai Kishore at Rs 2 crore. LSG played their RTM for WI pacer Shamar Joseph at his base price. RCB took Swapnil Singh back at Rs 50 lakh.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

2. How 'socialist' and 'secular' were inserted in the Preamble, why SC ruled they will stay

Introduction



Almost exactly 75 years since the Constitution of India was adopted, the Supreme Court recently upheld the insertion of the words 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble of the founding document.

Through the Constitution (Forty-Second Amendment) Act, 1976 (42nd

Amendment), Parliament during the Emergency enacted a sweeping series of amendments to the Constitution, one of which was labelling India a "SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC".

Though the Supreme Court has curbed some of the more controversial changes introduced through the 42nd amendment, it refused to interfere with the phrasing of the Preamble.

How did the Preamble as we know it today come into existence? And why did the court refuse to consider the challenges to how it is phrased?

History of the original Preamble

The preamble of the Constitution serves as a statement clarifying the guiding principles and purpose behind the Constitution of India. When the Constitution first came into force on January 26, 1950, the Preamble stated:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

The phrasing of the Preamble can be traced back to the first week of the Constituent Assembly debates on December 13, 1946. On this date, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru introduced the Objectives Resolution — a unanimously adopted 8-point "pledge" that provided the guiding principles for the drafting of the Constitution. Among other things, it declared the intent of the Constituent Assembly to proclaim India as an "Independent Sovereign Republic" and guaranteed equality before the law and safeguards for minorities.

During the debates, early attempts were made to introduce the concept of socialism into the Preamble of the Constitution. In October 1949, Constituent Assembly member Hasrat Mohani moved an amendment for the Preamble to instead begin with "We, The People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Union of Indian Socialistic Republics to be called U. I. S.R. on the lines of U. S. S. R.". However, this amendment was negated and the Preamble as we know it was adopted later that day.

These attempts were not confined to the Preamble. Earlier, in November 1948, Constituent Assembly member Professor K T Shah moved an amendment to Article 1(1) of the Constitution. Shah suggested that what is now "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States", should instead say "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Secular, Federalist, Socialist Union of States". The motion was eventually negated, but not before Assembly member H V Kamath also noted that the words secular and socialist "should find a place, if at all, only in the Preamble".

'Socialist' and 'secular' introduced

In the midst of the Emergency while the Indira Gandhi government was curbing civil liberties and jailing political opponents, Parliament enacted the 42nd Amendment. Often referred to as a 'mini-constitution' because of the sheer number of changes introduced, the 42nd Amendment greatly expanded the powers of the Centre.

Among a host of measures, it sought to immunise future amendments to the Constitution from being challenged in court by amending Article 368 (on the power and procedure to amend the Constitution) so long as the policies were implemented to give effect to any of the broad principles in Part IV of the the Constitution (Article 36-51).

The Preamble was not spared from these sweeping changes. The Amendment stated "for the words "SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC" the words "SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC" shall be substituted". This change was meant to "spell out expressly the high ideals of socialism, secularism and the integrity of the nation".

The Supreme Court struck down the aforementioned vast powers given to the Centre and Parliament in the case of *Minerva Mills v. Union of India* (1980), and the 43rd & 44th amendments further reversed several amendments. However, the amendment to the text of the Preamble remained, only to be challenged 44 years later in 2020.

The challenge to the Preamble

In July 2020, a Supreme Court advocate by the name of Dr. Balram Singh filed a petition challenging the inclusion of the words 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble of the Constitution. Later, former Law Minister Subramaniam Swamy and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay also filed petitions with similar challenges. They argued that the word 'secular' was deliberately excluded from the Constitution by its framers and that the word 'socialist' tied the Centre's hands when creating economic policies.

However, the court in a short 7-page order rejected these arguments, with Justices Sanjiv Khanna and P V Sanjay Kumar noting that "the flaws and weaknesses in the arguments are obvious and manifest."

When the Constitution was being drafted, the court noted that the meaning of the word secular was “considered imprecise” as some scholars had interpreted secularism as being opposed to religion. With time though, the court held that “India has developed its own interpretation of secularism, wherein the State neither supports any religion nor penalises the profession and practice of any faith”. The ideals espoused in the Preamble — fraternity, equality, individual dignity and liberty among others — “reflect this secular ethos”, the court held.

Similarly, the court held that the word ‘socialism’ has also evolved to have a unique meaning in India. It held that socialism refers to “(the) principle of economic and social justice, wherein the State ensures that no citizen is disadvantaged due to economic or social circumstances” and does not necessitate restrictions on the private sector which has “flourished, expanded, and grown over the years, contributing significantly to the upliftment of marginalized and underprivileged sections in different ways”.

The court also found that “The additions to the Preamble have not restricted or impeded legislations or policies pursued by elected governments, provided such actions did not infringe upon fundamental and constitutional rights or the basic structure of the Constitution” and held that there was no justification for challenging the 42nd amendment nearly 44 years after its enactment.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

3. India Rises to Top 50 in Network Readiness Index 2024

Improved Ranking and Score

India has climbed 11 positions to rank 49th in the Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2024,



INDIA
ENTERS TOP 50
IN NETWORK READINESS
INDEX 2024!

CLIMBS
11 RANKS TO
49TH POSITION

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1st rank** in AI Talent & ICT Services Exports
- 2nd rank** in FTTH Subscriptions & Mobile Internet Traffic
- 3rd rank** in Domestic Market Scale
- 4th rank** in Annual Investment in Telecommunication Services

compared to 60th in 2023. The report, released on November 21, 2024, evaluates 133 economies based on four pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact, encompassing 54 variables. India's score also improved from 49.93 in 2023 to 53.63 in 2024. The report has been published by the Portulans Institute, an independent non-profit research and educational institute based in Washington DC.

Key Achievements

India excels in several indicators:

- 1st rank: AI scientific publications, AI talent concentration, ICT services exports.
- 2nd rank: FTTH/building Internet subscriptions, mobile broadband traffic, international Internet bandwidth.
- 3rd rank: Domestic market scale.
- 4th rank: Annual investment in telecommunication services.

Performance Among Peer Economies

In the lower-middle-income group, India is ranked 2nd, trailing only Vietnam. The report highlights India's strengths in technological innovation and digital transformation.

Growth in Telecommunications Sector

India's rise in the NRI reflects significant advancements in telecommunications:

- Tele-density: Increased from 75.2% to 84.69% in the last decade.
- Wireless connections: Surged to 119 crore.
- Broadband expansion: Internet subscribers grew from 25.1 crore to 94.4 crore, with significant growth in rural areas.

Key reforms such as spectrum management, ease of doing business, and consumer protection have further boosted the sector.

Leap in Global Broadband Speeds

Since launching 5G services in 2022, India's global mobile broadband speed ranking improved from 118th to 15th.

Future Goals

India aims to position itself as a leader in telecom innovation with the Bharat 6G Vision, investments in emerging technologies, and a strong focus on digital infrastructure. These efforts underscore India's commitment to becoming a global digital powerhouse.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: PIB