Maldives Declares Political Emergency

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- While the Supreme Court has ordered the release of many jailed opposition leaders, Maldives government has openly refused to comply.
\n
- Contrarily, it has declared a state of emergency for 15 days, and government forces have also taken over the Supreme Court complex.
\n

\n\n

What were the fallouts?

\n\n

\n
- The recently political storm started by the Supreme Court's surprise verdict to release some opposition leaders has been spiralling out of control.
\n
- The government has been openly refusing to comply and has started repressive action against opposing voices.
\n
- **Emergency -** President Abdulla's Yameen declared a state of emergency in Maldives, which is the 2nd such declaration since he came to power in 2013.
\n
- The 1st was in 2015, when an alleged attempt on Yameen's life seemed to have warranted such a declaration.
\n
- The president has clarified that while certain rights will be restricted, general movements, services and businesses will not be affected.
\n
- **Gayoom's Arrest –** Former President Moumoon Abdul Gayoom, who reigned for 30 years till democracy was established in 2008, was also arrested.
\n
- Notably, 80 year old Gayoom is the half brother of Yameen and of late, he has openly sided with the dissenting opposition for toppling the government.
\n

- Also, troops stormed the Supreme Court premises and taken procession.
\n
- **Parliament Suspended -** The President is required to inform the Parliament about the declaration of emergency within two days.
\n
- But to circumvent this, Yameen has suspended the parliament indefinitely.
\n
- Notably, as the Supreme Court had also restored 12 MPs who had defected from Mr. Yameen's party, the majority is effectively with the opposition.
\n
- This thereby increases the vulnerability of the president to be subjected to impeachment in the 85-member parliament.
\n

\n\n

How has the reactions been?

\n\n

\n
- Restricting fundamental freedoms and suspending of the Supreme Court can only happen during martial law, and is illegal in the current situation.
\n
- Hence, opposition leaders have voiced that emergency was a blatant violation and an indication of Mr. Yameen’s desperation to hold on to power.
\n
- They’ve appealed to the masses to demonstrate against these actions and the international community has also largely criticised Mr. Yameen’s actions.
\n

\n\n

What are the options for India?

\n\n

\n
- **Histroic Prespective -** India has committed itself to the principle of “non-intervention” in the internal affairs of other countires country.
\n
- It is also strongly against external strings in its domestic politics and has regularly criticised western powers for interventions in developing countries.
\n
- But despite this, India has made multiple interventions in its neighbourhood when pressing concerns have called for such action.
\n
- The Bangaladesh liberation of 1971, Sri Lankan intervention in the late

1980s, and more recently, in shaping the Nepali constitution are some examples.
\n

- **Maldivian Case -** When the former president Nasheed was ousted from office in a coup in 2012, India had backed him strongly.
\n
- But the subsequent rise of Nasheed's nemesis and the current president Yameen, India was forced to recalibrate its stands.
\n
- This was partly due to Yameen's strong Islamic diplomacy with the Arab world and his ties with China which is backed by high-profile infrastructure projects.
\n
- **Current Situation -** Yameen is currently looking towards China to secure his position, despite mounting international pressure.
\n
- Hence, India has the option to either remain neutral or put its weight delicately behind the opposition to rally for a regime change.
\n
- While the former is the safer option, an intervention can be beneficial but would inherently invite the ire of China and holds with it the risk of failure.
\n
- India needs to make its move after weighing all the stakes involved.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

