Pakistan’s SRO listing

Why in news?

Pakistan Foreign Affairs Ministry (MFA) issued a Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) listing recently.

What is SRO listing?

- This SRO lists 88 fugitive terrorists, which Dawood Ibrahim and the LeT’s Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi..
- The SRO directed its officials to implement the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) committee resolutions against them.
- It directed the officials to ensure that everyone on the list does not have access to funding, arms or travel.

What does Pakistan deny?

- Pakistan’s MFA denied that the SRO listing was new.
- The listing had UNSC and Interpol information on at least five Pakistani passports and three Karachi addresses that belonged to Dawood.
- [Dawood - The former underworld don and the accused mastermind of Mumbai’s 1993 blasts.]
- However, the MFA says that the SRO did not imply an admission that he lives there.
- Instead, it argues that the move was a routine one, as a part of Pakistan’s international commitments.
- Pakistan is required to align its domestic terror listings with those issued by the UNSC’s ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee.

Does Pakistan’s domestic listing align with the international ones?

- The domestic listing is maintained under the country’s Anti-Terrorism Act by the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA).
- Thus far, the domestic list had not included either Dawood or Lakhvi.
- [Lakhvi was tried for the 26/11 attacks but was granted bail in 2014.]
- In contrast, LeT chief Hafiz Saeed and JeM chief Masood Azhar, who were designated by the UNSC in 2019, were added to the domestic list.

What are the confusions?

- The MFA claims that the listing that included Dawood and Lakhvi had been issued earlier.
- This is a claim that is countered by India, which says this is a first.
- The confusion over the SRO and Pakistan's disclaimer says that its government lacks a seriousness of purpose when it comes to its actions against all terrorists.

What are some questions?

- If the SRO had named these terrorists in past orders, there is a question why they were not added to its domestic listing.
- If it has included Dawood in its own SRO, then for the MFA to say it is paying lip service to the FATF directives, is a matter of concern.
- Finally, there is a question whether Pakistan has done anything to investigate, prosecute and apprehend these listed terrorists.

Is Pakistan obligated to answer these questions?

- In October 2020, Pakistan is expected to face some of these questions at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary session.
- This FATF session will decide if its actions,
    1. Merit a reprieve from the grey or "increased monitoring" list, or
    2. Downgrade it to the black or "high-risk jurisdiction" list.
- If downgraded, Pakistan will have to face sanctions.
- So, Pakistan needs to show proof of its actions on the ground, rather than going back and forth on the paperwork.

Source: The Hindu

Quick Facts

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- Headquartered in Paris, the FATF was set up by the G7 countries in 1989.
- **Objective** - FATF acts as an international watchdog on issues of money laundering and financing of terrorism.
- It is empowered to curtail financing of UN-designated terrorist groups.
- It is to limit the concerned countries from sourcing financial flows internationally and thereby constraining them economically.
- **Members** - FATF has 39 members, which comprise 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations.

- India became a full member in 2010.

