

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS
(DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS)
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No- 5
ANSWERED ON-29/01/2026

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR AIFF

5. SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ₹25 crore emergency funding pool with AIFF contributing ₹14 crore for ISL and ₹3.2 crore for I-League is sustainable, or merely temporary relief;

(b) whether Government has earned ₹11 crore in taxes from footballer Lionel Messi's recent visit, while Messi was paid ₹89 crore, totalling ₹100 crore expenditure, and whether such spending on foreign player appearances is justified when Indian football leagues lack commercial partners and domestic players face unemployment; and

(c) the long-term structural reforms planned to prevent future league suspensions and ensure financial sustainability?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

(DR. MANSUKH MANDAVIYA)

(a) Promotion of specific sports discipline is the responsibility of the concerned National Sports Federation (NSF). For promotion and development of sport of Football at national level, the Government has recognized All India Football Federation (AIFF) as the NSF. The Indian Super League (ISL) is a franchisee based league set up by AIFF. AIFF has informed that participation fees ranging between ₹12 – 18 crore a year, paid by individual participating clubs based on their respective cities. AIFF has informed that pursuant to the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, a Supreme Court-monitored committee oversaw the process for onboarding a new commercial partner. The process continued until 09.11.2025, however, no bids were received.

AIFF has further informed that since football in India must remain aligned with Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) calendars, the loss of seven crucial months between April and December 2025 severely impacted the sport as also affected the National Men's League pyramid, its continuity, and players' livelihoods, ultimately undermining the performance of the National Team.

To ensure the continuity of football, as a temporary measure, the AIFF has proposed a truncated league for this season, ensuring that India does not lose an entire year of competitive football. The proposed truncated league will feature 14 teams, with a budget of Rs. 24.60 crore for the ISL. The franchise fee structure for both the ISL and I-League is designed to cover central operating budgets with a contribution from AIFF of Rs. 9.70 crore for the ISL and Rs. 3.20 crore for the I-League, respectively.

(b) Footballer Lionel Messi's recent visit to India was a private event with no involvement from the AIFF. As this Ministry had no role in visit of footballer Lionel Messi, the Ministry does not have any information regarding expenditure incurred on the visit of the footballer.

(c) The AIFF's competition structures are in accordance with the AFC and FIFA. AIFF has conducted nearly 1700 matches in the last year across 21 competitions. At present AIFF has 3,67,667 players registered in Centralised Registration System (CRS) and they all come under Competitions Structure. AIFF has long-term framework, in line with global best practices, to ensure the financial sustainability of the League over the next 20 years.
