



2025:DHC:9515



\$~3 to 6

* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

% **Date of Decision: 29.10.2025**

+ W.P.(C) 12805/2023 & CM APPL. 62692/2025

MAHARASHTRA CARROM ASSOCIATIONPetitioner
Through: Mr. Aseem Mehrotra and Ms.
Deeksha Mehrotra, Advs.
Mob: 9811062351
Email: mehrotra.aseem@yahoo.co.in

versus

UNION OF INDIA AND ANR.Respondents
Through: Mr. Arnav Kumar, Mr. Adit Garg and
Mr. Keshav Mittal, Advocates for R-2
Mob: 9718126921
Mr. Atif Suhrawardy and Mr. Pankaj
Kumar, Advs. for AICF.
Mob: 9667075656
Email: pkj5646@gmail.com

4

+ W.P.(C) 17077/2024 & CM APPL. 62697/2025

UNION TERRITORY PONDICHERY CARROM
ASSOCIATIONPetitioner
Through: Mr. Aseem Mehrotra and Ms.
Deeksha Mehrotra, Advs.
Mob: 9811062351
Email: mehrotra.aseem@yahoo.co.in

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ANR.Respondents
Through: Mr. Arnav Kumar, Mr. Adit Garg and
Mr. Keshav Mittal, Advocates for R-1
Mob: 9718126921
Mr. Atif Suhrawardy and Mr. Pankaj
Kumar, Advs. for AICF.



2025:DHC:9515



Mob: 9667075656

Email: pkj5646@gmail.com

5

+

W.P.(C) 3099/2025 & CM APPL. 62689/2025

RAVI KUMAR

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Aseem Mehrotra and Ms. Deeksha Mehrotra, Advs.

Mob: 9811062351

Email: mehrotra.aseem@yahoo.co.in

versus

UNION OF INDIA THROUGH SECRETARY MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS & ORS.Respondents

Through: Mr. Atif Suhrawardy and Mr. Pankaj Kumar, Advs. for AICF.

Mob: 9667075656

Email: pkj5646@gmail.com

6

+

W.P.(C) 8665/2025 & CM APPL. 62545/2025

MAHARASHTRA CARROM ASSOCIATION

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Aseem Mehrotra and Ms. Deeksha Mehrotra, Advs.

Mob: 9811062351

Email: mehrotra.aseem@yahoo.co.in

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Udit Dedhiya, SPC with Ms. Apurva Sachdeva, Advocate for UOI

Mob: 9619444355

Email: uditdedhiyaoffice@gmail.com

Mr. Atif Suhrawardy and Mr. Pankaj Kumar, Advs. for AICF.

Mob: 9667075656

Email: pkj5646@gmail.com



2025:DHC:9515



CORAM:
HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE MINI PUSHKARNA
MINI PUSHKARNA, J. (ORAL):

1. The present batch of writ petitions have been filed *inter alia* seeking directions for quashing the elections result of respondent no. 1-All India Carrom Federation ("AICF").
2. Further, there is a prayer for direction to the respondent no. 1-AICF not to use the title 'India' or 'Indian'.
3. During the course of arguments, attention of this Court has been drawn to the letter dated 17th December, 2024 issued by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, wherein, it is stated as follows:

File No: 81-01/2023/SP-I
Government of India
Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
Room No. 718, A-Wing,
Shastri Bhawan, , New Delhi

To

Dated: 17/12/2024

Shri S. Ravi
5, Tharikara St.
Karmani Kuppan,
Puducherry.
605004

Registration Number : MOYAS/R/P/24/00191

Dear Sir/Madam

I am to refer to your Request for Information under RTI Act 2005, received vide letter dated 28/10/2024 and to say that *Point No.1: Ministry has not recognized any federation for the sport of Carrom.*
Point No.2: The Information for point No. 2 of your RTI application is available on website of DOPT at following web link: <https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Incentives%20to%20Sportspersons%20Information%20document.pdf>
Point No.3: The election conducted by AICF is not in accordance with the Sports Code 2011.
Point No.4: No information is available with the CPIO..

In case, you want to go for an appeal in connection with the information provided, you may appeal to the Appellate Authority indicated below within *thirty days* from the date of receipt of this letter.

Bangararaju V.V.K.K. Thatavarthi Dir, (SP-I)
FAA & Director
Address: J.L.N. Stadium, Lodhi Road New Delhi
Phone No.: 24362942

Yours faithfully
Surendra
17/12/24
(Surendra Yadav, US (SP-I))
CPIO & Under Secretary
Phone No.: 23385460
Email : surendra.yadav@nic.in



4. Perusal of the aforesaid letter clearly shows that the Government of India has categorically stated in the aforesaid letter that Ministry has not recognized any federation for the sport of carrom.
5. This Court also takes note of the submission made by learned counsel appearing for Union of India (“UOI”) that the UOI does not recognize AICF as a National Sports Federation. Thus, as per the stand of UOI, the status of AICF is that of a private body.
6. This Court further notes the short affidavit filed on behalf of UOI, which is reproduced as under:

“xxx xxx xxx

5. It is submitted that, the elections of the Respondent No.2/ All India Carrom Federation (*hereinafter referred to as ‘AICF’*) for the term 2018-2022 was taken on record by the Respondent No.2 vide letter No. 21-2/2018-SP-III dated 17.01.2020. Further, the recognition of the Respondent No.1/AICF was also renewed vide afore-stated letter dated 17.01.2020 however, the same was conditional and subject to the outcome of the pending C.S (OS) No. 576/2018 titled as

“*Haryana Carrom Association & Ors. Vs. All India Carrom Federation & Ors.*” filed before the Hon’ble High Court of Delhi. True copy of letter dated 17.01.2020 is annexed herewith as **Annexure R-1/1**.

6. It is submitted that, since, the above-stated Civil suit was decreed vide Judgment & decree dated 06.04.2023 whereby the elections of the Respondent No.2/AICF as held on 18.11.2018 as well as Electoral college published on 04.11.2018 were declared as illegal and thus, the elections as held on 18.11.2018 was set aside by the said Judgment/Decree and accordingly, the Hon’ble High Court directed for holding fresh elections of the Respondent No.2/AICF. True copy of Judgment & Decree dated 06.04.2023 is annexed herewith as **Annexure R-1/2**.



7. It is apposite to mention herein that, vide letter dated 07.12.2020 issued by the Respondent No.1, it intimated to the Respondent No.2/AICF that the matter regarding renewal of its annual recognition was examined and after perusal of the Electoral College of the elections as held on 18.11.2018 of the Respondent No.1/AICF, it was observed that the Respondent No.2/AICF is having two units in the State of Maharashtra viz. Maharashtra Carrom Association and Vidarbha Carrom Association and voting rights were given to members of these units and also members from the unite of Maharashtra Carrom Association and Vidarbha Carrom Association also have been elected during the said elections, which is against One State One Unit principle of National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 (*hereinafter referred to as "Sports Code"*).
8. It is submitted that, thus, the elections of the candidates elected from Maharashtra Carrom Association and Vidarbha Carrom Association units were not accepted. Further, the Respondent No.2/AICF was advised to ask candidates elected as Office bearer or for any other position from Maharashtra Carrom Association and Vidarbha Carrom Association units to demit office immediately under intimation to the Respondent No.1. Accordingly, it was intimated to the Respondent No.2/AICF that action for renewal of recognition will be taken thereafter. True copy of letter dated 07.12.2020 is annexed herewith as **Annexure R-1/3**.
9. It is submitted that, in compliance of the Judgment and decree dated 06.04.2023, the Ld. Returning officer viz., Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.S Chauhan (Retd.) appointed by the Respondent No.2/AICF published the Election notification on 01.08.2023 for holding elections of the Executive Committee of the Respondent No.2/AICF for the term 2023-2027. The Returning officer accordingly conducted the Elections to the Executive Committee (EC) of the Respondent No.2/AICF for the term 2023-2027 on 27.08.2023. True copy of election report dated 30.08.2023 of the R.O is annexed herewith as **Annexure R-1/4**.



10. It is submitted that, it has been alleged by the Petitioner association herein that when the elections process of Respondent No.2/AICF were ongoing, no invite was sent to eight (8) State Associations including the Petitioner Association which were included in the Electoral College (FORM-I) of 2012 to fill up the nominations form for being included in Electoral College (2023-2027) of the Respondent No.2/AICF. It has also been alleged that the Respondent No.2 issued nomination paper to two Units with one voting right in State of Maharashtra to Maharashtra Carrom Association and Vidarbha Carrom Association. Further, it has also been alleged that the R.O also accepted nomination paper in violation of age and tenure restriction as provided in Sports Code

and that no observer from Respondent No. 1/Ministry was present when elections were held on 27.08.2023 for the term 2023-2027.

11. It is pertinent to mention herein that, from a bare perusal of the report of the returning officer dated 30.08.2023 it is quite evident that representatives namely Sh. Arun Kedar from Maharashtra Carrom Association and Sh. Prabhjeet Singh Bachher from Vidarbha Carrom Association haven been included in the Electoral College (FORM-I) and accordingly have been given voting rights in the elections of the Respondent No.1/AICF which is in clear violation of provisions of one State one Unit as provided in *Clause 3.10* of the Guidelines for recognition of National Sports Federations (NSFs) enshrined in the Sports Code. Clause 3.10 provides as under:-

Clause 3.10:-

At the National level, there will be only one recognised federation for each discipline of sport. Only the duly recognised National Sports Federation would be entitled to financial grants as admissible. Only one State/UT Association from each State/UT shall be admitted as a member of the Federation, provided it has a minimum of 50% of the District level Associations affiliated to it. Any organisation of an all India standing and connected with the Sport may be given the status as that of a State or that of a U.T and admitted as affiliated Member. Other categories of membership may also be given, but while each affiliated State/UT Unit shall have a right to cast vote in the General Body Meetings, no other class of Member(s) shall have any right to vote, in the Federation's meetings. While granting recognition/affiliation to a State /UT Association, the National Federation should take into consideration the representative character of the State/UT Association so as to ensure that only truly representative body of the game gets the recognition/affiliation.

12. It is submitted that, thus, it would be seen that the formation of Electoral College (Form-I) for the elections of the Respondent



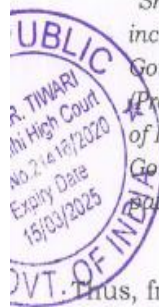
No.2/AICF for the term 2023-2027 held on 27.08.2023 was not in accordance with the provisions of the Sports Code.

13. It is submitted in respect of affiliation of State associations with the Respondent No.2/AICF that, as per List-II of 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India "Sports" is a State subject. Sports being a State subject, sports development up-to State Level and reforms in the State/UT associations registered under the relevant laws of the States/UT's comes within the purview of the States. Further, it is submitted that, it would not be out of place to mention that the Respondent No.1 does not interfere into the elections process of the NSFs let alone an un-recognized Federation/Sport association and the Respondent No.1 also does not have any role in the inclusion of any State association in the Electoral College (Form-1) of the concerned NSF as the same is within the purview of the Returning officer.

14. In respect of use of the expression "India" or "Indian" by the Respondent No.2/AICF is concerned, it is submitted that Clause 3.6 of the Sports Code provides as under:-

Clause 3.6 (ii):-

"Shall not be allowed to use the word India in its name since inclusion of the word India suggests the patronage of Government of India. (Reference: The Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950 which prohibits the use of India in the name of any entity without prior approval of the Government, as it may suggest or be construed to suggest the patronage of the Government)"



Thus, from a bare perusal of the above Clause 3.6(ii) of the Sports Code, it is evident that unrecognized Federation/factional sports bodies cannot in any manner use the word/expression "India" or "India" in their title, logos, letter heads etc. Further, the Respondent No.1 vide letter dated 16.10.2018 has issued specific



directives that the Federation which are de-recognized by the Govt. of India, sports bodies not recognized by the Govt. of India or sports bodies whose recognition has been withdrawn/suspended shall not use the expression "India" or "Indian" and the said expression can only and only be used by the recognized National Sports Federation. True copy of letter dated 16.10.2018 is annexed herewith as **Annexure R-1/5**.

15. It is pertinent to mention herein that, it has been the firm view of the Respondent No.1 that the Model Election Guidelines along with the prescribed Forms as provided in the Sports Code as well as subsequent guidelines issued by the Respondent No.1 from time to time are to be adhered while conducting Elections and further, it is also to be ensured that the said Elections should be free fair and transparent.

16. It is submitted that, the Respondent No. 1 craves leave of the Hon'ble High Court to file detailed affidavit in the instant petition as and when directed by the Hon'ble Court.

xxx xxx xxx"

7. Perusal of the aforesaid affidavit of UOI clearly shows that the recognition of AICF has not been renewed by the UOI primarily on the ground that the AICF was not following 'one state one unit principle' as envisaged under Clause 3.10 of *Annexure II* of National Sports Code.

8. This Court also takes note of the stand of UOI that as per Clause 3.6(ii) of the Sport Code, the expression 'India' or 'Indian' cannot be used without the prior approval of the Government of India.

9. Thus, since the AICF is an unrecognized federation, it cannot use the word/expression 'India' or 'Indian' in their title, logos, letterheads etc.

10. Considering the submissions made before this Court, it is manifest that AICF cannot be considered as a National Sports Federation as per the submission made on behalf of UOI, in the absence of renewal of recognition



of the AICF. Therefore, it becomes apparent that the AICF is a private entity/body.

11. This Court also takes note of the submission made by learned counsel appearing for AICF that the said entity sends teams to various sporting events internationally, wherein, the teams represents the country.

12. This Court further takes note of the submission made by learned counsel appearing for AICF that with respect to the sport of carrom, it is only the AICF which sends teams to various parts of the world.

13. Accordingly, considering the fact that AICF is a private body as of now, in the absence of renewal of its recognition by the UOI, it is directed that AICF shall change its name in order to delete the word 'India' from its nomenclature.

14. Further, whenever any team is sent by the AICF, which shall be sent only with its changed/amended name, the said federation shall specify that the team is from India and shall not portray the team as the Indian Team, which is recognized by the Government of India.

15. Considering the fact that the AICF was earlier recognized by the UOI, liberty is granted to the said entity to make a representation to the UOI for the purposes of its recognition as a National Sport Federation.

16. In case such a representation is made by the said entity, i.e., AICF (with changed name for the time being), the said representation shall be duly considered by the UOI. The said Carrom Federation shall comply with all the directions as may be issued by UOI with regard to grant of recognition.

17. In case, the UOI is satisfied with the various compliances made by the said Carrom Federation, the UOI may proceed to grant recognition to the Carrom Federation, in accordance with law, and after following the due



procedure.

18. Further, it is directed that the said Carrom Federation shall not use the expression 'India' or 'Indian' in any manner either in its name or any logo etc. or in the competitions conducted by them.

19. However, liberty is granted to the Carrom Federation to use the expression 'Team from India', in order to show that the representation is from the country India.

20. As regards the election of the Carrom Federation, this Court has not gone into the said issue on account of the categorical stand of UOI that the Carrom Federation is not a recognized National Sports Federation.

21. With the aforesaid directions, the present writ petitions, along with the pending applications, are accordingly disposed of.

22. The next date of 21st November, 2025 stands cancelled.

MINI PUSHKARNA, J

OCTOBER 29, 2025

Ak