



2025:DHC:11405



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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**% **Date of Decision: 15.12.2025**+ **W.P.(C) 18957/2025**

DELHI HOCKEY

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. D. N. Goburdhan, Sr. Advocate
along with Mr. Hemant Phalpher and
Mr. Rohit Pal, Advocates.

versus

HOCKEY INDIA

.....Respondent

Through: Ms. Shyel Trehan, Sr. Advocate along
with Mr. Rohan Poddar, Mr. Raghav
Anand and Mr. Shubham Kathuri,
Advocates.**CORAM:****HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SACHIN DATTA****SACHIN DATTA, J. (ORAL)****CM APPL.78944/2025 (Exemption)**

1. Allowed, subject to all just exceptions.
2. Application stands disposed of.

W.P.(C) 18957/2025 and CM APPL.78945/2025

3. The present petition has been filed by the petitioner / Delhi Hockey, a recognized State Federation and a member unit of Hockey India since 13.10.2014, being aggrieved by a Show Cause Notice (SCN) dated 31.07.2025 and a Hearing Notice dated 17.11.2025 issued by the respondent/ Hockey India.
4. The impugned SCN dated 31.07.2025 was issued pursuant to the orders dated 17.07.2025 and 25.07.2025, passed by this Court in W.P.(C)



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10079/2025.

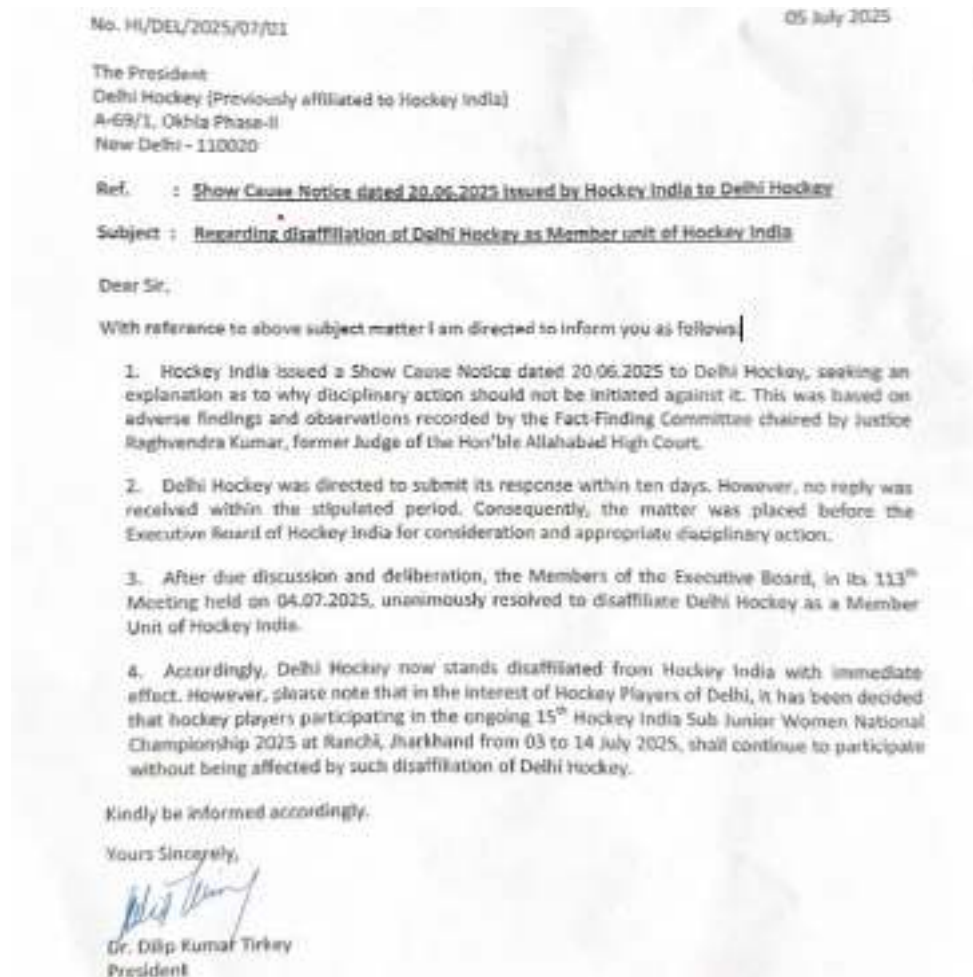
5. The order dated 17.07.2025 reads as under:

“W.P.(C) 10079/2025 and CM APPL.41837/2025 (Stay)”

3. The present petition has been filed by the petitioner/Delhi Hockey, a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, which functions as the State Sports Association for the sport of Hockey in Delhi. It is submitted that the petitioner has been affiliated with the Hockey India on account of its status as a recognised State Federation since 13.10.2014.

4. The petitioner is aggrieved by an order dated 05.07.2025, issued by the President of ‘Hockey India’, whereby the petitioner has been sought to be disaffiliated from ‘Hockey India’ with immediate effect. It is submitted that the same will have a deleterious effect on the sport of hockey in Delhi, in view of the petitioner’s status as a duly recognised State Federation.

5. The impugned order dated 05.07.2025 reads as under:-



6. Broadly, four contentions have been raised by learned senior counsel for the petitioner.



7. Firstly, it is submitted that the impugned order has not been preceded by any show cause notice specifically stating that the petitioner is sought to be disaffiliated from Hockey India. In this regard, it is submitted that paragraph-1 of the impugned order wrongly records that a show cause notice dated 20.06.2025 was issued to the petitioner. It is submitted that no show cause notice whatsoever was submitted to the petitioner putting it on notice that the petitioner is sought to be disaffiliated from Hockey India. It is vehemently contended that the impugned order has been issued without any prior notice whatsoever, and virtually comes as a bolt from the blue for the petitioner.

8. Secondly, it is submitted that the President of 'Hockey India', who has issued the impugned order, has no authority to do so. It is submitted that, in terms of the Constitution of the Hockey India, it is only the 'Congress' that has the power to take decisions regarding the admission of any organisation eligible for affiliation under the Constitution. Necessarily, if State association that has been duly admitted by the 'Congress' is to be disaffiliated, the decision in this regard is to be taken by the 'Congress', and not by any office bearer of the Executive Committee, be it the President. In this regard, specific reliance is placed on Article 5 of the Constitution of Hockey India which reads as under: -

5. POWERS, FUNCTIONS & DUTIES

5.1. Congress

5.1.1. To formulate the policy and principle on which the function of the Society will be carried out.

5.1.2. To carry into effect the object of the Society.

5.1.3. To hold Election of the Office Bearers and Executive members every four year as defined in 1.25 in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Society.

5.1.4. To admit membership of any organization eligible for affiliation under the Constitution

5.1.5. To take decision regarding continuing/ discontinuing its affiliation with any other organization.

9. Thirdly, it is submitted that there was no occasion for even the Executive Committee of Hockey India to consider the matter. It is pointed out that in the meeting of the Executive Committee scheduled on 04.07.2025, the disaffiliation of the petitioner was not even included as an agenda item.

10. Lastly, it is submitted that the impugned order is wholly unreasoned as it does not even disclose what is the ground/reason for which the petitioner has been sought to be disaffiliated.

11. Issue notice.

12. Learned counsel, as aforesaid, accepts notice on behalf of the respondents.



13. Let reply be filed within a period of four weeks from today. Rejoinder thereto, if any, be filed within a period of two weeks thereafter.

14. Learned counsel for the respondent controverts the submission of learned senior counsel for the petitioner that no show cause notice was issued to the petitioner prior to issuance of impugned order. He specifically submits that a show cause notice dated 20.06.2025 was specifically given to the petitioner, putting the petitioner to notice as regards the disaffiliation action proposed against the petitioner.

15. He further seeks to contend that the Executive Board of the Hockey India has the power to take the decision to disaffiliate the petitioner. In this regard, he relies upon paragraph 5.2.5 of the Constitution of the Hockey India. The said provision reads as under:-

5.2.5 To decide cases of indiscipline/ misconduct/ protest/ Breach of regulation by the affiliated member or any individual and impose suitable penalty subject to his right to appeal to the Congress.

16. Prima facie, there is merit in the contention of learned senior counsel for the petitioner that a decision regarding disaffiliation of the petitioner could have been taken only by the 'Congress' of 'Hockey India'. The affiliation or disaffiliation of a constituent body is an aspect which arises for consideration of the 'Congress' under Article 5 of the Constitution of matter. The same cannot be equated with any action to be taken against any affiliated member for indiscipline/ misconduct etc. It is undisputed that the affiliation/ admission of the petitioner with Hockey India was pursuant to a decision ultimately taken by the Congress of Hockey India. Necessarily, the decision to disaffiliate a constituent member must also be taken by the 'Congress'. No office bearer (including the President) or even the Executive Board could have taken such a decision without the matter having been placed before the Congress, especially considering the wide ramifications of such a decision on the sport of hockey in the State of Delhi.

17. Also, it does appear from the agenda for the meeting dated 04.07.2025 that the proposed disaffiliation of the petitioner was not included as one of the agenda item.

18. Further, a perusal of the impugned order reveals that the same is completely unreasoned. It does not provide any inkling as to the reason/s for which the petitioner has been sought to be disaffiliated. Even assuming that the show cause notice referred to the reasons for such disaffiliation, there is no justification or rationale for the final order to be completely non-speaking.

19. In the circumstances, till the next date of hearing, the impugned order dated 05.07.2025 shall remain stayed. There shall also be an interim order in terms of prayer c, d and e¹ of CM APPL.-41837/2025.

¹ c. ad-interim direction be passed to Hockey India to restore the online portal and email of Delhi Hockey which has been blocked/ deactivated by Hockey India on 5.7.2025; and



20. Further, Hockey India is also directed to ensure that there shall be no difficulty in participation of athletes from Delhi in any international/ national/ state level sporting event in the field of Hockey.
21. List on 28.10.2025.”

The order dated 25.07.2025 reads as under:

“W.P.(C) 10079/2025 and CM APPL.44640/2025 (seeking modification of order dated 17.07.2025)

3. The present application has been filed by the applicant/ respondent seeking modification of the order dated 17.07.2025, on the averment that the said order was passed in light of erroneous submissions on behalf of the petitioner which, according to the applicant/respondent, are inconsistent with the factual position.

4. After some hearing, with consent of respective counsel, the present petition is disposed of in following terms:

(i) the impugned letter dated 05.07.2025, issued by the President of Hockey India, (purporting to disaffiliate the petitioner) is set aside.

(ii) the respondent – Hockey India, through its Secretary General shall be at liberty to issue a fresh Show Cause Notice (SCN) to the petitioner, specifically putting it to notice as to any proposed ‘disaffiliation’ action and the reasons thereof. It is submitted that the said notice shall be given within a period of one week from today. The notice shall be served on the petitioner through its President, Hitesh Sindhwani and also through the counsel appearing for the petitioner in these proceedings.

(iii) the petitioner shall respond to the aforesaid notice within a period of two weeks from the date of receipt thereof.

(iv) the respondent shall be at liberty to pass a reasoned order after considering the reply on behalf of the petitioner, in accordance with the Constitution of the respondent and other applicable laws/regulations, under intimation to the petitioner.

5. The petition, as also pending applications, stand disposed of, in the above terms.

6. Needless to say, in case the petitioner is aggrieved with the outcome of the aforesaid exercise, it shall be entitled to avail its remedies, in accordance with law.

7. The date fixed i.e. 28.10.2025 stands cancelled.”

d. ad-interim direction to Hockey India to release all grants to Delhi Hockey India which have been deliberately withheld by Hockey India for the year 2024-2025; and

e. ad-interim direction be passed to allow the Petitioner to participate in all General Body meetings of Hockey India being its full voting permanent member including the General body meeting scheduled to be held on 27.7.2025 in terms of the Notice issued by Hockey India on 5.7.2025 (Annexure R of the Writ Petition); and



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6. Learned senior counsel for the petitioner has raised the following contentions:

(i) The SCN dated 31.07.2025 is not in consonance with the directions contained in the order dated 25.07.2025. It is submitted that the said SCN contains various statements which reveal a pre-determined mind set to take adverse action against the petitioner. Specific attention is also drawn to the following paragraph of the SCN:

“There are also several other allegations which, although not detailed herein, strike at the core of structural, operational, and financial misconduct by Delhi Hockey. These acts and omissions would constitute grave violations of the various provisions of Constitution of Hockey India including violation of Clause 2.4.2, Clause 2.4.3, 2.4.6 and its Code of Conduct and are deemed to be seriously detrimental to the growth, governance, and integrity of hockey in the National Capital Territory.”

It is contended that the above paragraph shows that the SCN is predicated on allegations which have not even been set out in the SCN thereby rendering it impossible for the petitioner to meaningfully respond thereto.

(ii) The SCN has not been adjudicated by the Secretary General who issued the same. It is submitted that even prior to adjudication of the SCN, a hearing notice dated 17.11.2025 was issued to the petitioner.

The said hearing notice reads as under:

“17 November 2025

Email: hitesh@ramcommunication.co.in

Mr. Hitesh Sindhwani
President
Delhi Hockey (Regd.)
A-69/1, Okhla Phase-II
New Delhi-110020

Sub: Personal Hearing before the Affiliation Committee of Hockey India pursuant to Order dated 25.07.2025 in W.P.(C) No. 10079/2025



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Dear Sir,

This communication is being issued in continuation of the proceedings arising from the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi dated 25.07.2025 in W.P.(C) 10079/2025, wherein Hockey India was granted liberty to issue a fresh Show Cause Notice specifically with respect to any proposed disaffiliation action.

Pursuant to the said directions, Hockey India issued a Show Cause Notice dated 31.07.2025, to which you submitted your response on 17.08.2025.

You are hereby provided an opportunity to appear before the Affiliation Committee in terms of the above Order and the Show Cause Notice, to show cause as to why the Committee ought not to recommend your disaffiliation.

Accordingly, you are requested to appear before the Affiliation Committee of Hockey India as per the details below:

Date : 24 November 2025

Time : 11:00 AM

***Venue : Office of Hockey India,
B1/E14, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Estate,
Mathura Road, New Delhi – 110044***

In the event that the above date or time is not convenient for you, you may kindly contact Ms. Ranjit Gill, Director, Hockey India, Phone: +91 97172 68282, Email: ranjit.gill@hockeyindia.org, within 48 (forty eight) hours of receipt of this communication, to discuss an alternative time slot that may be mutually workable.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of this communication and confirm your attendance.

Yours Sincerely,

-sd-

***Bhola Nath Singh
Secretary General***

It is submitted that issuance of the aforesaid notice, without adjudication of the SCN again reveals a pre-determined mind set. It is further submitted that although the hearings were scheduled to be held before the affiliation committee, it is the Secretary General who had issued the notice. No direct notice has been issued by the affiliation committee to the petitioner.

(iii) The Affiliation Committee has no power to disaffiliate a member



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unit. Attention is drawn to Clause-5.1.5² of the Constitution of Hockey India to contend that only the Congress is vested the power to disaffiliate a member / affiliated organization.

(iv) Lastly, it is contended that none of the circumstances, contemplated under Clause-2.4 of the Constitution of Hockey India are attracted to the facts of the present case so as to warrant any disaffiliation.

7. Learned senior counsel for the Hockey India strongly refutes the aforesaid contention. It is submitted that the SCN was issued pursuant to the consent order dated 25.07.2025. It is further submitted that the present petition has been filed only to scuttle the process which has been set in motion in terms of order dated 25.07.2025 passed by this Court and to prevent Hockey India from discharging its obligations by taking requisite action against current units on account of their malfunctioning / malpractices, as reported to Hockey India pursuant to a detailed fact finding inquiry.

8. I have considered the rival contentions of respective counsel.

9. It is evident that although the impugned action has been taken pursuant to the order dated 25.07.2025, it is imperative for Hockey India to ensure that the principles of natural justice are complied with.

10. There is merit in the contention of learned senior counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioner, that reference in the SCN to allegations “not detailed therein”, renders it impossible for the petitioner to meaningfully respond thereto.

11. Further, it is also apparent from a perusal of Constitution of Hockey

² 5.1.5. To take decision regarding continuing/ discontinuing its affiliation with any other organization.



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India that only the Congress is empowered to sanction disaffiliation of a member unit. As such, the impugned SCN can only result in a “recommendation” which must be placed before the Congress for appropriate decision.

12. In the circumstances, the following directions are issued:

- (i) Hockey India shall issue a fresh SCN to the petitioner, clearly setting out all the allegations against the petitioner, including allegations (if any), with regard to infraction of Clause-2.4 of the Code of Conduct.
- (ii) The SCN shall be issued by the Secretary General, with the prior sanction of the Executive Board, inasmuch as in terms of the Constitution of Hockey India, the Congress acts through the Executive Board, which in turn acts through the Secretary General.
- (iii) Upon issuance of such SCN, a fresh response shall be given thereto by the petitioner.
- (iv) The Secretary General shall adjudicate the SCN after giving sufficient opportunity to the petitioner to respond thereto and after granting an opportunity of hearing.
- (v) If the SCN culminates in a “recommendation” for disaffiliation, the same shall be placed before the Congress of Hockey India for an appropriate decision in this regard.

13. The above exercise shall be subject to the legal rights and remedies of the parties.

14. The petition is disposed of in the above terms.

SACHIN DATTA, J

DECEMBER 15, 2025/cl