IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

CIVIL APPEAL NOS.14953-14955 OF 2026
(Arising out of S.L.P.(Civil) Nos.40972-40974 of 2026)

HOCKEY INDIA ... APPELLANT(S)

VS.

HOCKEY ASSOCIATION OF ODISHA & ORS. ... RESPONDENT(S)

O R D E R

1. Leave granted.

2. Heard Mr. Mukul Rohatgi and Ms. Shyel Trehan, learned senior counsel appearing for the appellant, Mr. K.M.Nataraj, learned Additional Solicitor General appearing for respondent No.2-Union of India and Mr. K.Parameshwar, learned senior counsel appearing on caveat for respondent No.1.

3. These appeals portray an unfortunate scenario. Even the national sport has been dragged into litigation.

4. Two orders passed by the High Court of Orissa at Cuttack in Writ Petition (Civil) No.36939 of 2026 are called in question. The first is an order of 6th November, 2026 by which an *ex-parte* order was made whereunder two Show Cause notices issued to the Hockey Association of Odisha (HAO) and the election schedule for the appellant-Hockey

Nitin Talreja
Digitally signed by Nitin Talreja
Date: 2026.11.29 14:26:26 +0530

India, as notified, were stayed. The appellant-Hockey India moved an application to vacate the stay and that has also come to be dismissed by the impugned order of 18th November, 2026.

5. On 18th September, 2026 at the 119th Executive Committee meeting of the appellant, it was resolved to hold elections for the appellant-Hockey India and Shri Sudhir Tripathi was appointed as the Electoral Officer. On 29th September, 2026, the election calendar was issued under which nominations were to be filed by 24th November, 2026 and the poll was scheduled for 5th December, 2026.

6. On 1st October, 2026, notice for the 120th Executive Committee Meeting was also issued. It is a common case for the parties that the original term of the Executive Board of the Appellant expired on 30th September, 2026. But the Board was continuing, since the new Board had not been constituted. Be that as it may, the President of the appellant-Hockey India was also the President of the Hockey Association of Odisha namely, Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey, a hockey player of immense repute.

7. Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey filed Writ Petition (Civil) 15087 of 2026 in the Delhi High Court. This writ petition was filed on 5th October, 2026 and sought the following reliefs:

> *"a. Issue a writ of certiorari or any other appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature*

thereof, calling for the records of the purported 119th Executive Committee Meeting held on 18.09.2026 and quashing the notice dated 14.09.2026 together with the resolutions or decisions stated to have been taken at the said meeting;

b. issue a writ of certiorari or any other appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature thereof, quashing letter No.HI/HIELC/2026/09/01 dated 19.09.2026 appointing Respondent No.4 as Electoral Officer and fiving (sic) the election date, together with letter No.HI/Elections/2026/10/01 dated 01.10.2026 and all election steps taken pursuant thereto, without prejudice to commencement of a fresh lawful election process;

c. issue a writ of certiorari or any other appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature thereof, quashing the notice dated 01.10.2026 convening the purported 120th Executive Committee Meeting at 12 noon on 06.10.2026 as having been issued after expiry of the elected term and without the determination required by Articles 14.1.2(a) and 14.3.2(a) of the Hockey India Bye-laws;

d. Issue a writ of mandamus or any other appropriate writ, order or direction commanding Respondent No.1 to take such measures as are available within its statutory and recognition authority to ensure that the transition and election of Hockey India are undertaken through a legally competent, neutral and time-bound mechanism in accordance with the National Sports Governance Act, 2025, the applicable Rules, the Hockey India Bye-laws and the Hockey India Election Rules.

e. Pass such other or further writ, order or direction as this Hon'ble Court may consider just and proper in the interests of justice."

8. The Principal grievance was that the convening of the 119th Executive Committee Meeting for 18th September, 2026 as well as the then proposed 120th meeting were illegal, since

the president was not part of the meeting which convened the 119th and 120th meeting and the Secretary General could not have convened the meeting. Consequential reliefs were also sought, as stated herein above.

9. It was at this stage that on 7th October, 2026, a Show Cause Notice was issued by the appellant-Hockey India to the R-1 Hockey Association of Odisha (HAO) asking HAO to show cause why the membership of Hockey Association of India in Hockey India cannot be reclassified from a permanent member to that of an associate member.

10. At this stage, on 13th October, 2026 during the hearing of the Writ Petition before the High Court of Delhi, a note was filed by Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey the petitioner therein. In the said note, apart from the other submissions which were set out, under the caption 'A way forward', the following was submitted:

> *"16. It is submitted that despite the deadlock presently existing, the election schedule need not be displaced merely because the source of the present appointment is under challenge. To preserve both legality and continuity, this Hon'ble Court may appoint a Retired Judge of this Hon'ble Court or any other High Court, and place the affairs necessary for conducing the election under their independent supervision.*
>
> *17. Given the foregoing state of affairs, this Hon'ble Court is empowered under its extraordinary powers under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to direct such a course to ensure that the elections are conducted in a free and fair manner without the influence of the Executive Committee and/ or any office bearers,*

and in compliance of the Hockey India Bye-Laws, the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 and the directives of the Respondent No.1 (Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports) in relation to elections of National Sports Federations.

18. It is pertinent to mention that the Petitioner's suggestion for the appointment of a Retired Judge does not in any manner cast any aspersions on Respondent No.4 but is primarily centered towards the Respondent No.3's unilateral and brazen violation of law which was seconded by the Executive Committee Members who were present at the purported 119th and 120th Executive Meetings.

19. The immediate need is to prevent Respondent No.3 and persons claiming authority through the impugned meetings from taking further irreversible steps.

20. It is also prayed that the complete records of the 119th and 120th meetings, including notices, approvals, agenda papers, attendance, quorum, voting records, audio-visual records and draft or final minutes be provided to the Petitioner, so that the asserted authority can be tested on the actual contemporaneous record."

11. From reading of the above paragraphs it is clear that Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey who had moved the High Court on the ground that the meetings in question were convened without his presence, came forward to resolve the deadlock and to maintain legality and continuity, submitted that a Retired Judge could be appointed to independently supervise the conduct of the election; and that merely because certain challenges were made to the source of the appointment of the Electoral Officer and the convening of the meeting, the same need not be displaced.

12. Based on this submission and after hearing all parties concerned, the High Court of Delhi on 15th October, 2026 declined interim relief and after referring the grievances of the petitioner therein to the Grievance Redressal Committee, appointed Hon'ble Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri, former judge of this court, as the Grievance Redressal Commissioner.

13. It is not disputed that the Grievance Redressal Commissioner has taken charge and has held Four meetings. At this stage, on 22nd October, 2026 the draft electoral roll was released to which Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey had an objection. Thereafter, grievances have come to be filed before the Grievance Redressal Committee by Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey.

14. In the meantime, the international body, the FIH was informed of the proposed election date.

15. Additionally, hearing notice, pursuant to the Show Cause Notice issued to the HAO was also issued on 29th October, 2026 for 10th November, 2026.

16. At this stage, the HAO on 5th November, 2026 filed Writ Petition (Civil) No.36939 of 2026 with appropriate prayers for interim relief before the High Court of Orissa. The prayers in the said Writ Petition are as follows:

> *"i. Issue a writ of certiorari or any other appropriate writ, order or direction, to quash and set aside the minutes of the meeting of the 120th Executive Board Meeting of HI/ Opposite Party No.3*

dated 06.10.2026 under Annexure-1 of the instant Writ Petition, the consequential SCN dated 07.10.2026 issued by the former Secretary General of HI/Opposite Party No. 6 to the Petitioner under Annexure 2 of the instant Writ Petition and the subsequent notice dated 29.10.2026 issued by the purported Affiliation Committee of HU Opposite Party No.3, fixing a hearing on 10.11.2026 for adjudication of the Petitioner's membership status under Annexure 3 of the instant Writ Petition;

ii. Issue a writ of certiorari or any other appropriate writ, order or direction, to quash and set aside the decision taken at the 119th Executive Board Meeting of HI/ Opposite Party No.3 dated 18.09.2026, approving the proposal to conduct elections to the Executive Committee of HI/ Opposite Party No.3 and the appointment of Mr. Sudhir Tripathi as the Electoral Officer under Annexure-4 of the instant Writ Petition, the election calendar dated 29.09.2026 issued by the Electoral Officer in relation to the elections to the Executive Committee of HI/ Opposite Party No.3 under Annexure-5 of the instant Writ Petition, the letter dated 01.10.2026 addressed by the Electoral Officer to all Permanent Members of HI, calling upon them to nominate two representatives each, comprising one male and one female representative, for the purpose of preparation of the draft electoral roll of Hl under Annexure-6 of the instant Writ Petition, the notice dated 09.10.2026 issued by the former General Secretary of the HI/ Opposite Party No. 6 to all the Permanent Members of the HI requesting for names of Athlete Representatives for the constitution of the Athletes Committee of Hockey India under Annexure-7 of the instant Writ Petition and the draft electoral roll dated 22.10.2026 issued by the Electoral Officer/Opposite Party No. 8 under Annexure-8 of the instant Writ Petition;

iii. Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction directing HI/ Opposite Party No.3 to ensure that the restructuring of its General Body and the preparation of its electoral roll, including the restructuring of its voting members and affiliate units, are undertaken first strictly in accordance

with the NSG Act, the National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026, and the communication dated 22.12.2025 issued by Opposité Party No. 1 and only thereafter the elections to the Executive Committee of HI/ Opposite Party No.3 is held in strict compliance with the aforesaid statutory provisions, Rules and communication;

iv. Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction directing an independent forensic audit of the accounts, books of account, financial statements, transactions and expenditure of HI/ Opposite Party No.3 for the financial year 2025-2026, and such other period as this Hon'ble Court may deem appropriate, through an independent forensic auditor appointed by this Hon'ble Court or by an author designated by it and direct that the report of such forensic audit placed before this Hon'ble Court for appropriate orders.

v. Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction directing the Opposite Parties to ensure that all further proceedings relating to the elections and governance of HI/ Opposite Party No.3 are conducted strictly in accordance with the NSG Act, the applicable Rules, the directions issued by Opposite Party No. 1 and the Bye-laws of HI;

vi. Pass such other and further orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the present case."

17. It is in this writ petition that the two impugned orders have come to be passed with which the appellant is aggrieved.

18. Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, learned senior counsel, submitted that election schedule has already been notified and that there is a mandate, as ordained by the Federation Internationale De Hockey (FIH), the international body to conclude the elections and to have the new Executive Board

be in position by 31st December, 2026. Learned senior advocate submitted that Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey, who was the petitioner in the Delhi High Court himself had in the note suggested the way forward and it was pursuant to that note, the High Court appointed the Grievance Redressal Commissioner and also declined interim relief and allowed the elections to proceed. At that stage, a fresh Writ Petition had been filed by the Hockey Association of Odisha on an affidavit sworn by one Mr. Sanatan Sahu, the General Secretary, praying for the above reliefs whereby they primarily challenge the Show Cause Notice and also challenged the scheduled election of the Hockey India.

19. Mr. Rohatgi, learned senior advocate submitted that when the Delhi High Court had on the very statement of Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey denied interim relief and cleared the holding of the election, the question of whether the 119th meeting and 120th meeting were convened in his absence and/or otherwise had no relevance whatsoever.

20. Mr. Rohatgi also drew attention to an affidavit filed by Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey at page 1349, whereby Dr. Tirkey submitted that the writ petition in the Orissa High Court filed by the Hockey Association of Odisha of which he was the President, that he did not have any update about the hearing in the High Court of Orissa.

21. Mr. Rohatgi, learned senior counsel also submitted that the FIH had on 9th November, 2026 warned that

consequences may ensue under Article 2.6 of the FIH statutes, if the concerns were not resolved in a timely manner.

22. Mr. K.M. Nataraj, learned Additional Solicitor General appearing for the respondent-Union of India submitted that elections are mandatorily to be held and any delay or default would result in serious consequences for the nation, as it could result in Hockey India being disaffiliated from FIH and the Indian team being prohibited from participation in accredited international events.

23. Mr. K. Parmeshwar, learned senior advocate appearing for respondent No.1 vehemently opposed the contentions of Mr. Rohatgi, learned senior counsel for the appellant. Learned senior advocate for respondent No.1 submitted that there are several infirmities in the electoral roll; that Show Cause Notice has only been issued to the Hockey Association of Odisha when similar ad-hoc committees have been functioning in the district committees of several other states, that Hockey Association of Odisha has been discriminated; and that the state of Orissa which has contributed so much for the development of hockey in India and had obtained sponsorship and parted with significant percentage of revenue to Hockey India would be seriously prejudiced. Apart from this, learned senior counsel also contended that degrading Hockey Association of Odisha from a permanent membership to associate membership would apart

from taking away their right to vote at the Hockey India elections and to right to contest for positions in Hockey India would also debar the players affiliated to the Hockey Association of Odisha, from participating in national events. Learned senior advocate also submitted that the grievance committee headed by Hon'ble Justice Sikri is being construed by Hockey India, as a grievance committee only to redress the grievance of Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey.

24. During the hearing we put it to Mr. Rohatgi, learned senior advocate as to whether instructions could be taken for dropping the Show Cause Notice proceedings against the Hockey Association of Odisha and if at all there are some acts to be done by the association to align with the legal provisions, some time could be given as the legal regime itself is at its nascent stage and the bodies affiliated to Hockey India and Hockey India itself are in a transitioning phase from the old order to the new order. We adjourned the matter for an hour.

25. Mr. Rohatgi, learned senior advocate and Ms. Shyel Trehan, learned senior advocate, reverted back to us and submitted that the Show Cause Notice issued on 7th October, 2026 and the hearing notice issued on 29th October, 2026 would forthwith stand recalled.

26. We record the said submission and treat the said two notices as recalled with immediate effect.

27. In fact, Mr. Rohatgi, learned senior counsel for the

appellant submitted that even with the Show Cause Notice in position, representatives from Hockey Association of Odisha, namely Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey and Miss Lucela Ekka (a former women's State captain of the State of Orissa and a reputed hockey player) were recorded as representatives of Hockey Association of Odisha and would have any event voted and would have been part of the electoral roll in the election.

28. Today, with the Show Cause Notices having gone, there is absolutely no cloud over the affiliation of Hockey Association of Odisha as a permanent member in Hockey India. Under the above circumstances, we are of opinion that election ought to be held as per the schedule fixed and polling which is a part of the electoral process scheduled for 5th December, 2026 ought to take place as per schedule.

29. As stated earlier, this is a very serious issue, as any default on this could expose the country and the sport to serious consequences internationally. This is quite apart from the fact that this will cause serious disappointment to the players who are training hard to represent the country and participate in international events. The players are performing so well.

30. The apprehension of Mr. Parmeshwar, learned senior counsel for respondent No.1 regarding Show Cause Notice has already been taken care of. The further aspect that the Grievance Redressal Committee headed by Hon'ble Justice

Sikri is only constituted to redress the grievance of Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey can be taken care of with a request to Justice Sikri that he would also function as the Grievance Redressal Commissioner for any grievance that Hockey Association of Odisha may have, or any other affiliated association may have. In no circumstance should all this result in deferment of the election as scheduled.

31. We, in view of what has been stated above, set aside the order dated 6th November, 2026 and the order dated impugned orders dated 18th November, 2026. The net result will be that there will be no impediment whatsoever for the conduct of the poll on 5thDecember,2026 and for declaration of results.

32. We also feel that both the Writ Petitions should be disposed of and the sport should no longer be involved in litigation. However, learned senior counsel for respondent No.1 points out that prayer (iv) calling for audit is an independent prayer. Once the elections are over, the new board will come into position. Any grievance that Hockey Association of Odisha may have, can be brought to the notice of the new board and if it is not redressed, they can always resort to legal remedies.

33. In view of the above, both Writ Petitions being Writ Petition (Civil) No.36939 of 2026 in the High Court of Orissa and Writ Petition (Civil) 15087 of 2026 in the Delhi High Court would stand closed by our present order.

34. We hope and trust that the sport which has brought so much fame to the nation, is not dragged into litigation and the players play with a free mind and bring greater glory to the nation.

35. With the above observation, the appeals are disposed of.

.....J.
(K.V.VISWANATHAN)

.....J.
(ARUN PALLI)

NEW DELHI;
November 28, 2026

ITEM NO.22 COURT NO.10 SECTION XI-A

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Petition(s) for Special Leave to Appeal (C) No(s).40972-40974/2026

[Arising out of impugned final judgment and orders dated 06-11-2026 in IA No. 21860/2026 and dated 18-11-2026 in IA No. 22248/2026 and IA No. 22479/2026 in WP (C) No.36939/2026 passed by the High Court of Orissa at Cuttack]

HOCKEY INDIA Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

HOCKEY ASSOCIATION OF ODISHA & ORS. Respondent(s)

(IA No. 362201/2026 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING C/C OF THE IMPUGNED JUDGMENT
IA No. 362203/2026 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES
IA No. 362205/2026 - PERMISSION TO FILE LENGTHY LIST OF DATES)

Date : 28-11-2026 These matters were called on for hearing today.

CORAM :
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE K.V. VISWANATHAN
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN PALLI

For Petitioner(s) :
Mr. Mukul Rohtgi, Sr. Adv.
Ms. Shyel Trehan, Sr. Adv.
Ms. Diksha Rai- 1974, AOR
Mr. Rohan Poddar, Adv.
Mr. Amit Jaiswal, Adv.
Mr. Ravi Shankar Pandey, Adv.
Ms. Atiga Singh, Adv.
Ms. Sagun Srivastava, Adv.
Ms. Purvat Wali, Adv.
Ms. Lakshmi Agarwal, Adv.
Mr. Nishi Kant Singh, Adv.
Ms. Geentajali Setia, Adv.

For Respondent(s) :
No.1 **Mr. K Parmeshwar, Sr. Adv.**
Mr. Kush Chaturvedi, Adv.
Mr. Anjuman Tripathy- 3495, AOR
Mr. Arya Tripathy, Adv.
Mr. Mohit Singh Sikarwar, Adv.
Mr. Adit Garg, Adv.

For respondent No.2
Union of India **Mr. K.M.Nataraj, ASG**
Mr. Anuj Udupa, Adv.
Mr. Vinayak Sharma, Adv.
Mr. Sharath Nambiar, Adv.
Mr. Amrish Kumar, AOR

Ms. Rupali Francesca Samuel- 4335, AOR
Mr. Aradhya Trivedi, Adv.
Ms. T.Geetha, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following

O R D E R

1. **Leave granted.**

2. **The appeals are disposed of in terms of the signed order.**

3. **Pending applications shall stand disposed of.**

(ANITA MALHOTRA) **(NIKITA SINGH)**
DEPUTY REGISTRAR **COURT MASTER**

(Signed order is placed on the file.)