DECISION ON OBJECTIONS CONCERNING THE ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (AIFF EC ELECTION, 20.12.2026)

Ref No:

ORDER

(24.11.2026)

The Draft Electoral College for the election to the Executive Committee of All India Football Federation (AIFF) was published on the website on 15.11.2026 and a window of 7 days was provided for sending objections to the same till 3:00 PM on 21.11.2026. The undersigned has received the objections set out below concerning the Andaman and Nicobar Football Association ("**ANFA**"), which are dealt with through this Order.

With regard to preparation of the Electoral College, the following provisions of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 ("**the Act**"), and the National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026 ("**the NSBR**"), and the Constitution of AIFF ("**the Constitution**") and further amendments and resolutions are material:

NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE ACT, 2025

The only relevant provision in this regard is Section 4(2) of the Act. However, it is seen that Section 4(2) pertains to eligibility for contesting elections or seeking nominations. It does not apply to inclusion in electoral college. The opening line of Section 4(2) reads:

> *"(2) A person shall not be qualified to contest for election or seek nomination to, the Executive Committee, unless. ..."*

NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE (NATIONAL SPORTS BODIES) RULES, 2026

Rule 10(1) of NSBR reinforces the fact that Section 4 of the Act only gets attracted at the stage of contesting for elections to the Executive Committee of AIFF ("EC"). Rule 10(2) is for Indian Olympic Association and has no bearing here. Rule 10(3) provides for who are the eligible voters are for the elections of EC and Rule 10(4) states that the Electoral College shall consist of only such members or their representatives that have voting rights as per Rule 10(3) and are not otherwise disqualified as per the provision of the Act or the NSBR. Relevant extract from Rule 10 reads as follows:

> ***10. Election to the Executive Committee. —***
>
> ...
>
> *(3) Members of the General Body of a National Sports Body other than the National Olympic Committee, as specified under sub-rule (1) of rule 7, shall be eligible to vote for the election to its Executive Committee as specified below, namely:-*
>
> *(a) every individual sportsperson of outstanding merit shall have one vote;*

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(b) every State level affiliate unit of the National Sports Body that is registered with the National Sports Board, shall have a maximum of two votes, to be exercised by separate individual representatives of such affiliate unit; and

(c) for any category of persons specified under clause (e) of sub-rule (1) of rule 7, one vote for each such person.

(4) The electoral roll for an election to the Executive Committee shall consist of only such members or their representatives in the General Body of the relevant National Sports Body that have voting rights as per subrule (2) or sub-rule (3), as the case may be, and are not otherwise disqualified under the provisions of the Act or these rules."

Further, Rule 10(5) provides that the draft electoral roll shall be prepared and released by the Electoral Officer, and its proviso states that "the Electoral Officer's decision shall be final and binding in respect of the inclusion or non-inclusion, as the case may be, of any person on the electoral roll". Rule 10(6) requires the Electoral Officer to provide at least seven days from the release of the draft electoral roll to receive and respond to any objections regarding the composition of the final electoral roll.

Further, Rule 11 outlines the disqualifications from being a member of the General Body, of AIFF ("**GB**") or of any committee of AIFF, which disqualifications are also attracted for contesting for election to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Committee of AIFF. The same reads as follows:

11. Disqualifications. *— (1) A person shall be disqualified from being a member of the General Body, or of any committee of a National Sports Body, and shall not be eligible for contesting for election to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Committee, if such person is-*

(a) declared insolvent under applicable law; or

(b) subject to a conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction in India for an offence, followed by a sentence of imprisonment; or

(c) subject to a ban from holding any such position by an order of the Ethics Committee of such National Sports Body:

Provided that the disqualification in respect of -

(i) clause (a) shall be for the period of insolvency as applicable;

(ii) clause (b) shall be for a period of one full term of the Executive Committee after the completion of such sentence; and

(iii) clause (c) shall be for the duration of such ban.

(2) The bye-laws of a National Sports Body may provide that, in addition to the criteria specified under sub-rule (1), a person shall be disqualified from -

(a) being a member of the General Body or of any committee of such National Sports Body, or shall not be eligible for contesting elections to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Committee, if such person is a member of any other National Sports Body other than the National Olympic Committee; and

(b) being a member of the General Body or of any committee of such National Sports Body, where such person has not completed the cooling off period of one term after



having held the position of President, Secretary General or Treasurer in any other National Sports Body."

CONSTITUTION OF AIFF

Entitlement to vote.

As per Article 13.3(a) of the Constitution, every Member Association which is a Full Member is entitled to 2 votes in the elections of the EC of AIFF. The procedure for admission as Full Member is outlined in Schedule I of the AIFF Constitution. Article 4.1 of Schedule III provides that each State Association, which is a Full Member, shall have up to 2 votes, to be cast by separate individuals eligible to represent such Full Member.

Intimation, scrutiny and objections.

Article 4.2 of Schedule III provides that each Full Member shall intimate the names of its 2 representatives / delegates for inclusion in the Electoral College to the Electoral Officer on its letter head duly signed by its President / Secretary, as per the timelines prescribed by the Electoral Officer, and that such representatives shall not be subject to any Disqualification Event. Any change in the name of the representatives / delegates after the last date, or any intimation received thereafter, is permitted only with the approval of the Electoral Officer. Under Article 4.3 of Schedule III, the Electoral Officer scrutinizes the names, prepares the Electoral College List in Form 1, and takes up and decides objections within 7 days.

Loss of voting right.

As per Articles 17, 18 and other such provisions of the Constitution, the voting right of a Full Member extinguishes if its membership is suspended or it is expelled by AIFF. Under Article 17.1, the authority to suspend a member vests in the General Body (including where the Member has been derecognised or suspended under the NSGA), and the procedure under Article 17.3 has to be followed. Under Article 17.2, the Executive Committee may also suspend a member with immediate effect, which suspension lasts until the following General Body meeting unless lifted earlier. Article 17.4 provides:

> *"17.4 A suspended Member shall lose its membership rights. Other Members shall not entertain sporting contact with a suspended Member."*

For expulsion, the detailed procedure under Article 18.2 has to be followed by AIFF. Article 17.6 also provides for loss of rights in the circumstances stated therein.

Disqualification of representatives.

Another bar for being a representative of a Full Member is laid down in Article 20.7, which in turn relies on the Disqualification Events defined in Article 1.17. This interpretation is supported when Article 20.7 is read with Article 1.11, the latter mandating that to be a candidate for elections of the EC of AIFF, the concerned individual must be a voting member of the



General Body of AIFF. Of the Disqualification Events, the following are relevant to the objections:

"b) Attainment of the age of 70 (seventy) years; …

c) Conviction followed by a sentence of imprisonment; …

g) Being or becoming a minister or a government servant (unless such government servant has necessary approvals from the relevant government in order to not be considered disqualified);

h) Completion of the maximum term of office of any particular office-bearer as specified in Article 26.3, without serving the specified cooling-off period of 4 (four) years where applicable; …"

Article 26.3 provides that the President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer of AIFF may continuously hold their positions for up to 3 consecutive terms and shall be eligible for re-election to such posts after having served a mandatory cooling-off period.

Disputes between rival groups.

Article 51.6 provides:

"51.6 In addition to the above, any dispute arising on account of claims by 2 (two) different executive/managing committees or sets of individuals claiming to be the duly elected committee representing the Member Association in a State, or of two different groups claiming to constitute the official Member Association of a State, such dispute shall be referred by the AIFF in the first instance for hearing and redressal by the NDRC. Till the time, the NDRC has not been constituted by AIFF, such disputes shall be referred to a sub-committee of the Executive Committee, which sub-committee shall not include any person from the State relating to which the dispute has arisen."

Articles 51.7 and 51.8 further empower the Executive Committee to derecognise or de-affiliate, and to appoint an ad hoc committee for a period not exceeding 6 months, while such a dispute is pending.

Twin test.

Thus, broadly, the twin test which needs to be applied is (i) whether a state association is a Full Member of AIFF or not, and (ii) whether the Full Member or its representatives are disqualified as per the Act, the NSBR, or the Constitution of AIFF. In applying this test, the following principles are kept in mind:

a. A Full Member's voting right is lost only on suspension or expulsion in accordance with Articles 17 and 18, or by an operative order of a competent court. The pendency of litigation, without such an order, does not by itself suspend or extinguish it. While a Member remains suspended, it does not have a voting right.

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b. Disqualification Events attach to individuals. They do not take away the status or the votes of the Member Association.

c. The task of the Electoral Officer under Rule 10 and Article 4 of Schedule III is confined to preparing the roll and deciding objections to it. The Electoral Officer does not adjudicate the validity of elections of a Member Association, its internal governance, the validity of its suspension, or disputes between rival groups, which are for the competent forum or, under Article 51.6, for AIFF to refer to the NDRC. Likewise, whether the governing body of a Member Association has been elected or appointed in compliance with Article 15.7, and is to be recognised, is a matter of recognition by AIFF and not one for the Electoral Officer while preparing the roll.

d. Where a Full Member is entitled to vote, exclusion of both its representatives would leave a State or Union Territory without representation, which is contrary to the objective of preserving broad-based and democratic representation in the electoral process.

e. Every decision is subject to any order that may be passed by a competent court or forum.

f. Under Article 4.2 of Schedule III, read with Circular No. 1 (Ref. No. 2/EC/Election/2026/1) dated 06.11.2026, the names of representatives are to be intimated on the letterhead of the Full Member signed by its President / Secretary by 6:00 PM on 13.11.2026. Where separate or conflicting nominations are received from the same Member Association, the names nominated by its President prevail. An intimation received after that time, or a change in the names, is permitted only with the approval of the Electoral Officer, which is exercised case by case so as to secure broad-based representation of the Full Members.

g. Every representative must be free of any Disqualification Event on the date of the election. The undersigned verifies this, including the age of each representative under Article 1.17(b), from the Government-issued photo identity documents furnished with the nomination.

Further, the draft Minutes of the Special General Body Meeting of AIFF held on 01.11.2026 ("**SGBM**"), which the undersigned is informed are yet to be approved, record that the House deliberated upon the challenges faced by certain Member Associations in completing their constitutional alignment and electoral processes within the stipulated timelines, recalling the general sense of the House in the SGM held on 23rd May 2026 in Kolkata that Member Associations facing genuine difficulties should not be penalised. The draft Minutes further record that Mr. Praful Patel, Mr. N.A. Haris and Mr. B.S. Mehra pointed out that, since the AIFF election process was underway and an independent Electoral Officer had been appointed for the AIFF Elections, any decision regarding eligibility for inclusion in the Electoral College rests strictly with the Electoral Officer. These draft Minutes are referred to only as recording the understanding of the House. The power of the undersigned to decide the inclusion or non-inclusion of any person in the Electoral College flows from Rule 10(5) of the NSBR and Article 4.3 of Schedule III, and not from those Minutes. A resolution or observation of a general meeting, whether approved or not, neither confers nor takes away the voting right of any Member, which can be lost only in the manner provided in Articles 17 and 18 of the Constitution.



DECISION

ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (ANFA)

With regard to the inclusion of ANFA and its representatives, the following objections were received by the undersigned:

a. Objection dt. 13.11.2026 from Mr. M. Abdul Gafoor:

- This objection raises allegations that there are various governance-related irregularities and pending membership complaints in ANFA and there was also an irregularity in the election proceedings of ANFA reportedly conducted on 01.11.2026 under the supervision of an AIFF-appointed Observer and Returning Officer.

- On receiving this objection, the undersigned asked AIFF for its comments on the objections, which were submitted by AIFF on 20.11.2026. The comments are reproduced below:

  *"**Absence of Particulars of the Alleged Pending Complaints:** The objection states that "many complaints" are pending for disposal with AIFF, but does not identify any complaint by its date, reference or subject matter. Further, as per available records, there are no pending complaints in relation to the affiliation and/or compliance of the ANFA with its obligations as a member association of AIFF.*

  ***2. Conduct of the General Body Meeting of 1st November 2026 and the Prayer to Keep the Report in Abeyance:** The objection itself records that the general body meeting of ANFA held on 1st November 2026 was conducted in the presence of an Observer and a Returning Officer appointed by AIFF. The objection is, however, based on information stated to have been seen on social media on 7th November 2026, and does not identify any specific procedural irregularity in the conduct of the meeting or in the declaration of its outcome. The assertion that Mr. Sanjay Meshack has been declared President of ANFA concerns the internal affairs of ANFA, which are governed by its own constitution and bye-laws, and no order of any competent court or authority staying or setting aside the said meeting has been placed on record. AIFF has received and recognized the reports of the Returning Officer and the AIFF Observer in relation to the elections held on 01 November 2026.*

  The prayer that the report be kept in abeyance, that ANFA be excluded from the Electoral College until all complaints are "resolved", is open-ended, particularly in the absence of reference to any complaint that has been filed with the AIFF."

- It is noted that admittedly, ANFA is a Full Member of the AIFF and hence, as per Article 13.3(a), it is entitled to 2 votes. There is no provision in the Constitution of AIFF, which debars a Full Member from being excluded from the Electoral College on the grounds of mere allegations or pending complaints. As long as ANFA is a Full Member of AIFF, it cannot be deprived of the two votes.

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- Accordingly, this objection stands disposed off as **rejected**.

b. Objection dt. 20.11.2026 from Mr. M. Abdul Gafoor:

- The objection contends that the inclusion of Shri Sanjay Meshack and Shri Raja Gopal as ANFA representatives in the AIFF electoral college is unlawful because the purported ANFA election of 01.11.2026 was conducted without notice, electoral roll, nominations, scrutiny, or any transparent democratic process mandated by the AIFF Constitution and NSGA. It asserts that the only validly elected ANFA Executive Council is the one elected on 14.12.2025 and therefore seeks deletion of their names from the electoral college and disclosure and scrutiny of the entire record of the impugned election.
- On receiving this objection, the undersigned asked AIFF for its comments on the objections, however, no comments were provided.
- In essence, the objector has levelled allegations regarding the validity of the elections of ANFA. The undersigned does not have the jurisdiction to assess the validity of the elections of the members of AIFF. As per Article 51.6 of AIFF Constitution, the jurisdiction for adjudication of such a dispute vests with the National Dispute Resolution Chamber of AIFF.
- Further, the objector has not pointed out how any disqualification under the Act, the NSBR, or the Constitution of AIFF has been attracted to the representatives sent by ANFA.
- It is also noted that the objector has essentially sought exclusion of the two representatives without stating as to who ought to have been included in the Electoral College on behalf of ANFA. Thus, if the objection is decided in favor of the objector, there will be no representation in the elections from the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar. Such an outcome cannot be countenanced, as it would be contrary to the overarching objective of preserving broad-based and democratic representation in the electoral process and would result in the complete disenfranchisement of the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar in the governance of AIFF.
- Therefore, there is no reason to exclude the names of the two representatives of ANFA from the Electoral College.
- Accordingly, this objection stands disposed off as **rejected**.

Electoral Officer
All India Football Federation

24/11/2026

Electoral Officer
All India Football Federation

Place: New Delhi

Date: 24.11.2026