

BEFORE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DEEPAK GUPTA
FORMER JUDGE,
SUPREME COURT OF INDIA OMBUDSMAN,
BIHAR CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Mr. Rupesh Kumar Jha & Anr

.....Complainant No. 3

Versus

BCA & ORS

..... Respondents

Appearance

For Complainant No. 3:

Mr. Pratik Kumar, Adv.

For DCA

Mr. Aakarshan Aditya, Adv.

For Respondent

Mr. Neeraj Gupta, Senior Adv.

Mr. Abhishek Goel, Adv.

Mr. Manish Raj, CEO, BCA

Mr. Ziaul Arefin, Secretary, BCA

ORDER DATED 13 JULY 2026

1. Today's hearing was fixed for hearing complaint No. 3 filed by Mr. Rupesh Kumar Jha through Mr. Pratik Kumar, Advocate in which allegations have been levelled in respect of the selection/ non selection of players and selectors by the Bihar Cricket Association (BCA).
2. It is clarified that, due to an inadvertent omission, the presence of Mr. Abhishek Goel, Advocate, for BCA was not recorded in the order dated 04.07.2026. It is hereby recorded that Mr. Abhishek Goel was present on behalf of BCA during the hearing held on 04.07.2026.

Allegations against Players

3. Before dealing with the allegations against each player, it may be noted that the parties have filed a common chart setting out the allegations made by the Complainant, the response of the Bihar Cricket Association, District Cricket Association and the rejoinder filed by the Complainant. The said chart has been taken on record and has been considered while passing the present order.

First Player: Mr. Adhiraj Johri

4. The allegation against Adhiraj Johri is that he was originally born in the State of West Bengal and had participated in domestic cricket under the Cricket Association of Bengal. It is further alleged that he thereafter sought to secure selection through Rajasthan Club. Upon his failure to obtain selection there, he was inducted into the Bihar Cricket Association and represented Bihar in the Ranji Trophy match against Arunachal Pradesh.

5. The stand of the Bihar Cricket Association ("BCA") is that, at the time of registration, the birth certificate produced by the player, purportedly issued by the BDO, Nawada Sadar, was duly verified through the prescribed QR Code mechanism and was found to be genuine. BCA further submits that FIR No. 49/2023, registered in relation to the allegations, culminated in submission of a Final Form by the Investigating Officer on account of lack of evidence.
6. It is, however, pertinent to note that thereafter the BDO, Nawada Sadar, by communication dated 19.05.2023, declared that the birth certificate in question was false and fabricated. There is no satisfactory explanation on record to displace or rebut the communication issued by the very authority which purportedly issued the birth certificate.
7. The submission that the criminal case ended in a Final Form does not, by itself, negate or override the categorical declaration made by the BDO, Nawada Sadar that the birth certificate was false and fabricated. Closure of the criminal case on the ground of lack of evidence may exonerate the accused from criminal prosecution; however, it does not ipso facto establish that the birth certificate is genuine. These are distinct issues and must be examined independently.
8. Prima facie, therefore, I am of the view that the material presently available raises serious doubts regarding the eligibility of Adhiraj Johri to represent Bihar. Pending final adjudication, it would not be appropriate to permit him to participate in tournaments conducted by the Bihar Cricket Association or to represent Bihar in any BCCI tournament.

9. Accordingly, by way of an interim direction, Adhiraj Johri shall not be permitted to participate in any tournament conducted by the Bihar Cricket Association or represent Bihar in any BCCI tournament until further orders.
10. During the course of hearing, Mr. Manish Raj, Chief Executive Officer, Bihar Cricket Association, submitted that Adhiraj Johri has, in fact, not been permitted to participate in any tournament conducted by the BCA after these allegations came to light. The said statement is taken on record.
11. Before parting with this issue, I direct the BCA to file a further affidavit indicating whether Adhiraj Johri had participated in any match conducted by the Bihar Cricket Association prior to his selection for the Bihar Ranji Trophy team. The affidavit shall also disclose the basis on which he became eligible for such selection. This be done on or before 5th August 2026.
12. The broader question regarding the procedure to be adopted in cases involving allegations of this nature, including whether such matters are required to be examined by the Anti-Corruption Unit or by any other independent mechanism, shall be considered separately on a subsequent date.
13. It is clarified that the player shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity of being heard before any final adverse order is passed.

Second Player: Mr. Yash Pal Yadav

14. At this stage, I do not find any prima facie case to warrant any interim action against Mr. Yash Pal Yadav. The principal grievance of the

Complainant is that the requisite documents, including the birth certificate, were procured after the BCA notification dated 15.02.2023. Merely because the documents were obtained after the issuance of the said notification would not, by itself, establish that the player is not a resident of Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.

15. It is also pertinent to note that there is no specific allegation or material placed on record indicating the State to which Mr. Yash Pal Yadav actually belongs or demonstrating that he is a permanent resident of any State other than Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.
16. The complainant is permitted to file any fresh material available. This be done on or before 5th August 2026. In case, no fresh material is filed, then the complaint against Mr. Yash Pal Yadav shall stand closed.

3rd Player: Mr. Saurabh Soni

17. At this stage, I do not find any prima facie case to warrant any interim action against Mr. Saurabh Soni. The principal grievance of the Complainant is that the requisite documents, including the birth certificate, were procured after the BCA notification dated 15.02.2023. Merely because the documents were obtained after the issuance of the said notification would not, by itself, establish that the player is not a resident of Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.
18. It is also pertinent to note that there is no specific allegation or material placed on record indicating the State to which Mr. Saurabh Soni

actually belongs or demonstrating that he is a permanent resident of any State other than Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.

19. There is, however, one additional allegation against Mr. Saurabh Soni. It is alleged that in the report cards pertaining to the academic sessions 2017–18, 2018–19 and 2019–20, the player's roll number is shown as 31 in all three years. It has also been alleged that all three report cards appear to have been prepared using the same pen. These circumstances do cast some doubt regarding the authenticity of the educational records relied upon by the player. However, in the absence of any verification from the concerned educational institution or other cogent material, no conclusive finding can be returned at this stage.
20. Having regard to the nature of the allegations, the matter may require further scrutiny, and appropriate directions in that regard shall be considered separately. The complainant is permitted to file any fresh material available on or before 5th August 2026.

4th Player: Mr. Adarsh Pandey

21. At this stage, I do not find any prima facie case to warrant any interim action against Mr. Adarsh Pandey. The principal grievance of the Complainant is that the requisite documents, including the birth certificate, were procured after the BCA notification dated 15.02.2023. Merely because the documents were obtained after the issuance of the said notification would not, by itself, establish that the player is not a resident of Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.

22. It is also pertinent to note that there is no specific allegation or material placed on record indicating the State to which Mr. Adarsh Pandey actually belongs or demonstrating that he is a permanent resident of any State other than Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.
23. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, further submitted that Mr. Adarsh Pandey had pursued his education through the Jharkhand State Open School, which, according to him, lends support to the allegation that the player does not belong to the State of Bihar. However, merely because the player studied through the Jharkhand State Open School would not, by itself, establish that he is not a resident of Bihar or that he was ineligible to represent the State. This circumstance, though relevant, cannot be treated as conclusive in the absence of any further supporting material.
24. The complainant is permitted to file any fresh material available. This be done on or before 5th August 2026. In case, no fresh material is filed, then the complaint against Mr. Adarsh Pandey shall stand closed.

5th Player: Mr. Samast Mishra Shastri

25. At this stage, I do not find any prima facie case to warrant any interim action against Mr. Samast Mishra Shastri. The principal grievance of the Complainant is that the requisite documents, including the birth certificate, were procured after the BCA notification dated 15.02.2023. Merely because the documents were obtained after the issuance of the said notification would not, by itself, establish that the player is not a resident of Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.

26. It is also pertinent to note that there is no specific allegation or material placed on record indicating the State to which Mr. Samast Mishra Shastri actually belongs or demonstrating that he is a permanent resident of any State other than Bihar or that he was otherwise ineligible to represent the State.
27. The complainant is permitted to file any fresh material available. This be done on or before 5th August 2026. In case, no fresh material is filed, then the complaint against Mr. Samast Mishra Shastri shall stand closed.

6th Player: Krishna Kumar

28. The allegation against Mr. Krishna Kumar Yadav is that the documents relied upon by him, including the birth certificate, residence certificate and other supporting documents, were procured after the Bihar Cricket Association Notification dated 15.02.2023. It is further alleged that his birth certificate was issued by Gaya, whereas his place of residence is shown as Sikandra, Jamui, and that his educational records and bank account reflect addresses at Patna.
29. The stand of the Bihar Cricket Association is that the player was registered on the BCCI ODMS on the basis of a Bihar-issued birth certificate duly verified through the QR-Code mechanism. It is further submitted that the notification dated 15.02.2023 was merely a camp notification and not a declaration that the players concerned were non-residents of Bihar. According to the Bihar Cricket Association, the mere fact that the supporting documents were obtained within a short span of time does not, by itself, establish forgery or render the player ineligible. The Bihar Cricket Association has further undertaken to refer the matter to the Anti-Corruption Unit if any specific documentary

evidence of forgery, such as an out-of-State birth certificate or school record, is placed on record.

30. At this stage, I do not find any prima facie material to hold that the documents relied upon by the player are forged or fabricated merely because they were issued after the notification dated 15.02.2023. The principal grievance of the Complainant is that the requisite documents were procured after the said notification. By itself, however, that circumstance cannot lead to the conclusion that the player is not a resident of Bihar or is otherwise ineligible to represent the State. There is also no specific allegation supported by cogent material that the player actually belongs to any other State. Accordingly, I do not consider it appropriate to pass any interim direction restraining the player from participating in BCA/BCCI tournaments. However, if any further documentary material is placed on record disclosing forgery or any other disqualification, the matter shall remain open for appropriate consideration.
31. The complainant is permitted to file any fresh material available. This be done on or before 5th August 2026. In case, no fresh material is filed, then the complaint against Mr. Krishna Kumar shall stand closed.

7th Player: Veer Abhimanyu

32. The allegation against Mr. Veer Abhimanyu is that he was not born in the State of Bihar and, in fact, belongs to the State of Uttarakhand.
33. The stand of the Bihar Cricket Association is that since the player did not possess a birth certificate through the ODMS mechanism, he furnished proof of residence by way of a residential certificate, on the basis of which his registration was accepted.

34. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, further submitted that the player is in possession of two Aadhaar Cards, which, according to him, casts serious doubt on the genuineness of the documents relied upon by the player. If the allegation regarding the existence of two Aadhaar Cards is found to be correct, the same would certainly require a detailed inquiry by the competent authority.
35. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, pointed out that, as per the Aadhaar Update History placed on record by the Bihar Cricket Association itself, the demographic particulars in the player's Aadhaar Card, including the address, were changed from Uttarakhand to East Champaran, Bihar on 21.12.2023. He, therefore, submitted that the player ought not to have been permitted to participate in the tournament.
36. This aspect shall be specifically answered by the Bihar Cricket Association as well as the concerned District Cricket Association. They shall explain the basis on which the player was permitted to participate in the tournaments conducted during the year 2024. This be done by 5th August, 2006.
37. Having regard to the nature of the allegations, the matter requires further scrutiny, and appropriate directions in that regard shall be considered separately. The complainant, if he so desires, may file further documents in support of its complaint. This be done on or before 5th August 2026.

8th Player: Mr. Danish Jawed Chowdhary

38. The allegation against Mr. Danish Chowdhary is that he actually belongs to Mumbai and was not eligible to represent the State of Bihar.
39. The Bihar Cricket Association, in its reply, admits that the player was registered on the basis of a Bihar birth certificate. However, it has also stated that it is willing to refer the matter to the Anti-Corruption Unit for a detailed inquiry.
40. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, further submitted that the location reflected on the Hero App in respect of the player is shown as Mumbai, which, according to him, lends support to the allegation that the player does not belong to the State of Bihar.
41. Having regard to the nature of the allegations and the stand taken by the Bihar Cricket Association itself that the matter requires further inquiry, I am of the prima facie view that the issue deserves a detailed examination. Accordingly, till further orders, Mr. Danish Chowdhary shall not be permitted to participate in any domestic tournament conducted by the Bihar Cricket Association or represent Bihar in any BCCI tournament.

9th Player: Mr. Anurag Kumar

42. The allegations against Mr. Anurag Kumar are of a serious nature. It is alleged that the address reflected in his Aadhaar Card was changed to show his residence as Shahpur, whereas earlier it reflected an address in Muzaffarpur. It is further alleged that the address in the Aadhaar Card and the PAN Card was changed within a span of one week.

43. The Bihar Cricket Association has already referred the matter to the Anti-Corruption Unit for inquiry. After hearing the parties, I shall consider whether the inquiry ought to continue before the Anti-Corruption Unit or be entrusted to any other independent authority.
44. Be that as it may, having regard to the seriousness of the allegations and the fact that an inquiry is already underway, Mr. Anurag Kumar shall not be permitted to participate in any domestic tournament conducted by the Bihar Cricket Association or represent Bihar in any BCCI tournament until further orders.

10th Player: Mr. Madhur Yadav

45. With regard to Mr. Madhur Yadav, the allegation is that there exist two birth certificates pertaining to him, one issued from Delhi and the other from Gaya, Bihar.
46. The stand of the Bihar Cricket Association is that no player by the name of Mr. Madhur Yadav is registered with the Bihar Cricket Association.
47. In view of the stand taken by the Bihar Cricket Association, the Complainant is granted time up to 5th August 2026 to file an affidavit placing on record the material and evidence relied upon in support of the allegations against Mr. Madhur Yadav. Thereafter, the Bihar Cricket Association shall be at liberty to file its response, if any, by 20th August and appropriate orders shall be passed thereafter. If no fresh material is placed on record the case shall stand closed.

11th Player: Mr. Hemant Singh

48. With regard to Mr. Hemant Singh (also referred to as Hemant Arora), the allegation is that he is originally from the State of Uttar Pradesh and has been playing for Bihar under the name Hemant Singh. It is alleged that he is the son of Mr. Nitin Arora, a resident of House No. 101, Modinagar Road, Chandralok Colony, Hapur, Uttar Pradesh. It is further alleged that while the Aadhaar number remains the same, the player is shown with another identity and address in Nalanda, Bihar.
49. The stand of the Bihar Cricket Association is that the player was registered on the BCCI ODMS on the basis of a Bihar-issued birth certificate verified through the QR-Code mechanism and processed through the Madhepura District Cricket Association. However, upon the specific documentary material being placed on record showing the same Aadhaar number under two different names and addresses, namely Hemant Arora of Uttar Pradesh and Hemant Singh of Nalanda, Bihar, the BCA has initiated an inquiry through the Anti-Corruption Unit. The player has already been directed to appear before the ACU to establish his eligibility, and his participation in BCA/BCCI matches has been restrained pending the inquiry.
50. In view of the aforesaid stand taken by the Bihar Cricket Association, I do not consider it necessary to issue any further direction at this stage. However, the final report of the Anti-Corruption Unit shall be placed before this Forum and shall not be acted upon without its approval. Thereafter, appropriate orders shall be passed after considering the report and after affording the player an opportunity of being heard.

12th Player: Mr. Shivraj Chowdhary

51. As far as Mr. Shivraj Chowdhary is concerned, the allegation is that he is originally from the State of Rajasthan and that his date of birth, name and even his father's name were altered to enable him to represent Bihar. It is further alleged that, despite being aware of these discrepancies during the Aadhaar verification process, the Bihar Cricket Association continued to field him in BCCI domestic matches.
52. The record further shows that, upon receipt of the complaint, the Bihar Cricket Association referred the matter to its Anti-Corruption Unit. The Anti-Corruption Unit submitted its report dated 06.06.2026 recommending that the player should not be permitted to participate in any BCA/BCCI matches pending final adjudication. Pursuant thereto, the player has already been restrained from participating in such matches with effect from 06.06.2026.

In view of the aforesaid developments, I do not consider it necessary to pass any further interim directions at this stage. However, the Bihar Cricket Association is directed to place on record the complete report of the Anti-Corruption Unit before this Forum on or before 5th August 2026. It is further directed that no final decision on the basis of the said report shall be taken without placing the matter before this Forum and obtaining its approval.

13th Player: Ms. Pragati Prasad

53. As far as Ms. Pragati Prasad is concerned, the allegation against the player is that she is in possession of two birth certificates, one issued from the State of Bihar and the other from the State of West Bengal.
54. It appears from the record that a complaint in this regard was made to the BCCI. By communication dated 08.10.2025, the BCCI called upon

the Secretary, Bihar Cricket Association, to seek a formal clarification from the player and to take appropriate action in the matter by 12:00 noon on 09.10.2025.

55. The record further reveals that on 09.10.2025, Mr. Manish Raj, CEO of the Bihar Cricket Association, informed the BCCI that the player and her father had appeared before him on the same day. Thereafter, the Bihar Cricket Association has placed on record an apology purportedly signed by Ms. Pragati Prasad and her father, Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad. Curiously, the date appearing below the signatures of both Ms. Pragati Prasad and her father is 09.12.2025. The document also bears the signatures of two witnesses, namely Ms. Madhu Sharma and Mr. A.K. Pandey. While the date below the signature of Ms. Madhu Sharma is shown as 09.10.2025, the date below the signature of Mr. A.K. Pandey is reflected as 05.04.2025.
56. Both Mr. Neeraj Gupta, senior counsel for the Respondent and Mr. Manish Raj, CEO of the Bihar Cricket Association, submitted that the discrepancy in the dates may merely be a typographical error. Prima facie, I am unable to accept this explanation. The dates are hand written below each signature. This is not a case of a mere typographical error. The discrepancies are of such a nature as to cast doubt on the manner in which the Bihar Cricket Association and its Anti-Corruption Unit have dealt with the matter. If the player and her father admittedly appeared before the CEO on 09.10.2025, it is difficult to comprehend how one of the witnesses could have signed the document on 05.04.2025 and the player herself and her father on 09.12.2025.
57. The Bihar Cricket Association is, therefore, directed to file a specific affidavit explaining the aforesaid discrepancies and to place on record the original documents as well as the complete file relating to the inquiry

conducted in the matter. Mr. A.K. Pandey shall also file his personal affidavit explaining the circumstances in which the document came to be witnessed by him and clarifying the discrepancy in the date appearing below his signature. This be done by 5th August 2026.

58. Since Ms. Pragati Prasad has already been restrained from participating in BCA/BCCI tournaments, no further interim directions are required at this stage.

14th Player: Ms. Anjali Singh

59. As far as Ms. Anjali Singh is concerned, the Bihar Cricket Association has submitted that, on the basis of the affidavit furnished by Mr. Menhaz Ahmad of Pappu Cricket Academy, Siwan, the matter was inquired into by the Bihar Cricket Association. Pursuant to the said inquiry, the Bihar Cricket Association imposed a ban on the player for a period of two years.
60. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, submitted that the action taken by the Bihar Cricket Association itself substantiates the allegations made in the complaint and, therefore, no further inquiry is required in the matter.
61. In view of the aforesaid action already taken by the Bihar Cricket Association, I do not consider it necessary to pass any further directions in the matter. The proceedings, insofar as they relate to Ms. Anjali Singh, stand concluded.

15th & 16th Players: Mr. Arnav Arav and Ms. Khushi Gupta

62. As far as Mr. Arnav Arav and Ms. Khushi Gupta are concerned, the grievance of the Complainant is that, despite being genuine performers in the BCA domestic season, they were not selected to represent Bihar in the BCCI tournaments.
63. The Bihar Cricket Association has submitted that the selection of players is the exclusive prerogative of the Selection Committee and that the decision of the selectors cannot be interfered with in the absence of any material establishing mala fides or arbitrariness. It has further been pointed out that, as regards Mr. Arnav Arav, he was ranked No. 91 in the batting rankings and his non-selection was based on the assessment of the Selection Committee. As regards Ms. Khushi Gupta, it has been submitted that she was, in fact, included at Serial No. 14 in the relevant list/squad. Therefore, the allegation that she was not selected is factually incorrect.
64. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, however, submitted that the Selection Committee had ignored better-performing players and had adopted arbitrary standards while making the selections. He contended that deserving players were overlooked despite their performances in the domestic season and that the selection process lacked transparency.
65. I am unable to accept the aforesaid submission. Selection of players is essentially within the domain of the Selection Committee, and unless a case of mala fides, arbitrariness or violation of the applicable Rules and Regulations is made out, this Forum cannot sit in appeal over the subjective assessment of the selectors. No such prima facie material has been placed on record in the present case.

66. Accordingly, I do not find any ground to interfere with the selection process or to issue any further directions in respect of the aforesaid players.

17th & 18th Players: Ms. Priti Priya and Ms. Puja Kumari

67. As far as Ms. Priti Priya and Ms. Puja Kumari are concerned, the grievance of the Complainant is that these players who had performed much better in the BCA domestic season were not selected to represent Bihar in the BCCI tournaments.

68. The Bihar Cricket Association has submitted that the selection of players is the exclusive prerogative of the Selection Committee and that the decision of the selectors cannot be interfered with in the absence of any material establishing mala fides or arbitrariness. It has further been pointed out that the Complainant's own Annexure shows Ms. Puja Kumari at Rank No. 1 and Ms. Priti Priya at Rank No. 3 in the Bowling Leaderboard of the BCA Senior & U-23 Women's T-20 Trophy 2024-25. However, it is submitted that selection for BCCI tournaments involves several considerations beyond a single tournament's leaderboard, including fitness, batting contribution, squad balance and the overall assessment of the Selection Committee. It is further submitted that no material has been placed on record to establish any corrupt or extraneous consideration in their non-selection.

69. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, however, submitted that the Selection Committee had ignored better-performing players and had adopted arbitrary standards while making the selections. He contended that deserving players were overlooked despite their

performances in the domestic season and that the selection process lacked transparency.

70. Even the response of the BCA is that Ms. Puja Kumari was at Rank No. 1 and Ms. Priti Priya at Rank No. 3 in the Bowling Leaderboard of the BCA Senior & U-23 Women's T-20 Trophy 2024-25. No doubt the selectors are the final arbiters in this regard, but the selection process must be transparent and fair. The BCA shall file an affidavit explaining why these players ranked at No. 1 and 3 in the bowling leaderboard were excluded. The BCA shall also place on record the Minutes of Meeting of the selection committee while selecting the team and if any reasons were given to exclude Ms. Puja Kumari and Ms. Priti Priya, the same shall be placed on record. This be done on or before 5th August, 2026.

19th, 20th & 21st Players: Mr. Gaurav Joshi, Mr. Gopi Kishan & Mr. Ankur Tandon

71. As far as Mr. Gaurav Joshi, Mr. Gopi Kishan and Mr. Ankur Tandon are concerned, the only allegation made by the Complainant is that they are "suspected players" from outside the State of Bihar. No specific particulars, documentary evidence or material has been placed on record to substantiate the said allegation.
72. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, submitted that these players also require an independent inquiry. However, in the absence of any specific pleading or supporting material, the allegation remains vague and sketchy.

73. As regards Mr. Gopi Kishan, it has been brought to my notice that the Bihar Cricket Association has already imposed a two-year ban upon him. In view thereof, no further directions are required in his case.

74. At this stage, I do not find any prima facie material to direct any inquiry or to pass any adverse order against Mr. Gaurav Joshi and Mr. Ankur Tandon. The complainant is permitted to file any fresh material available on or before 5th August 2026. In case, no fresh material is filed, then the complaint against Mr. Gaurav Joshi and Mr. Ankur Tandon shall stand closed.

22nd Player: Mr. Saurabh Mala

75. As far as Mr. Saurabh Mala is concerned, the allegation of the Complainant is that he procured a birth certificate on the basis of a forged school certificate issued in the name of a school at Nautan, West Champaran, and was thereafter permitted to participate in the domestic tournaments of the Bihar Cricket Association through the Madhepura District Cricket Association. It is further alleged that the player forms part of the same racket whereby players from outside the State are projected as residents of Bihar on the strength of forged documents.

76. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, submitted that the school records and the communication issued by the principal clearly establish that the certificate relied upon by the player was forged and that no student by the name of Mr. Saurabh Mala had ever studied in the said school. He submitted that the material on record conclusively establishes the allegations against the player.

77. The Bihar Cricket Association submitted that, upon receipt of the complaint, the matter was referred to the Anti-Corruption Unit. The Anti-

Corruption Unit, after conducting an inquiry, found that the school certificate relied upon by the player was not genuine and that no student by the name of Mr. Saurabh Mala had ever been enrolled in the concerned school. Thereafter, after affording the player an opportunity to explain, the Bihar Cricket Association imposed a two-year ban upon the player by order dated 11.06.2026.

78. In view of the action already taken by the Bihar Cricket Association and the two-year ban imposed upon the player, I do not consider it necessary to issue any further directions in the matter. The proceedings, insofar as they relate to Mr. Saurabh Mala, stand concluded.

23rd Player: Mr. Amritanshu

79. As regards Mr. Amritanshu, the principal objection raised by Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, is that during the year 2025 the player represented both the Nalanda District Cricket Association and the Patna District Cricket Association. Relying upon Rule 13 of the BCCI ODMS Rules, it is submitted that such participation is impermissible and that the player was not eligible to represent two different associations during the same season.
80. Mr. Neeraj Gupta, learned counsel for the Bihar Cricket Association, submitted that Rule 13 applies only to a change of "State Cricket Association" and not to a change of District Cricket Association. Rule 13 of the BCCI ODMS Rule reads as follows:

"13. Dual Registration of a Player

As per the rules of registration a player cannot be registered online from two different Associations in a particular season.

"A Player can participate in the BCCI Tournaments, only from one Association in a particular season."

81. I have considered the rival submissions and perused Rule 13 of the BCCI ODMS Rules. A plain reading of the Rule shows that it contemplates a transfer by a player from one "Association" to another during a particular season. In the context of the BCCI ODMS Rules, the expression "Association" necessarily refers to a State Cricket Association affiliated to the BCCI and not to a District Cricket Association functioning under a State Association. I, therefore, do not find any force in the submission that Rule 13 extends to transfers between District Cricket Associations within the same State.
82. It has further been brought on record that the player sought transfer on the ground that he was pursuing his studies in the area where the transfer was sought. In the absence of any material to suggest that the player had acted in violation of any applicable Rule or had obtained the transfer by misrepresentation, the player cannot be faulted for the same.
83. Accordingly, I find no illegality in the transfer of the player from one District Cricket Association to another. In my view, Rule 13 of the BCCI ODMS Rules has no application to the facts of the present case. No further directions are, therefore, called for in this regard. The matter is closed.

24th Player: Ms. Sanjana Chahar

84. As far as Ms. Sanjana Chahar is concerned, the only allegation made by the Complainant is that the surname "Chahar" is not ordinarily found in the State of Bihar and, therefore, she must belong to another State.

85. Mr. Pratik Kumar, learned counsel for the Complainant, reiterated the aforesaid submission and sought a direction to the Bihar Cricket Association to produce historical records to establish that the player's father and grandfather were residents of Bihar.
86. In my view, the allegation is extremely vague and cannot, by itself, give rise to any prima facie inference that the player is not a resident of Bihar. Merely because a particular surname is uncommon or not ordinarily associated with a particular State cannot lead to the conclusion that the person is ineligible to represent that State. Under Article 19 of the Constitution of India, every citizen has the right to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India. The player's parents or ancestors may well have settled in the State of Bihar. In the absence of any specific allegation supported by documentary material regarding the player's place of birth, residence or eligibility, no adverse inference can be drawn merely on the basis of her surname.
87. Accordingly, I do not find any prima facie case for issuing any direction or initiating any inquiry against the player. No further orders are required in this regard. The matter is closed.

Player 25th: Mr. Shashi Shekhar

88. As far as Mr. Shashi Shekhar is concerned, having regard to the nature of the issues involved and the submissions advanced by the parties, I am of the view that the matter requires separate consideration. Accordingly, the case of Mr. Shashi Shekhar shall be taken up and dealt with at a separate hearing. No opinion on the merits of the controversy is being expressed at this stage.

89. The Bihar Cricket Association is directed to file a supplementary affidavit on or before 5th August, 2026, placing on record, in respect of each player, the complete record pertaining to his/her registration, eligibility, participation in matches conducted by the District Cricket Association and/or the Bihar Cricket Association prior to selection for any BCCI tournament, and all other documents relevant to the issues under consideration.

Allegations against Selectors

90. Before dealing with the allegations against each selector, it may be noted that the parties have filed a common chart setting out the allegations made by the Complainant against each selector, the response of the Bihar Cricket Association, District Cricket Association and the rejoinder filed by the Complainant.

Mr. Vishal Das (Junior Team Selector – 2024–25)

91. As far as Mr. Vishal Das is concerned, the complainant has challenged the selection of Mr. Vishal Das as Junior Team Selector. His case is that though he last played in the 2018-19 Ranji Trophy, he continued to be an active player and his name appears at Serial No. 51 in the list of players called for the Ranji Trophy Selection Camp for the 2021-22 season. Mr. Pratik Kumar submits that, therefore, Mr. Vishal Das cannot be said to have retired for five years.
92. The stand of the BCA is that, in respect of Mr. Vishal Das, it sought clarification from the BCCI. The CEO of the BCA sent an e-mail dated 16.08.2024 and the BCCI, vide e-mail dated 17.08.2024, clarified that Mr. Vishal Das had last played in the 2018-19 season and that mere

inclusion in a selection camp does not amount to having played a match in that season.

93. I am not commenting on the merits of these submissions. The BCA must place on record both the e-mails dated 16.08.2024 and 17.08.2024. The same shall be placed on record by way of an affidavit of the Secretary/CEO on or before 5th August 2026.

Mr. Anant Pratap (Women's Team Selector – 2023–24 & 2024–25)

94. In respect of Mr. Anant Pratap, there are two allegations. One is that he does not belong to the State of Bihar and is, therefore, not eligible for appointment as a Women's Team Selector. Secondly, it is alleged that there are no details of the matches played by him.
95. The stand of the BCA is that eligible candidates from the State of Bihar were not available and, therefore, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, vide order dated 14.10.2025, permitted appointment of selectors out of players not belonging to the State of Bihar. Thereafter, Mr. Anant Pratap, who had represented Tripura, was appointed on merit.
96. The BCA is directed to file a fresh affidavit in this matter stating the date on which the advertisement was issued inviting applications for appointment of selector(s) for the State of Bihar. It shall also place on record whether eligible players from the State of Bihar had applied pursuant to the said advertisement. In its affidavit, the BCA shall further inform whether any notification was issued inviting applications from ex-players who had not played for Bihar to apply for appointment as selectors for the State of Bihar and the process adopted for selecting Mr. Anant Pratap. Even if non-residents were to be appointed, the BCA shall

explain whether any notification inviting applications from such candidates was issued. The affidavit shall be filed by the Secretary/CEO on or before 5th August 2026.

Ms. Priya Kishori and Ms. Sanjana Ray (Women's Team Selectors – 2023–24)

97. The allegation in respect of Ms. Priya Kishori and Ms. Sanjana Ray is that they were ineligible and were still appointed as Women's Team Selectors. It is further urged that even the BCCI found them to be ineligible.
98. The response of the BCA is that the Selection Committee was appointed by the Annual General Meeting of the BCA and not by the President.
99. The BCA is directed to file an affidavit stating whether any advertisement inviting applications for appointment of selectors was issued, the method adopted for screening the applications received and the method adopted for selecting the best candidates amongst the applicants.
100. The affidavit shall be filed by the Secretary/CEO on or before 5th August, 2026.

Mr. Anand Kumar (Selector)

101. The main argument in respect of Mr. Anand Kumar is that he did not take part in several meetings of the Selection Committee and had not signed many of the selection lists prepared during his tenure. There is, however, no challenge to his appointment as a selector.

102. The respondent is directed to file a short affidavit giving details of all the meetings of the Selection Committee along with photocopies of the original selection sheets showing whether he had signed or not signed the same. The affidavit shall be filed on or before 5th August, 2026.

Mr. Vishnu Shankar (Selector)

103. The allegation against Mr. Vishnu Shankar is that he has continuously remained associated with the Bihar Cricket Association and has assisted in the unlawful selection process, including facilitating the selection and participation of players from outside the State in Bihar teams for BCCI competitions.

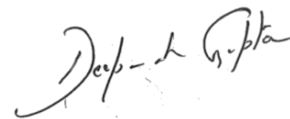
104. It is further alleged that this is why he was appointed as a selector during the 2022-2023 and 2025-2026 seasons and as a member of the coaching staff during the 2024-2025 season.

105. The stand of the BCA is that Mr. Vishnu Shankar was appointed by the Annual General Meeting of the BCA. It is submitted that the allegations are vague and general in nature and no specific instance, player or season has been identified by the complainant.

106. The allegations made against Mr. Vishnu Shankar are vague and general in nature. No specific instance or particulars have been given in support of the allegations. Therefore, this complaint is rejected at this stage. However, liberty is granted to the complainant to file a fresh application giving details and particulars of the alleged misconduct of Mr. Vishnu Shankar, if so desired.

Mr. Suvir Singh (Selector)

107. Mr. Neeraj Gupta states that he would like to file an additional affidavit in respect of Mr. Suvir Singh within four weeks.
108. By the above order, in some of the matters, the parties have been granted time up to 5th August, 2026 to file further affidavits and/or documents. Rejoinders, if any, shall be filed on or before 19th August, 2026. The parties shall thereafter file a fresh consolidated chart incorporating the additional documents and pleadings filed by them on or before 26.08.2026.
109. The Bihar Cricket Association (BCA) shall pay hearing fee of INR 50,000/-. Mr. Pratik Kumar being an ex-player is exempted from payment of fees.
110. List the matters on 29.08.2026 for further proceedings through video-conferencing.
111. The BCA is directed to upload a copy of this order at its website.



Justice Deepak Gupta (Retd.)
Ombudsman