



SC Slams Politicisation of Sports Administration

For Prelims: [Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India](#), [Supreme Court of India](#), [Indian Olympic Association](#), [State subject](#), [National Sports Code of India](#)

For Mains: Judicial Oversight in Sports Administration, Politicization in Indian Sports Federations, Sports Governance

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Why in News?

The [Supreme Court of India](#) has directed the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** to ensure Indian kabaddi players participate in the **Asian Kabaddi Championship 2025**.

- The directive comes amid [Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India \(AKFI's\)](#) suspension by the **International Kabaddi Federation (IKF)**, with the court slamming political interference and bureaucratic control in sports administration.

Why was the AKFI Suspended by IKF?

- **About:** The **AKFI** is the **apex governing body for Kabaddi** in India. It regulates all forms of Kabaddi, including **National, Indoor, Beach, and Circle Style**, and plays a key role in organizing tournaments, selecting teams, and overseeing the sport's development.
 - **Headquarters:** Jaipur, Rajasthan
 - **Affiliations:** [Indian Olympic Association \(IOA\)](#), **Asian Kabaddi Federation (AKF)**, and **International Kabaddi Federation (IKF)**. AKFI follows guidelines received from the IKF and AKF.
 - **Recognition:** Officially recognized by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India**.
- **Concerns Regarding AKFI:** AKFI faces allegations of **opaque elections, mismanagement, and monopolization** by politicians, raising concerns over **nepotism** and fair representation.
- **Delhi HC Intervention:** Amid AKFI management concerns, the Delhi High Court appointed Justice (Retd) S.P. Garg as administrator to oversee its affairs.
- **AKFI Suspension:** IKF suspended AKFI over governance issues, citing the **absence of an elected body**, jeopardizing India's international Kabaddi participation.
 - IKF assured AKFI's affiliation restoration and India's participation at the Iran championship if an elected body replaced the administrator.

Note: The IKF, founded in 2004 and headquartered in Jaipur, is the global governing body of Kabaddi, with 24 affiliated countries (including India).

What Did the Supreme Court Order?

- The Supreme Court instructed **Justice (Retd.) S.P. Garg**, to **hand over charge to the newly elected body** from the **December 2023 elections**.
 - The Court stressed urgency due to the upcoming Asian Kabaddi Championship 2025, directing AKFI's Governing Body to immediately **select teams and arrange training camps**, and ensure India's participation in the tournament.
- The Court also clarified that the transfer of authority **does not imply endorsement** of the AKFI elections and that related issues remain open for adjudication.

What are the SC's Concerns Regarding Sports Administration?

- **Politicization:** Former politicians and bureaucrats dominate sports bodies, sidelining **athletes**.
 - SC acknowledges that sports associations improve when sportspersons take charge rather than political or bureaucratic appointees.
- **Mismanagement:** Allegations of **opaque election processes, financial irregularities, and monopolization** by certain individuals have surfaced.
 - Federations like AKFI operate without **properly elected governing bodies**, violating sports norms not aligning with the [National Sports Code of India 2011](#).
- **No Checks and Balances:** With no clear oversight or accountability, sports bodies operate without transparency, as evident in the [2010 Commonwealth Games](#), where the [Central Vigilance Commission \(CVC\)](#) reported financial irregularities in 14 projects.
- **Impact on Athletes:** Delays in team selection, training, and tournament participation due to administrative inefficiencies harm athletes.
 - Athletes face [sexual harassment](#), but weak complaint systems and delayed action leave them vulnerable, demanding urgent reforms.
- **Sports Infrastructure:** As sports is a [State subject](#), there is no uniform approach to infrastructure development across India.

What is the National Sports Code of India 2011?

Click Here to Read: [National Sports Code of India 2011](#)

Way Forward

- **Auditing:** Engaging diplomatic channels to resolve sports federation recognition issues and ensuring [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#) and [INTERPOL](#) investigations to eliminate corruption and vested interests at national and international levels.
 - A **central regulatory body** with clear statutes and democratic principles is needed to **govern all sports federations**, ensuring transparent governance and strict oversight for fair and accountable administration.
- **Empowering Athletes:** Athletes must have **active roles in decision-making** for transparency and accountability.
 - Follow the **Olympic Charter**, which mandates athlete representatives in **National Olympic Committees** (e.g., IOA in India).

Increasing Women's Representation: Ensure **gender equality**, establish quotas, and **create a safe, inclusive environment** to encourage women in sports administration careers.

Drishti Mains Question:

Examine the impact of political interference and bureaucratic control in Indian sports federations.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q. An athlete participates in the Olympics for personal triumph and nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies, on their return. Discuss the merit of state sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement. **(2014)**

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