

Howman on Rule 15 Findings: India – ‘Extremely High’ Doping Risk; Bahrain – ‘Vast Improvement’

20 APRIL 2026, MONACO: Indian athletes must now comply with more stringent anti-doping stipulations following the Athletics Federation of India’s (AFI) recategorization from ‘Category B’ to ‘Category A’, under Rule 15 of the [World Athletics’ Anti-Doping Rules](#).

This decision, recently taken by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) Board, relates to the consistently “extremely high” risk of doping in India which has ranked in the top two for the most Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) in athletics between 2022 and 2025. In 2022, India recorded 48 ADRV (ranked 2nd); in 2023, 63 (ranked 2nd); in 2024, 71 (ranked 1st); and for 2025, India has recorded 30 ADRV so far (ranked 1st) (note: there will be a substantial time lag in reporting the final ADRV numbers).

Under the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules, the AIU Board categorises all Member Federations according to their doping risk to the sport. ‘Category A’ Member Federations, representing the highest risk, are subject to more stringent requirements under the Rules, including minimum testing requirements for their national team athletes.

“The doping situation in India has been high-risk for a long time and, unfortunately, the quality of the domestic anti-doping programme is simply not proportionate to the doping risk,” explained AIU Chair David Howman.

“While the AFI has advocated for anti-doping reforms within India, not enough has changed. The AIU will now work with the AFI to achieve reforms to safeguard the integrity of the sport of athletics, as we have done with other ‘Category A’ Member Federations.”

In contrast to the situation in India, Howman announced that, following strong reform efforts, the Bahrain Athletics Association (BAA) will be re-categorised from ‘Category A’ to ‘Category B’ in 2027 provided that current measures already in place are maintained throughout 2026.

Howman stated: “The BAA is to be congratulated on the vast improvement of the anti-doping situation in Bahrain.”

Important achievements include the creation of a new, independent Bahrain NADO which has significantly increased its national testing pool size, is conducting proper no-notice out-of-competition testing and is rigorously testing Bahrain athletes based in other countries. The BAA itself has introduced effective measures for performance monitoring and education of its athletes, vetting for athlete support personnel and measures to monitor athletes based abroad.

“These high standards need only be maintained in 2026 for the BAA to be re-categorised for 2027 – our next World Championships year,” Howman added.

Elsewhere, 'Category B' Federations, Botswana, Peru and Cuba are now subject to minimum testing obligations for their athletes competing at the following events: the World Relays in Gaborone in May (Botswanan athletes); the World Racewalking Championships in Brasilia staged earlier this month on April 12 (Peruvian athletes); and the World Athletics Championships in Beijing 2027 (Peruvian, Botswanan and Cuban athletes).

While these 'Category B' Federations have not at this time been categorised as 'high risk for doping', the AIU Board has imposed minimum testing obligations due to consistently inadequate testing levels on their national teams.

"The imposition of minimum testing obligations for Botswana for the World Relays 2026 and the Beijing World Championships 2027 stems from an inadequate response to repeated warnings about low testing levels, and an increase in performance at international level," explained Howman.

On the other hand, the Peru team had already been subject to minimum testing obligations in 2024 for the Paris Olympics before the obligations were lifted in 2025.

"However, we witnessed a total backsliding by Peru in 2025 – almost returning to the testing levels that were the basis for the imposition of the minimum testing obligations for the Paris Olympic Games in the first place," disclosed the AIU Chair.

Meanwhile, in the lead-up to last year's World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, Cuba recorded the highest percentage of athletes with zero out-of-competition tests among the top 40 nations, and overall national-level testing also declined by 50 per cent compared to the lead-up period for the Paris Olympic Games.

The athletes for each of these teams must have a minimum 3 out-of-competition tests in the lead-up to the relevant event to be eligible to compete.

Note: Rule 15 of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules came into effect in 2019. It creates anti-doping obligations on national federations who can be held accountable for the anti-doping programmes operated in their country. A key requirement is that there must be a reasonable and proportionate anti-doping programme in place for national teams who compete at major championships in the sport of athletics. Federations may be categorised according to their doping risk to the sport, with differing specific obligations applying depending on the category.

ABOUT THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT

Link: [HTTPS://WWW.ATHLETICSINTEGRITY.ORG](https://www.athleticsintegrity.org)

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by the World Athletics that manages all integrity issues – both doping and non-doping – for the sport of athletics. The remit

of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behaviour with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU's role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.



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