

The Indian EXPRESS

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE
SINCE 1932

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021, CHANDIGARH, LATE CITY, 16 PAGES

₹4.00 WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Animal welfare board, US outfit flag 'illegal greyhound races' in Punjab, demand action

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CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 21

THE ANIMAL Welfare Board of India (AWBI) and a US based organisation working against greyhound races have separately written to Punjab government alleging "illegal conduct of dog races" in the State and demanding immediate action against the offenders.

Citing a complaint it received, the AWBI while referring to "illegal conduct of greyhound dog races held in Faridkot on February 13" requested to ensure that "such illegal events are not allowed to take place anywhere or at any time in future."

The GREY2K USA Worldwide, a US-based organisation, has also written to Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh in this regard. "I urge you to enforce the humane laws against dog racing in Punjab. It is my understanding that illegal races have again occurred, this time in the Faridkot District on

February 13," GREY2K USA Worldwide Education Fund president and general counsel Christine A Dorchak said in correspondence addressed to the CM

GREY2K USA, as per its website, is the largest greyhound protection organization in the world. "As a non-profit entity, we work to pass stronger greyhound protection laws and end the cruelty of dog racing on both national and international levels. We also promote the rescue and adoption of greyhounds across the globe," the website says.

In its mission statement, organisation says, "Greyhound racing is cruel and inhumane, and should be prohibited. GREY2K USA was the first organization to successfully outlaw dog racing using the ballot initiative process.... Since our formation, dozens of American dog tracks have closed for live racing, and dog racing is now illegal in 41 states. We also engage all around the globe to end the cru-



The two outfits said an illegal greahound race was held in Faridkot on February 13. *File*

elty of commercial dog racing in the six other countries where it currently exists."

Referring to greyhound race in Faridkot, Christine wrote, "This anachronous activity has proven to be cruel and inhumane as well as economically and socially damaging in the few countries that have adopted it. To this end, the only legal dog track in China has been closed and adoption groups around the world had to join together to save the dogs. Here in the United States, where dog racing was

first introduced in 1919, nearly all our fifty states have made dog racing illegal. The trend is with the greyhounds and away from their exploitation."

The AWBI, meanwhile, through its letter, which was also marked to Punjab Chief Secretary, State Animal Husbandry director, the Director General of Police and Faridkot Deputy Commissioner, directed that "the action taken report may be sent to the Board immediately."

Referring to a Supreme Court judgment, AWBI noted, "In fact, the ban is very wide, and is ab-

solute. Races and other events involving bulls, bullocks, cattle, etc cannot be conducted.... The permission granted and conducting of this race is in clear violation of the Supreme Court judgment, and in fact, will be tantamount to contempt of court."

Earlier, in an email message to AWBI officials, the complainant had alleged that "despite the letter written by Secretary, Animal Welfare Board of India, on 7th Dec[ember] 2020 to the state govt of Punjab and Animal Husbandry Dept of Punjab, the greyhound races are still continuing. Greyhound races were held in Faridkot of Punjab, on 13th February 2021 which is clear violation of AWBI instructions and Supreme Court directions. It seems that laws are not enforced effectively." The complainant further wrote that "it is very shocking to see Animal Husbandry Dept and District administration of Punjab gives permission for holding such events."