



**AND IN THE MATTER OF:-**

**JUUL Labs, Inc.**

IP Legal

1000F Street NW,

8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, D.C.

20004 USA

.....Complainant

**Versus**

**Rahul Sharma**

F-21, Chennai,

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

India – 600062

rrrrsharma90@gmail.com

.....Respondent

**AWARD**

**13.02.2026**

1. The present arbitration proceedings are initiated under and in accordance with the INDRP, and the INDRP Rules of Procedure which are adopted by the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) which governs the dispute in connection with .IN domain name.
2. The Complainant has filed the subject complaint against the Respondent, *inter alia*, seeking transfer of domain name <juulvape.in> from the Respondent to the Complainant.
3. The Registrant/Respondent has registered the <juulvape.in> (hereinafter ‘disputed domain name’) with the domain name Registrar duly accredited with the NIXI i.e. GoDaddy.com, LLC since 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2025.

**Procedural history**

4. I was appointed as an Arbitrator by the NIXI in the present matter vide their email dated 31.12.2025 which email containing the complaint and all relevant documents was marked to the Respondent (rrrrsharma90@gmail.com) as well. The said email of the Respondent is reflected as such in

*Vareem Singh*

the WHOIS record of the disputed domain name. The Arbitrator issued a notice dated 02.01.2026 under Rule 5(c) of INDRP Rules of Procedure whereby the Respondent was directed to file its reply to the Complaint till 01.02.2026. The parties were directed to file their respective written submissions by 06.02.2026. The said notice issued by the present Arbitrator was marked via email dated 02.01.2026 to the Complainant and to the Respondent, which email did not bounce back. The Respondent was duly served with the complaint and documents vide email dated 31.12.2025 by NIXI. Thereafter, the notice 02.01.2026 of the Arbitrator was also duly served on the Respondent vide Arbitrator's email of same date.

5. The Complainant, vide notice dated 02.01.2026 was directed to serve again on the Respondent the subject complaint and all accompanying documents, including the said Notice of the Arbitrator, so that the Respondent is provided with ample opportunity to file his reply.
6. The Complainant, through its learned counsel vide email dated 05.01.2026 has sent the aforesaid documents to the Respondent at his aforesaid email id i.e. rrrrsharma90@gmail.com. The said email dated 05.01.2026 was marked to the Arbitrator as well. Thereafter, the learned counsel of the complainant vide separate his email dated 05.01.2026, to the Arbitrator with a copy to the Respondent, sent the email delivery receipt of the aforesaid email dated 05.01.2026 and the Courier tracking receipt (Consignment no. 17587891392), as documents, to show that domain complaint and the required documents were duly sent to the

Respondent in compliance of the aforesaid notice issued by the Arbitrator.

7. In view of foregoing, it is apparent that Respondent was served with domain complaint along with all other documents firstly by NIXI vide their email dated 31.12.2025, secondly by the Complainant vide their email dated 05.01.2026. The Notice dated 02.01.2026, via email of same date by the Arbitrator was also served on the Respondent. The said email of the Arbitrator did not bounce back. Furthermore, both the emails of the Complainant dated 05.01.2026 to the Arbitrator stating that Respondent was duly served with the complaint was also marked to the Respondent as well.
8. All possible attempts were made to serve the Respondent. Therefore, I can safely hold that Respondent was duly served with domain complaint along with documents thereto and is aware of present proceedings. This Tribunal has not received any reply to the complaint from the Respondent. The Respondent has avoided participation in present proceedings.
9. Rule 5(d) of the INDRP Rules of Procedure states that the date of commencement of the arbitration proceeding shall be the date on which the arbitrator issues notice to the Respondent. Therefore, the date of commencement of arbitration in the present case is 02.01.2026. Rule 5(e) of the INDRP Rules of Procedure states that an Arbitrator shall pass an award within a period of 60 days from the date of commencement of the arbitration proceeding and in exceptional circumstances, the timeline may be extended by a maximum period of 30 days by the Arbitrator subject to a reasonable justification in writing. The present award is

passed within the timelines prescribed under the INDRP Rules of Procedure.

### **Issues for consideration**

10. Paragraph 4 of the INDRP provides the grounds on which a complaint can be filed by the aggrieved Complainant who considers that a registered domain name conflicts with his/her legitimate rights or interests on the following grounds:

(a) the Registrant's domain name is identical and/or confusingly similar to a Name, Trademark or Service Mark etc. in which the Complainant has rights; and

(b) the Registrant has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name; and

(c) the Registrant's domain name has been registered or is being used either in bad faith or for illegal/unlawful purpose.

### **Contention of the Parties**

11. The Complainant in its complaint, *inter alia*, states the following:-

a. The Complainant under the trade mark JUUL provides an alternative for adult smokers which delivers nicotine satisfaction akin to a cigarette in a format which is easy to use. The JUUL system's proprietary nicotine salt formula, design, and temperature regulation result in an experience that create alternative to cigarette smokers.

b. The Complainant is using its trade mark JUUL since at least as early as 2015 when the product under the trade mark JUUL was launched.

*Vasum Singh*

- c. The global sales of JUUL products are in billions of dollars since the launch in 2015.
- d. The products of the complainant under the trade mark JUUL have garnered publicity in articles in Men's Fitness, Business Insider, Forbes, The New Yorker, the New York Times, Wired, TIME and many other publications. The Complainant has filed third party articles from Business Insider, Business Wire, which are from years 2016 and 2017.
- e. The products of the Complainant's products are sold through convenience stores as well as through Complainant e-commerce websites hosted at <juul.com> in US, <juul.co.uk> in UK, and <juul.ca> in Canada. The Complainant also uses other JUUL-specific domain names to promote its website, such as <juulvapor.com> and operates company websites at domains such as <juullabs.com> and <juullabs.co.uk>. The Complainant has produced extracts from its website [www.juullabs.com](http://www.juullabs.com).
- f. The Complainant states that it displays the trade mark JUUL throughout its websites and on the packaging of its products. The details of the complainant's products were accessible in India prior to the regulatory restrictions being imposed.
- g. The Complainant has its trade marks JUUL, JUULPOD, JUULPODS, JUUL2 and JUUL registered in different jurisdictions including in USA. The trade mark registration certificate mentions the date of first use w.r.t trade mark JUUL as 01.062015. In India, the trade mark JUUL of the Complainant is granted protection under International Registration No. 1262817 (IRDI-3157820). The said

*Vaishali Singh*

protection is granted since 30.06.2015. JUUL is also part of the tradename of the Complainant.

- h. The Complainant has mentioned several UDRP decision in its favour. The Complainant has also mentioned INDRP Case No. 1086 dated 03.07.2019 titled Juul Labs, Inc Vs Saad Shariff whereby the domain name <juul.co.in> was ordered to be transferred in favour of the Complainant, and INDRP Case no. 1104 dated 24.06.2019 titled as Juul Labs, Inc Vs. Rohan Verma whereby the domain name <juulpod.in> was ordered to be transferred in favour of the Complainant.
  - i. The Complainant came across the Respondent's website which purports to be unauthorizedly selling the Complainant's goods, which are currently not available in the Indian jurisdiction due to regulatory mandates. In addition to using the Complainant's trademark JUUL as a part of the disputed domain name, the Respondent is extensively using the JUUL trademarks and has also copied the product listing images from the Complainant's websites which is protected under copyright. The foregoing creates the false impression that the Respondent and the website hosted at the Disputed Domain are of the Complainant or are affiliated with, sponsored or endorsed by the Complainant and that the Complainant is selling its products in India despite the regulatory restrictions. The Complainant has filed the Whois record for the Disputed Domain and the webpages of the hosted website.
12. The Respondent did not file any reply to the complaint, despite ample opportunity granted, as mentioned above.

Vaani Singh

**Respondent's disputed domain name confusingly similar to Complainant's trade mark**

13. The trade mark and tradename of the Complainant are prior to the registration of the disputed domain name.
14. The Complainant is successful in showing the prior use of its registered trademark JUUL which is much prior to the registration/creation of the disputed domain name.
15. It is well established law that the specific top-level domain such as '.com', '.net', '.in' etc does not affect the domain name for the purpose of determining whether it is identical or confusingly similar (*Relevant decision:- Rollerblade, Inc. v. Chris McCrady*<sup>1</sup>). Therefore, TLD '.in' is to be disregarded while comparing the disputed domain name with the trademark of the Complainant. When the trade mark (JUUL) and the domain name <juul.com> of the Complainant and the disputed domain name (<juulvape.in>) are considered, there is no doubt that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the registered trade mark, and domain names of the Complainant. The inclusion of descriptive word 'vape' in the disputed domain name does not make it distinguishable from the registered trade mark JUUL of the Complainant.
16. The registered trade mark of the Complainant is prior in use. The said trade mark JUUL has protection under the Indian Law. trade mark JUUL of the Complainant is granted protection under International Registration No. 1262817

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<sup>1</sup> WIPO Case No. D2000-0429

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