



**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

*Date:23-01-23*

## **Wrestling Nightmares**

*Probe sexual harassment with strictness and sensitivity*

### **TOI Editorials**

In its eight-page reply to the Union sports ministry, the Wrestling Federation of India dismissed all allegations of sexual harassment as motivated by a “hidden agenda”. The sweeping, simplistic and swift way in which it did so only confirmed what the wrestlers protesting at Jantar Mantar were spotlighting – that the federation silences every accusation against its domineering chief. At that point, the ministry finally asked Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh to “step aside”. But this is only the start of a fair hearing to Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and the other much-medalled wrestlers who are speaking in public for those who cannot yet do so themselves.

That these sexual harassment allegations are not yet in writing and that the victims haven’t yet stepped forward is quite understandable given the thick history of harassment complaints against male administrators and coaches that ended up with the complainant paying a bigger price. Both the sports ministry and IOA’s oversight committees for probing the allegations against Singh and WFI must therefore do their work not only with diligence, but also sensitivity. Women who have already suffered unjustly, must not be subjected to brute invasions of privacy. Deliver a timely verdict, initiate police action as warranted, and begin institutional fixes.

Indian sports also need more women in positions of authority, including as coaches. Their presence is critical for budding female athletes, who shall be watching the two probes closely. Sexist nightmares can quickly wither a young woman’s dream of winning golden glory for her country.

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**THE ECONOMIC TIMES**

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## **It’s Good to Get More Neighbourly**

### **ET Editorials**

Big Brother India’s continued and proactive support for Sri Lanka’s economic recovery, most recently at the International Monetary Fund, provides a glimpse into the role New Delhi envisions in the region. The possibility of using Indian power infrastructure for electricity trade between Nepal and Bangladesh is another facet of India’s neighbourhood engagement. These bonds of support, trade and economic opportunities should bind the countries, with India as a critical player. Acting in unison would be in enlightened self-interest of each country of the South Asia/BIMSTEC region.

New Delhi has been steadfast in its support to Colombo as the fuel, energy and commodities engulfed Sri Lanka and pushed the island nation into political turmoil. Now as Sri Lanka charts a recovery, India was the first country to provide a letter of support at the IMF. New Delhi consistently maintains that economic prosperity of the countries of the region is beneficial for all. As the bigger economy, its investment in these countries and increasing trade is about mutual benefit and not dominance. This approach makes India a reliable partner. The power trade between Nepal and Bangladesh reflects this. Nepal will gain from the sale, and Bangladesh will benefit from the access to electricity. Earlier, India provided debt finance for construction of the 1320 mw Rampal power plant in Bangladesh.

There will be occasions when countries will shop around New Delhi and Beijing for the best deal. There is no denying that China has a bigger economy and greater capacity to invest. However, India's approach, its commitment to building partnerships and not using investments to take over national assets should, along with the ties of language, culture, history, give it an edge.



*Date: 23-01-23*

## Necessary pushback

### *The Centre should stop seeing judicial appointments as rewards for loyalists*

#### **Editorial**

The Supreme Court collegium has done well to push back against the Union government's attempts to block the appointment of some advocates as High Court judges. The three-member collegium, which makes recommendations for High Court appointments, has reiterated its decision to elevate lawyers Saurabh Kirpal to the Delhi High Court, R. John Sathyan to the Madras High Court and Somasekhar Sundaresan to the Bombay High Court. As it dealt in detail with the objections raised by the Centre in each individual case, the motives behind the government's ongoing contestation with the judiciary over appointments to constitutional courts stand exposed. Communications between the collegium and the Centre offer a glimpse into the untenable nature of the government's objections to proposed appointees, making it abundantly clear how badly the current regime wants to control judicial appointments. If the objection based on a candidate's sexual orientation smacks of a medieval-minded ideological bias, the effort to stall the elevation of a couple of advocates based on their social media activity exposes a mindset that sees appointments to the higher judiciary as a system of spoils meant for political loyalists. As the collegium has pointed out, neither the sexual orientation of Mr. Kirpal nor the airing of political views by the other two advocates will impinge on their suitability or integrity.

The government appears to think that potential candidates for judicial appointments should not have political views of their own, or that a tendency to make their views or opinion known will amount to a possible bias in their functioning as judges. Nothing can disprove this more than the fact that there are other names — to which the government seems to have no objections — that are closely associated with

political parties. Indeed, one can say that the history of judicial appointments is replete with instances of government law officers, who invariably enjoy the confidence of the political leadership at the Centre or the States, and lawyers who represent political leaders being offered positions on both the Supreme Court and High Court Benches. The objection based on sexual orientation is particularly appalling, as it is contrary to the constitutional position against discrimination based on sex or sexual preferences. The viewpoint that the collegium system of appointments is flawed as it is opaque and tends to reduce the zone of consideration is valid. However, the manner in which the current regime is seeking to filter out candidates who, it suspects, may not further its political agenda will surely give the impression that allowing any sort of government interference will pose a threat to judicial independence.

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## **A reminder of the flaws in India's urbanisation policies**

*A recent report on urban financing for India is another case of a top down approach that is over dependent on technocentric solutions and capital-intensive technologies*

**Tikender Singh Panwar is a former deputy mayor, shimla and an urban specialist**

A report by the World Bank, released in November last year, on financing India's urban infrastructure needs, focuses on private investments ameliorating urban problems. The push to attract private capital, since the 1990s, followed by the urban reforms under the United Progressive Alliance I regime, the Smart City mission, and now this report, continues to plague India's policy paradigm in the urban sector.

So, has the reform process really been able to attract private capital to urban infrastructure?

After three decades of reforms, urban finance predominantly comes from the government. Of the finances needed to fund urban capital expenditures, 48%, 24% and 15% are derived from the central, State, and city governments, respectively. Public-private partnership projects contribute 3% and commercial debt 2%.

In the last few years, various reports have estimated a huge demand for funding urban infrastructure; for example, the Isher Judge Ahluwalia report says that by 2030, nearly ₹39.2 lakh crore would be required. Likewise, the 11th Plan puts forth estimates of ₹1,29,337 crore for four basic services, ₹1,32,590 crore for urban transport and ₹1,32,590 crore for housing. A McKinsey report on urbanisation has a figure of \$1.2 trillion, or ₹90 lakh crore.

### **World Bank estimates**

The World Bank estimates that nearly \$840 billion (₹70 lakh crore) would be needed for investment in urban India to meet the growing demands of the population, and \$55 billion would be required annually. The flagship programmes of the government, the Smart City mission, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), etc., are not more than ₹2 lakh crore (that too for a period of five years). So, how will such a gap between demand and supply be matched?

The core idea of the report and the solutions suggested include “improving the fiscal base and creditworthiness of the Indian cities. Cities must institute a buoyant revenue base and be able to recover the cost of providing its services”. In simpler terms, it means increasing property taxes, user fees and service charges to name a few.

This report already points out that nearly 85% of government revenue is from the cities. This means that urban citizens are contributing large revenues even as the World Bank report’s emphasis is on the levying of more burdens in the form of user charges on utilities, etc. But the point is even by enhancing the tax base, will it be sufficient to meet the rising demands of urban infrastructure in the cities?

### **Finding alternative paths**

The basic problem with this report and other reports drawn up in a similar fashion is that they are made using a top to bottom approach, with too much of a focus on technocentric solutions using very high capital-intensive technologies.

For the urban context, plans must be made from below by engaging with the people and identifying their needs.

Empowering the city governments and the people at large is the second point. In the national task force that reviewed the 74th Constitutional Amendment, chaired by K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, many suggestions were made such as empowering the people, transferring subjects to the city governments, suggesting that 10% of the income-tax collected from cities be given back to them and ensuring that this corpus fund was utilised only for infrastructure building. This would ensure that city governments had an advantage in ensuring rapid transformation.

Another important aspect of urban infrastructure is linked to urban governance, which is in a shambles in most parts of the country. Regular elections should be held in cities and there must be empowerment through the transferring of the three Fs: finances, functions, and functionaries.

Cities primarily are run by parastatals and the city governments hardly have any role to play in the smooth functioning of such parastatals.

The World Bank in its report has stated in the report (page 69): “As an example, state-level management of urban water and sewerage functions may be devolved in a time-bound manner. An improved urban legal framework that includes a stable and certain fiscal transfer regime, accords financial powers to ULBs [urban local bodies] along with attendant rules/regulations... will determine the medium- to long-term scale of investment flows for urban infrastructure.”

### **The Shimla example**

However, the exact opposite is happening. The Shimla water story is an example. The Shimla water works was transformed into a single utility in 2016-17, called the Greater Shimla Water Supply and Sewage Circle (GSWSSC) under the Shimla Municipal Corporation. The Bank rendered help in the form of a soft loan, ensuring an adequate supply of water and proper distribution by the utility, but under the Shimla Municipal Corporation. However, in 2017-18, it changed the character of GSWSSC to a company and formed the Shimla Jal Prabandhan Nigam Limited, now run under a board of directors, but outside the ambit of the municipality.

Such machinations shall not serve the purpose and will be perilous to the entire purpose of the urbanisation in India. The World Bank report is another reminder of the tragedy which Indian urbanisation is witnessing — “policy paralysis from the top”.

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## It’s time for India’s universities to join the world

**Opening to the world means making India more visible on the global academic scene and also learning about, and implementing, best practices from abroad**

**Philip G.Altbach**



With India assuming the G20 presidency, it is now time for it to join the world’s academic community as a major player. Indians are well-known globally as top scientists and academics, university leaders, and key leaders in high tech, but little is known about the academic environment from which they have emerged. India’s academic system is now the world’s second largest. And, as articulated in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020, the country is actively pursuing reform and improvement.

Opening to the world means making India more visible on the global academic scene and also learning about, and implementing, best practices from abroad. The G20 leadership is an excellent opportunity to do both. Further, one of the priority areas in education during India’s G20 presidency is ‘Strengthening Research and Promoting Innovation through Richer Collaboration’. India is in a particularly advantageous position — the world sees India as an increasingly important economy and geopolitical player. India also plays an important role in higher education — mainly as an exporter of students and talent in many scientific fields — and especially in information technology and related fields. There is a growing interest abroad in linking with Indian universities and research institutes, not only because of untapped talent but also due to disengagement from China by some Western countries.

### **Unknown, complex system**

India is not only the world’s second largest academic system, but also one of the world’s most complex and little understood academic environments. Its higher education sector is fragmented, inflexible with tight subject boundaries, and of uneven quality. The NEP’s focus is on consolidation, with the goal of bringing flexibility and multi-disciplinary education and improving quality. While private sector colleges and universities will continue to fuel growth, high-quality government institutions such as the IITs and AIIMS are also expanding and improving, and will likely achieve good results if they are adequately funded and permitted to have appropriate autonomy.

India has set up the National Institutional Ranking Framework, which has helped fuel competition among institutions. India's global ranking in scientific publications improved from the seventh position in 2010 to the third in 2020. India ranks third in terms of the number of PhDs awarded in science and engineering. India's Global Innovation Index ranking has also improved significantly, from 81 in 2014 to 40 in 2022, although it lags significantly behind the U.S. and China.

Indian universities have not scored well in the global rankings. The highest-scoring Indian institution in the 2023 Times Higher Education ranking is the Indian Institute of Science, in the 251-300 range. Another 75 institutions are ranked lower. The best-known institutions globally are the IITs. These do not rank well because they are small, specialised schools and not comprehensive universities, but their quality is much better than their ranking scores. The recent announcement that IIT-Kharagpur will establish a branch campus in Malaysia will help. For India to catch up, both in the rankings and in reality, will take significant investment over a sustained period of time. In comparison, China over decades has invested billions of dollars to improve its top universities — and this shows in the rankings and in measures of scientific output.

### **Distinctiveness**

There are elements of India's academic environment that are distinctive and worth highlighting to an international audience. These include the emergence of about a dozen top-quality non-profit private universities, mostly funded by philanthropically minded Indians. This elite sector is expanding and is focused on building an international 'brand' for Indian higher education. India uses English as the main language of science and higher education, which makes it much easier to interact with the rest of the world. India has more than 100 research laboratories in diverse areas sponsored by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and other Central government agencies. Some are outstanding in terms of their research contributions and their relationships with India's economy.

### **Exercising leadership**

India's universities and its scientific prowess are an important part of a soft power strategy. The internationalisation initiatives outlined in the NEP is an important start. India's G20 leadership is also an excellent opportunity to exercise leadership. Two interesting initiatives have been suggested. One is a conference in India of leaders of universities in the G20 countries with the aim of acquainting them with India's academic opportunities. Another is the creation of a prestigious scholarship programme, similar to the Fulbright programme, that would provide top Indian students and faculty time in leading universities abroad and funding to bring top academic from abroad to India. China's version of this is the China Scholarship Council.

Indian universities, researchers, and academics also need to involve themselves in the global scientific community through participation in joint projects, international meetings, and the like. All this will take careful planning, sustained resources, support from the Central and State governments and an expanded international consciousness in the Indian academic community.

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# दैनिक जागरण

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## कलेजियम पर टकराव

संपादकीय



यह सही समय है कि सरकार और सुप्रीम कोर्ट कलेजियम व्यवस्था को लेकर संवाद करें। यदि सुप्रीम कोर्ट यह समझ रहा है कि कलेजियम व्यवस्था को संविधानसम्मत बताने से उसे स्वीकार कर लिया जाएगा तो यह संभव नहीं। इसी तरह इससे भी बात बनने वाली नहीं कि सरकार इस व्यवस्था की विसंगतियों को बयान करती रहे। सुप्रीम कोर्ट कलेजियम ने जिस तरह जजों की नियुक्ति के लिए तय नामों की सिफारिश दोहराते हुए उनकी वरिष्ठता बनाए रखने पर जोर दिया, उसका अर्थ है कि वह सरकार की आपत्तियों पर ध्यान देने को

तैयार नहीं। अब सभी की निगाहें इस पर होना स्वाभाविक है कि सरकार क्या प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करती है? सुप्रीम कोर्ट कलेजियम की पहल से यदि कुछ स्पष्ट है तो यही कि उसने अपने रुख पर अडिग रहने का फैसला कर लिया है। इससे सरकार और उसके बीच टकराव बढ़ सकता है। आवश्यकता टकराव की नहीं, बल्कि समाधान तलाशने की है। यह समाधान तब मिलेगा, जब सुप्रीम कोर्ट के साथ ही सरकार भी अपने रुख पर विचार करने के लिए तैयार होगी। एक लंबे समय से जहां सरकार कलेजियम व्यवस्था की विसंगतियों को रेखांकित करने में लगी हुई है, वहीं सुप्रीम कोर्ट इस व्यवस्था को संविधानसम्मत ठहराने में लगा हुआ है। इसे इसलिए स्वीकार नहीं किया जा सकता, क्योंकि एक तो विश्व के किसी प्रतिष्ठित लोकतंत्र में जज ही जज की नियुक्ति नहीं करते और दूसरे संविधान में कलेजियम व्यवस्था का कोई उल्लेख नहीं। सभी इससे परिचित हैं कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने लगभग तीन दशक पहले अपने ही एक फैसले के माध्यम से जजों की नियुक्तियों, स्थानांतरण और पदोन्नति का अधिकार अपने हाथ में ले लिया था।

यदि सुप्रीम कोर्ट यह समझ रहा है कि कलेजियम व्यवस्था को संविधानसम्मत बताने से उसे स्वीकार कर लिया जाएगा तो यह संभव नहीं। इसी तरह इससे भी बात बनने वाली नहीं कि सरकार इस व्यवस्था की विसंगतियों को बयान करती रहे। उसे इस व्यवस्था में बदलाव के लिए सक्रिय होना चाहिए। इसके प्रति सुप्रीम कोर्ट को भी लचीला रुख अपनाना चाहिए। यह ठीक नहीं कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट की ओर से केंद्रीय कानून मंत्री के उस पत्र का कोई उत्तर नहीं दिया गया, जिसमें उन्होंने कलेजियम व्यवस्था में सरकार के प्रतिनिधियों की भागीदारी की बात कही थी। आखिर इसमें गलत क्या है? यह सही समय है कि सरकार और सुप्रीम कोर्ट कलेजियम व्यवस्था को लेकर संवाद करें। संवाद के स्थान पर विवाद खड़ा करने से किसी का हित होने वाला नहीं है। इसकी अनदेखी नहीं की जा सकती कि न्यायपालिका में सुधार का जो अभाव

है, उसके दुष्परिणाम पूरे देश को भोगने पड़ रहे हैं। समझना कठिन है कि यदि सरकार और सुप्रीम कोर्ट न्याय क्षेत्र के अन्य विषयों, जैसे कि न्यायालयों के निर्णयों को क्षेत्रीय भाषा में उपलब्ध कराने पर एकमत हो सकते हैं और एक दूसरे की सराहना भी कर सकते हैं तो अन्य विषयों और विशेष रूप से उच्चतर न्यायपालिका में न्यायाधीशों की नियुक्ति पर मतैक्य क्यों नहीं रख सकते? इस संदर्भ में संसद या संविधान को सर्वोच्च बताने का कोई अर्थ नहीं, क्योंकि यदि कोई सर्वोच्च है तो वह है देश के लोगों की इच्छा।



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## तारों बिना रात

### संपादकीय

जैसे वायु प्रदूषण या ध्वनि प्रदूषण होता है, ठीक वैसे ही प्रकाश प्रदूषण होता है और यह प्रदूषण लगातार बढ़ता चला जा रहा है। इस प्रदूषण का दुष्प्रभाव यह है कि जो चीजें जैसी दिखनी चाहिए, वैसी नहीं दिख रही हैं। दुनिया भर में फैले अनेक सिटीजन साइंटिस्ट ने 12 वर्ष तक अध्ययन के बाद रिपोर्ट पेश की है। रात में होने वाला कृत्रिम प्रकाश प्राकृतिक प्रकाश को दूषित करने लगा है। वैज्ञानिकों ने बताया है कि रात के समय तारों को देखना साल दर साल मुश्किल होता जा रहा है। कृत्रिम प्रकाश जहां ज्यादा है, वहां से तारों को देखना या खोजना बहुत मुश्किल हो गया है। वैज्ञानिकों के अनुमान की मानें, तो हर साल कुछ-कुछ तारे प्रकाश प्रदूषण में छिपते चले जा रहे हैं।

ऐसे में, अध्ययन के नतीजे सैटेलाइट की बढ़ती जरूरत की ओर भी इशारा करते हैं। अब तारों को देखने या ग्रहों-उपग्रहों की पड़ताल में सैटेलाइट ही सहारा हैं। अगर पृथ्वी से तारों को देखकर अध्ययन किया जाएगा, तो वास्तविक स्थिति स्पष्ट नहीं होगी। एक खतरा यह भी है कि अगर पृथ्वी से तारे साफ नहीं दिखेंगे, तो सांस्कृतिक और स्वास्थ्य संबंधी बदलाव भी होंगे। तारों से जुड़ी कहानियां या गीत सामान्य नहीं रह जाएंगे। उस भावी पीढ़ी को समझने में परेशानी होने लगेगी, जो तारों भरा आसमान देखने से वंचित रहेगी। क्यबा एट अल में प्रकाशित ग्लोब एट नाइट प्रोजेक्ट के अध्ययन बहुत महत्वपूर्ण हैं। कम रोशनी और धुंधले तारे भी मानव को सीधे दिखने चाहिए, लेकिन अब मुश्किल होने लगी है। वैज्ञानिकों ने अध्ययन किया है कि आकाश की चमक समय के साथ कैसे बढ़ रही है। पिछले बारह वर्ष (2011 से 2022 तक) के आंकड़ों के विश्लेषण से पता चलता है कि कृत्रिम प्रकाश से प्रभावित आकाश की चमक दुनिया में हर साल 10 प्रतिशत की खतरनाक औसत के साथ बढ़ रही है, यानी आठ साल से कम समय में दोगुनी हो जा रही है। यह वृद्धि रक्षा मौसम विज्ञान उपग्रह कार्यक्रम और सुओमी नेशनल पोलर-ऑर्बिटिंग पार्टनरशिप उपग्रहों द्वारा लिए गए विकिरण मापन के आधार पर कृत्रिम प्रकाश उत्सर्जन (दो प्रतिशत वार्षिक) के अनुमान से बहुत अधिक है। अनेक सैटेलाइट भी सही रोशनी को पकड़ने-समझने में अक्षम हो रहे हैं। अतः भविष्य में ऐसे सैटेलाइट की जरूरत है, जिनको प्रकाश प्रदूषण से किसी तरह की समस्या न आए।

वैसे यह ध्यान रखने की बात है कि अभी जो डाटा प्रकाशित हुआ है, उनमें से ज्यादातर यूरोप और उत्तरी अमेरिका से लिया गया है। व्यापक डाटा और अध्ययन की जरूरत है। अफ्रीका, एशिया और ऑस्ट्रेलिया से भी आंकड़े सामने आने चाहिए। लोगों को समझदार बनना पड़ेगा। अभी ज्यादातर शहरों में लोग अत्यधिक रोशनी देखकर बहुत खुश होते हैं, जबकि ऐसी रोशनी प्रकाश प्रदूषण ही है। ज्यादा रोशनी में पत्ते, फूल, फल और तमाम चीजें अलग ही रंग में दिखने लगती हैं। रात में कृत्रिम प्रकाश के खतरों के प्रति जागरूकता बहुत बढ़नी चाहिए और जरूरत के हिसाब से ही रोशनी की व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। ज्यादातर लोग कृत्रिम प्रकाश को सड़क सुरक्षा और व्यक्तिगत सुरक्षा से भी जोड़ते हैं, जबकि इसका असली समाधान कुछ और है। वैसे दुनिया के खगोलविदों को इस प्रदूषण का आभास जल्दी हो गया था कि रात की रोशनी उनके शोध को प्रभावित कर सकती है और वे अपनी वेधशालाओं को चमकदार शहरों से दूर ले गए। हम कहीं भी हों, समझना होगा कि तारों के बिना रात का कोई अर्थ नहीं।

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