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- ❖ **India-China Relations**
- ❖ **Indo-Russian Ties**
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Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

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Rio Olympics Fiasco

By contributing just two medals to the total medal tally of India at the recently concluded 2016 Rio Olympics, despite the fact that India had sent its largest contingent ever this time, the Indian contingent has kept the past tradition of its dismal performance at the Olympics. Of the total members of the Indian contingent, around 84 per cent performed below their qualifying marks. Of the 85 individual participants — excluding the 32 in men and women’s hockey — just 13 matched their personal best, justified their world ranking or advanced past the opening round. The post-Olympics phase has given rise to blame game. Undoubtedly, charges and counter-charges are being leveled on the Olympians, officials of the Sports Authority of India and various sports federations, including IOC, for the poor show and below par performance; nevertheless, it is high time for thorough introspection in the whole system governing the sports.

Many critics and experts in the realm of sports are unanimous in their opinion that absence of sporting culture in the country, inadequate financial resources, corruption and political interference are the major factors that account for India’s underperformance in international sporting events. Overemphasis on cricket eclipses other sporting events. In order to develop sporting culture in the country, a national sports policy needs to be framed with emphasis on promoting sports at the school and college level on par with academics. Availability of resources in terms of money and infrastructure has to be ensured with the objective of promoting a synchronized sporting culture.

Lack of financial resources for sports should not an excuse for a nation like India. It is not the lack of money but its faulty disbursement mechanism that accounts for underperformance. Media reports indicate that very little of the sanctioned amount actually goes in providing support to the sportspersons. The poor planning and execution of the budget allows corruption to seep in the system. Some experts feel that instead of spending money for sports, India should start investing in sports. Asserting that spending and investing are two different things, they point out that India has never invested in sports for the long term and it only expects miracles at the touch of a button. Alluding to Prime Minister’s recent announcement of budget increase for the Games from existing Rs 15 crore to Rs 125 crore, a critic has opined that in the absence of a proper rational plan, even this eight-fold fund increase may not translate into reality.

India should emulate the example of Britain in this regard. In the recent 2016 Rio Olympics, the Brits brought back 67 medals - 27 gold, 23 silver and 17 bronze. At the 1996 Sumer Games in Atlanta, UK made an abysmal show and could manage to win a solitary gold medal and finished in 36th position. After those Games in 1996, Britain decided to invest funds raised from the lottery into sports and the dividends are paying off. The British Olympic Association spent double the money on the team’s facilities at Rio than at any other Games. The UK doled out £274m across all Olympic sports. The medals, thus, come at a cost of £4.1m. India can also work out some similar plan to raise funds for the sports.

Some critics point out that politics and corruption in sports management is also responsible for country’s abysmal performance in sports. While pointing out the entire sports management system is fraught with over ambitious bureaucracy, poor resource management, corruption, conflict of interest and opaqueness, they cite the example of India’s Sports Minister who accompanied the Indian contingent at Rio and did all to sabotage India’s image where millions put their best foot forward. India was called out for uncivil behavior. The present scenario also calls for revamping the nation’s sports bodies by inducting world-class sportspersons at all levels so that they can help build a culture that promotes, trains and builds world-class talent. A former Indian Olympian recently lamented: “While other countries have scripted a turnaround in their fortune like the UK, we sadly continue to languish in mediocrity.” It is high time that the present dispensation looks seriously into the sad state of affairs pervading sports in the country and take remedial measures to prepare for the Tokyo Olympics.

— BK