

Kolkata horror

OUTRAGE over the gruesome rape and murder of a young female medic in a Kolkata hospital is swelling across India. The victim's disfigured body was discovered nearly a week ago. Enraged women have taken to the streets under the banner of 'Women, Reclaim the Night: The Night is Ours', with doctors calling for a countrywide shutdown. While the gory incident serves as a reminder of the 2012 tragedy — a girl was brutalised and killed in a Delhi bus — this time the collective focus is on India's persistent epidemic of violence against women, and safety for its doctors. What aggravates matters is the fact that the episode is shrouded in allegations of a cover-up on the part of the West Bengal government, led by the country's sole woman chief minister, the police and the hospital administration.

India seems to be collapsing under the weight of its shame: its figures for crimes against women have alarmed the world for years, translating into a deep-seated repulsion for females. In 2022, the daily tally of reported rapes was 90. Activists maintain that predators have become increasingly emboldened under Prime Minister Narendra Modi due to a climate of political protection and lax law enforcement. Besides, India's National Crime Records Bureau reports a poor conviction rate for sexual violence — 27pc to 28pc from 2018 to 2022. The tragedy is not without lessons for Pakistan: prejudice, victim-shaming and the rampant 'rape versus rape' whataboutery consolidates misogyny, brutalises society and normalises rape. Hence, only unity against inequality and rigid patriarchal structures can ensure enforcement of laws, and raise conviction rates with solid evidence collection. As for India, abject poverty, communalism and an exploitative caste matrix have guaranteed impunity for crimes of power and control. In parts such as Uttar Pradesh, where many violators are linked to the BJP, the offence is an act of militant bigotry. India must restore empathy.

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In India, rage over
 frightful rape and murder of
 a female medic staff is rising.
 Scarred body of the victim was
 founded nearly a week ago.
 Under the banner 'Women, Reclaim
 the Night; the Night is ours',
 enasperate women have staged
 the protest with doctors who
 calling for cessation of their services
 nationwide as a gesture of protest.
 Although, the brutal incident brings
 back to the memory the 2012
 tragedy - a young girl was humiliated
 and killed in a Delhi bus.
 However, ^{this time} the focus is on doctors'
 safety and India's tenacious plague
 of violence against women. At the
 same time, West Bengal government
 the hospital administration and
 the police are deploying malicious
 tactics of allegation for a cover-up
 which exacerbates the matter.

Beneath the weight of
 its shame India is crumbling;
 its figures for crime against women
 have shocked the world for years,
 which manifest deep-seated aversion
 towards women. In year 2022, 90 cases
 relating to rape were reported on

on a daily basis. Activists argue, in Modi's government, political protection and frail law enforcement have further encouraged the perpetrators. The tragedy also has lessons for Pakistan: Prejudice, victim-shaming and rampant 'rape vs rape' whataboutery strengthen the existing evils of misogyny, brutalises society and normalizes crime against women. Thus, Unity against the problems which are in our societal structure can improve law enforcement, raise conviction rate with concrete evidence collection. With regard to India, unjust caste system, creeping poverty, and communalism have solidified impunity for crimes of power and control. Many violators who have special connections with BJP, majority of their crimes were driven by extreme hate and intolerance. It is argued that India must bring empathy back to life.