

**Sports Bill will bring
transparency and reform to
federations: Gagan Narang**

New Delhi: Olympic medallist-turned-sports administrator Gagan Narang believes the National Sports Governance Bill will usher in much-needed transparency and reforms in the functioning of National Sports Federations (NSFs).



Olympic medallist-turned-sports administrator Gagan Narang believes the National Sports Governance Bill will usher in transparency. (Getty Images)

“It’s a forward-looking, futuristic bill that can significantly transform the sporting ecosystem in the country. It will help athletes perform better by allowing them to focus with the right mindset,” Narang told HT.

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A key feature of the Bill is the creation of a National Sports Tribunal, intended to resolve disputes involving federations. Currently, there are multiple sports-related litigations across various courts in India, which has become a major administrative bottleneck.

“The Bill will address all legal issues plaguing federations. Also, if an athlete has a dispute, there will be a resolution committee in place. That means athletes can focus on their sport without the burden of legal battles,” said Narang, the bronze medallist in 10m air rifle at the 2012 London Olympics. After a long decorated career where he won an Olympic medal, a World Championships medal (2010, Munich,) and secured multiple podium finishes at Asian Games and Commonwealth Games, Narang has switched to sports administration. He serves as vice-president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and is also a member of the IOA’s Athletes’ Commission. In addition, he is part of the Mission Olympic Cell, which approves programmes for the country’s top elite athletes.

Having taken on multiple roles in sports administration, Narang believes that most issues can be resolved with the right intent and perspective. With his growing experience, he is quickly developing key administrative skills. Narang emphasised that the Bill’s transparency measures, including making NSFs accountable under Right to Information (RTI) Act, are a step in the

right direction. "The governance structure will be clearer and more accountable. Most importantly, disputes will no longer derail an athlete's career."

He acknowledged that implementing structural change at the federation level will be challenging, but necessary.

"The key is to establish a governance framework. Once that's in place, we can build around it. Change won't be easy, but it's crucial for the betterment of Indian sport. Implementing these reforms is a step in the right direction."

He welcomed the Bill's provisions for grievance redressal mechanisms and inclusion of athlete and women representatives in the executive councils of federations.

"Athlete representation on executive boards will ensure athlete-centric programs. Women's participation is vital too — not just athletes, but also women coaches and administrators. The grievance redressal mechanism will finally have a structured form."

"The government is respecting the autonomy of federations while ensuring ethics, fairness, and accountability. It strikes the right balance between freedom and responsibility. Our sports minister (Mansukh Mandaviya) spent long hours with top federation officials to discuss India's sporting vision and it reflects the government's serious intent and commitment to long-term development in sports," he added.

Narang said the Bill could play a foundational role as India prepares its bid for the 2036 Olympic Games.

"This is our moment. The Bill provides a platform to build the kind of governance infrastructure needed to support our athletes and help them perform at their best on the world stage."

On the recent resolution of internal differences within the IOA, Narang expressed optimism.

"It's a very good restart. Whether it was the Asian Games, the successful conduct of two National Games, or preparation for the Paris Olympics — the IOA always presented a united front. There were never any differences when it came to sports and athlete development. Whatever minor differences existed have now been resolved."

"A little difference of opinion is healthy in any democratic setup. Now it's time to move forward and focus on the work ahead of us."

As a member of IOA Athletes Commission, Narang is gearing up to launch various educational programmes for athletes.