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Outrage after India's top policeman Ranjit Sinha says 'if you can't prevent rape, you enjoy it'

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India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director Ranjit Sinha addresses a December press conference at the CBI headquarters in New Delhi, India. The top police official is under fire for saying, 'If you can't prevent rape, you enjoy it' AP Photo/Mustafa Quraishi, File

NEW DELHI — India's top police official apologized Wednesday for saying, "If you can't prevent rape, you enjoy it," a remark that has outraged women across the country.

Central Bureau of Investigation chief Ranjit Sinha made the remark Tuesday during a conference about illegal sports betting and the need to legalize gambling. The CBI, the country's premier investigative agency, is India's equivalent of the FBI.

Sinha said at the conference that if the state could not stop gambling, it could at least make some revenue by legalizing it.

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"If you cannot enforce the ban on betting, it is like saying, 'If you can't prevent rape, you enjoy it,'" he said.

The remarks have caused outrage across India, which in the past year has been roiled by widespread protests following the fatal gang rape of a 22-year-old woman on a bus in New Delhi.

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On Wednesday, Sinha said that his comments had been taken out of context and misinterpreted, and that he was sorry if he had caused hurt.

Angry activists, however, called for his resignation.

It is sickening that a man who is in charge of several rape investigations should use such an analogy. He should be prosecuted for degrading and insulting women

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Brinda Karat said Sinha's comments were offensive to women everywhere.

"It is sickening that a man who is in charge of several rape investigations should use such an analogy," Karat told reporters. "He should be prosecuted for degrading and insulting women."

The New Delhi attack on the young woman last December caused nationwide outrage and forced the government to change rape laws and create fast-track courts for rape cases. New laws introduced after the attack make stalking, voyeurism and sexual harassment a crime. They also provide for the death penalty for repeat offenders or for rape attacks that lead to the victim's death.



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