

Rahul Gandhi's Sikh Remarks

Why In News

- A **BJP-backed Sikh group** is holding a protest march to the residence of Congress's Sonia Gandhi in Delhi, objecting to **Rahul Gandhi's remarks in the US on religious freedom** enjoyed by the community in the country. Contending that they are **more secure under the BJP government** than they were during the Congress rule, they are demanding that Mr Gandhi apologise for his remarks.



Rahul Gandhi's Remarks

- During his three day visit to the US, **Mr Gandhi had said the fight in India** is not about politics.
- **Asking a Sikh member of the audience** his name, Mr Gandhi had said: "The fight is about whether he, as a Sikh, is going to be allowed to wear a turban in India; or whether, he, as a Sikh, will be allowed to wear a kada in India; or whether he, as a Sikh, is allowed to go to a Gurudwara. That's what the fight is about, and not just for him, but for all religions".
- The **remarks have raised hackles back home**, and the BJP has accused him of habitually making anti-national comments abroad, which is particularly serious now in view of his current position as the Leader Of the Opposition.



Gurpatwant Singh Pannun

- Pro-Khalistani outfit **Sikhs for Justice (SFJ)** founder Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a **designated terrorist by India**, on justified the demand for Khalistan. Pannun's justification came after Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's remarks on whether a Sikh would be allowed to wear a turban or go to the gurudwara.



- Pannun said in a social media post that Rahul Gandhi's statement on the "**existential threat to Sikhs in India**" is not only bold and pioneering but also rooted in the factual history of the oppression Sikhs have been facing under successive regimes in India since 1947.

- "(It) also corroborates SFJ's stance on the justification for the Punjab Independence Referendum to establish a Sikh homeland, Khalistan," Pannun added.

BJP's Remarks

- Union minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** has called Mr Gandhi's comments "sinister", and accused him of spreading "dangerous narratives" abroad.
- Referring to the **anti-Sikh riots of 1984** following the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards, the minister said, "If there has been one time in our history when as a community, we have felt anxiety, a sense of insecurity and existential threat, it has been the times when Rahul Gandhi's family has been in the seats of power".



Ilhan Omar

- Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's trip to the United States sparked a firestorm back home for the third day in a row as **BJP leaders sharply criticised** the Leader of the Opposition for **meeting controversial American lawmaker Ilhan Omar**.
- **Omar is known for her critical stance** on India and has been accused in some quarters of holding an ideological bias when it comes to her views on the country. She was among several US lawmakers who Rahul Gandhi met on Tuesday during his three-day US visit.

RAHUL SEEN WITH INDIA BAITER ILHAN OMAR



- Meeting sparked criticism from BJP leaders in India. Rajya Sabha MP and BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said, "**Rahul Gandhi is known for spewing anti-India venom**, but what he has done this time is concerning. He became the first Leader of the Opposition to meet US MP Ilan, who is infamous for taking anti-India stand."



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