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BJP issues notice to Hegde over Bapu bombshell

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The BJP on Monday issued a show-cause notice to former Union Minister Anantkumar Hegde, who left the party red-faced by claiming that the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi was "staged" and supported by the British.

The remarks by Hegde — an MP from Uttara Kannada and no stranger to controversy — come at a time when the Modi government is celebrating Mahatma Gandhi's 150th anniversary in a big way.

Hegde's statement provided ammunition to the Congress and other opposition parties, who demanded filing of a sedition case against Hegde and an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Parliament.



Anantkumar Hegde

"They are disparaging the national movement. If the prime minister and the BJP government are sincere about the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, we demand that the PM come to Parliament and clarify his position," Congress' senior spokesperson Anand Sharma said.

Aghast at the remarks, the

BJP went into damage control mode, with the central BJP leadership issuing a show-cause notice and directing him to issue an apology.

BJP members also disapproved of Hegde's remarks. "The whole world knows about Mahatma Gandhi and it may be his personal opinion," BJP member Jagadambika Pal said when asked about Hegde's remarks.

Union Minister Ashwani Choubey said Hegde should have avoided making the comments, as Gandhi is a respected figure across the nation.

Hegde has been a repeat offender. In the previous government, Hegde had kicked off a row claiming that the Modi government would re-write the Constitution, remarks that sent the BJP scurrying for cover.