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SC issues notice to Rahul in Rafale contempt petition

Gives Relief From Personal Appearance On April 30

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to Congress president Rahul Gandhi in the contempt petition brought against him by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi but exempted him from personal appearance in the court on April 30.

Appearing for Rahul, senior advocate A M Singhvi expressed gratitude to the SC for only seeking an explanation from the Congress president on the criminal contempt plea and not issuing notice in its April 15 order. However, a bench of CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna said it would correct the technical error by issuing notice to the respondent.

In a criminal contempt case, issuance of notice by a constitutional court mandates the respondent to appear in person before the court on the date fixed, unless specifically exempted. Rahul does not have to appear on April 30 and will be represented by an advocate.

Singhvi said, "For the last 18 months, Rahul Gandhi has been standing by the 'chowkidar chor hai' slogan. It is inconceivable that he thought the SC has adopted the slogan. He is being candid, honest and brave to admit his mistake and express regret. As many



The SC bench said it would hear the plea against Rahul on April 30 along with the petition, jointly filed by Prashant Bhushan and former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, seeking review of the December 14 judgment giving a clean chit to the Modi govt on the Rafale deal

as 12 statements had been made by PM Modi and BJP leaders claiming the SC had given a clean chit to the NDA government in the Rafale deal. Where is the clean chit? Did the SC give it? Why should there be no contempt proceedings drawn against them?"

Lekhi had sought initiation of contempt proceedings against Rahul for linking the SC's April 10 order rejecting the Centre's objection to the court considering certain Rafale deal documents while hearing pleas for review of its December 14 judgment virtually giving a clean chit to the NDA government with his oft-repeated slogan 'chowkidar chor hai'.

Interestingly, the bench said it would hear the contempt plea against Rahul on April 30 along with the petition, jointly filed by activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan and former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, seeking review of

the December 14 judgment.

For Lekhi, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said though Rahul expressed regret for linking the SC order with the 'chowkidar chor' jibe thrown at PM Narendra Modi and admitted that he had made those contemptuous statements without reading the April 10 order, "no apology has been tendered by him to show his contrition and yet he calls himself a responsible leader of a 130-year-old party".

"From Amethi to Wayanad, Rahul Gandhi goes around saying the SC has found the 'chowkidar' to be the 'chor' in the Rafale deal even without caring to read the SC order for petty political gains. In India, people have immense faith in the Supreme Court and when something is attributed to the apex court, the public believes the statement. There has to be some limit to Rahul Gandhi's cavalier attitude," Rohatgi said.

Slapping ₹407cr tax liability in Yi case mala fide, Gandhis tell SC

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New Delhi: Challenging the income tax department's decision to reopen their tax assessments for 2011-12 relating to Associated Journals Ltd, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Oscar Fernandes told the Supreme Court on Tuesday that the action was "mala fide" and called the slapping of Rs 407 crore tax liability on them "illogical, perverse and irrational".

Senior advocate P Chidambaram, appearing for Sonia Gandhi, told a bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Hemant Gupta that the I-T department decided to reassess the income without application of mind and the decision defied common sense as it came to the conclusion that she had "escaped income" of over Rs 141 cr for getting 1900 shares in a non-profitable organisation 'Young Indian'.

"It is a totally perverse order and intended to saddle the petitioners with huge tax liability. It is illogical and... no reasonable person would come to such conclusion," Chidambaram contended.

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