

T.O.I. - 31/1/09

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Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi paid a visit to Sabarmati Ashram, NID and Gujarat College on Friday

PICS: DILIP THAKER

You'll find politics easier than this!



Wait, let me hold the spool



Come this side and I'll teach you



How do you manage to do that?



You think I'll be able to spin right?



Ah, this suits me perfectly fine!



GANDHIANS DENIED ENTRY TO HRIDAY KUNJ AS RAHUL TOURS SABARMATI ASHRAM



Veteran Gandhians like Chunibhai Vaidya (centre) and Ashram trustee Amrut Modi (right) were denied entry initially due to security reasons

Rahul Gandhi takes lessons in Gandhigiri

DILIP PATEL

It was 4.50 by the clock. Sporting spotless white kurta pyjama, AICC general secretary Rahul Gandhi stepped into Sabarmati Ashram with the objective of learning 'Gandhigiri' in letter and spirit. He left enlightened 23 minutes later.

But had he been there a little earlier, his mission would have failed. Reason? There would have been none inside Hriday Kunj to explain to him the principles of Gandhiji for security reasons. Forget thousands coming to the Ashram on the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, even Gandhians like Amrut Modi and Chunibhai Vaidya were denied entry initially. While a Sabarmati police constable stopped Modi from entering Hriday Kunj, another asked Chunibhai to vacate the premises. But finally good sense prevailed. After Congress leader and former deputy chief minister Narahari Amin intervened, the Gandhians were permitted to go inside Hriday Kunj to be with Rahul during his visit on Friday evening. Reaching the Ashram, Rahul first visited the personal room-cum-office of Gandhiji. He was visibly astonished to learn that Mahatma used to write letters for hours standing. He keenly observed the charkha and spent four minutes to go through the 18 principles of Gandhiji.

Next, he stopped in front of locked room of Kasturba Gandhi. "Can I go inside?" he asked. The room was opened following the humble request. Guest room was Rahul's next destination. When he evinced interest on the freedom fighters putting up in the room, Modi told Rahul: "Jawaharlal Nehru was one among them." Once in the kitchen, Rahul enquired about the menu of Gandhiji and how he used to cook. Coming out, he sat beside a charkha in the lobby. "I want to learn how thread is made in charkha," Rahul said.

When Modi told him to sit on the other side of the charkha and try his hand, Rahul learnt the trick from Dhanesh, whose great grandfather taught spinning khadi to Gandhiji, Nehru and Sardar Patel. When Dhanesh said he was glad to teach spinning khadi to someone from Nehru family, Rahul laughed loud.

Modi gave him a cotton garland (sute ki anti) to show the usage of khadi threads. Thereafter, it's used to make khadi clothes, the Gandhian added. When Rahul came out of the lobby, Dhimant Badhia, a Gandhian, gifted him 8 metres of khadi cloth. Rahul asked his secretary to ship it to Delhi for making a dress. He was also presented 20 books on Gandhiji. When Rahul was about

AT GUJARAT COLLEGE

Perhaps inspired by his visit to Sabarmati Ashram, Rahul Gandhi advised youth at Gujarat College to be self-dependent. "Whenever I don't find any solution to a problem, I fall back to the principles of Gandhiji. Believe me, I always get a solution," he said.



NIDIANS LEFT 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED'

SHRADHA SINGH

Design students of NID were bowled over by Rahul Gandhi, who paid a whirlwind visit to their campus on Friday. He chatted away with the students and even had lunch with them in their mess. NIDIans and faculty members got a rare chance to interact with the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty and they made the most of it. The questions posed to him ranged from trivial ones like 'Why is politics so murky' to 'Why are politicians not accessible to the common man'.

Says Prasoon Saba, a student of Strategic Design Management, said, "He requested us not to address him as 'sir'. 'Call me Rahul', he told us. He is such a humble guy." "I was least interested in politics before meeting Rahul," says Suniti Dumbawar, a student of photography. Rahul even discussed a range of issues pertinent to design in India. Akhil Saccena, Director of NID said, "Though his visit was quite unexpected, we had a fruitful interaction with him. He took a keen interest in aspects of design and had ideas about how it should be promoted."

CITY

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CONG COUNCILLOR, WORKERS 'THRASH' COPS AT GUJ COLLEGE

The scuffle broke out after cops denied them entry during Rahul Gandhi's visit

VIPUL RAJPUT

A Congress councillor, Arvindsinh V Chauthan, and some party workers reportedly scuffled with security personnel at Gujarat College on Friday after the latter denied them entry through the VIP gate.

A large number of security personnel were deployed at the college, where Rahul Gandhi was addressing a crowd attending the Abhay Udaan function. Around 20 Congress workers, who tried to get in through the VIP en-

trance at 4.30 pm, lost their cool when security personnel stopped them. They apparently hurled abuses at the security personnel, who refused to budge. Minutes later, Chauthan reached the VIP entrance and reportedly slapped a police constable, Idarshi Khan.

"We were given orders not to let anyone enter through the VIP gate," Khan said. "The orders were issued because the entry point was quite close to Rahul Gandhi's stage." Khan said that Chauthan and the Congress workers abused and thrashed him and another constable, Ishwar Desai.

Rahul draws a parallel between BJP,

Says saffron party pursuing divisive politics, spreading fear and creating schisms in society

British style

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 30

Congress general secretary and scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, Rahul Gandhi, on Friday, drew a parallel between the ideologies of the BJP and the British. He said the saffron party was pursuing "divisive politics" which was once practised by the British to perpetuate their rule over India.

He was addressing Congress party workers from all over the state on the last day of a month-long 'Abhay Udaan, Bharat Mahaan' programme. He said divisive politics was based on "spreading fear, which is used to divide the people and create schism in various sections of society".

Pointing out that there was another type of politics, which united and brought the people together, he said this one was based on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of allying fears and strengthening the social and communal bond. "It is Gandhiji's politics, which is the need of the nation today," he said, adding that it was the Congress, which had been practicing the politics taught by the Mahatma.

He expressed the hope that the 'abhay udaan, bharat mahaan' programme — aimed at fostering national unity post-Mumbai attack and mobilising party workers ahead of the Lok Sabha polls — will unite the people and realise the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, who wanted to see people from different communities living in peace and harmony.

Rahul, who was projected as the topmost leader of the party by slogan shouting Congress leaders and workers, said India being a nation of over 100 crore people need not fear anyone. "It will stand on its own feet and



lead the world," he said, adding "But not with the support of any politician, but with the contribution and support of its poor, downtrodden, villagers and city dwellers."

The audience applauded his comment by shouting slogans, 'Rahul Gandhi tum aage badhlo, hum tumhare saath hain' (Rahul Gandhi you move forward, we are with you).

He also spoke on the increasing distance between the common people and politicians in this age of technology, adding that when there was no

television and Internet, Gandhi remained connected with the people by writing lakhs of letters.

But the gap between the leaders and the people increased when Internet and television became available everywhere, he said. He stressed on the need to remove the gap, and said that leaders must mix with the people to know the basic issues and find out a solution for them.

He said that some people referred to him as a "child", and some called him "inexperienced" and others said

"I am a young man." He added: "But whenever I confronted a problem and failed to find an answer, I consulted a book of Gandhiji's quotations kept on my reading table and always found the right answer. So, Gandhiji is my guide."

He praised Gujarat's contribution to the nation, saying that the state gave Mahatma Gandhi who secured the country's freedom.

Later, Rahul administered oath of patriotism and determination to fight terrorism to the Congress workers.



(Clockwise top left) AICC general secretary Rahul Gandhi tries his hand at a khadi spindle in Ahmedabad on Friday; while he administers oath to Congress workers at Gujarat College, the youths take cue and follow their leader.

Newsline photos by Harish Shah

He also felicitated several Gujaratis who had excelled in their respective fields. They included Naishal Shah, who had topped the all India chartered accountancy examination, world billiard champion Rupesh Shah, Sufiya Sheikh, who swam across the English Channel and actress Pranchi Desai.

Among others who addressed the function were state Congress president Siddharth Patel and Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Shaktisinh Gohil. Ahmedabad city Congress president Pankaj Shah presented a vote of thanks.