

29 september 2014

Even as excitement surged to a climax for Sunday's community reception for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Madison Square Garden, protests rallies planned at the event venue appeared to gather momentum, as did a second "Citizens' Court" protest in Washington, for which an "indictment" was said to have been "served" to the Indian Embassy.

On September 28 a broad coalition of organisations that came under the umbrella Alliance for Justice and Accountability plan to hold a rally, demonstration and press conference outside the Madison Square Garden to register their protest against Mr. Modi, whom they hold responsible for not stopping the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat when he was Chief Minister of the State.

Meanwhile human rights group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) said that as U.S. President Barack Obama rolls out the red carpet for Mr. Modi on September 30, a Citizens' Court in Lafayette Park, immediately outside the front end of the White House, would hold indictment proceedings against the Indian Prime Minister that would be telecast live throughout the U.S.

In this regard a copy of the "charge sheet" and notice of indictment proceedings for the Citizens' Court was said to have been recently served on Mr. Modi via the Indian Embassy using a summons delivery service, whose officer signed an affidavit that he delivered a copy of the documents to a named Embassy official at the Embassy premises near Dupont Circle and informed that person of the contents.

The "charge sheet" includes six counts against Mr. Modi under identified statutes of U.S. law, SFJ said.

While the proceedings may not have any legal ramifications for Mr. Modi they come at an awkward time, when he will have his first ever meeting with Mr. Obama, whose administration held firm to a visa-ban against Mr. Modi issued in 2005 for his alleged role in the 2002 riots.

Even though it remains unclear whether the Obama administration could have taken steps to block high-visibility protests steps away from the White House entrance, it is evident that they did not thwart it, as permission to conduct the Citizens' Court has been granted to the SFJ by the National Parks Service, and *The Hindu* has obtained a copy of the document.

Additional pressure from dissenting groups has come in the form of a New York-based human rights group, the American Justice Centre, offering a bounty of \$10,000 to anyone who could serve Mr. Modi with the summons issued by a federal district court and capture the service on video, sparking concerns that there could be a security incident during Mr. Modi's historic five-day visit to the U.S.

While New York law allows for summons servers to simply ascertain the presence of Mr. Modi in relatively close proximity and deposit the summons near or on his person, for example at his feet or in his hands, the potential involvement of an Indian-American community member in such a venture, say during a scheduled meeting with the Prime Minister, could complicate matters.

http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/world/protesters-gear-up-for-modi-events/article6454530.ece?utm_source=Most%20Popular&utm_medium=International&utm_campaign=Widget%20Promo