

## NIHANGS



### Issue

The Nihangs have been accused of chopping limb of a man and later lynching him for allegedly showing disrespect to scriptures.

### Background

The incident comes one and half year later of a similar incident when Nihangs had chopped off a hand of police official.

### Details

This incident took place at the Singhu border protest site and the victim belongs to a group that has been protesting against three farm laws.

### The group

- The Nihangs are an order of Sikhs who wear blue dress, carry arms such as swords and spears. They also wear a decorated turbans surmounted by steel quoits.
- The word Nihang stands for alligator, sword and pen in Persian. The word may have originated from Sanskrit word nihshank which means without fear, unblemished, pure, and carefree.

### Formation

- The Nihang order was formed when the Khalsa was formed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. The word also finds mention in Guru Granth Sahib.
- Some historians trace the order's history to Guru Gobind Singh's son Fateh Singh when he dressed up in a blue chola and blue turban with a dumala.

### Difference with other Sikhs

- Nihangs observe the Khalsa code of conduct in its strictest sense. They do not profess any allegiance to an earthly master.
- Instead of saffron they hoist a blue Nishan Sahib (flag) atop their shrines. The Nihangs consume a popular drink called shardai or sharbati deg (sacrament drink).

### Role in Sikh history

- Nihangs defended Sikh faith during the onslaught of Mughals and also during the invasion of Ahmed Shah Durrani.
- They had their independent existence in Akal Takht. After the fall of Sikh Empire in 1849, they lost their powers.

### Current status

- Nihangs stay in their respective deras and take part in pilgrimage of Anandpur Sahib, Damdama Sahib Talwandi Sabo and Amritsar.
- They are known to possess martial skills and today constitute a small community headed by a leader known as jathedar.

### Becoming a Nihang

- Following Sikh traditions
- Remembers five banis
- Performs daily ablutions by waking up at 1 am
- Performs morning and evening prayers
- Individual can belong to any caste or creed
- He should be a baptized Sikh

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