

Protest Toolkit

February 16, 2021

In News: Activist Disha Ravi was recently arrested by the Delhi Police for a toolkit document that she shared with Swedish activist Greta Thunberg.

What is the issue ?

- On Sunday, 14 February, a magistrate in Delhi's Patiala House Court remanded 21-year-old climate activist Disha Ravi to five days of police custody in what is now being termed as the 'protest-toolkit case'.
- In this case, Greta Thunberg shared a link to the toolkit on the farmers protest which was found to contain some pro-Khalistani elements.
- The toolkit shared by the activists tries to explain the farmers' protest to those who don't know the reason behind the agitation.
- Dishas role came under suspicion by Delhi Police after climate activist Thunberg tweeted a toolkit document which the police alleged had led to the January 26 violence in New Delhi.

Decoding the 'Protest-Toolkit'

- 'Toolkits' – in modern day internet parlance – consist of a set of guidelines to ensure the achievement of certain shared goals.
- 'Toolkit' is a term activists use for a campaign information document.
- It is a valuable resource that can be used to sustain a campaign or movement, used mostly on the internet.
- While toolkits are readily used by government departments and private organisations, they have also gained momentum in social protests across the globe.
- For instance, detailed toolkits were used to effectively organise and manage the Occupy Wall Street protest

(2011), pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong (2019), and anti-CAA protests in Delhi.

What is the Khalistan movement?

- The Khalistan movement is a Sikh separatist movement seeking to create a homeland for Sikhs by establishing a sovereign state, called Khalistān in the Punjab Region. Such a state existed in Punjab from 1709 to 1849.

What are the historical events responsible for Khalistan?

- 1947 Partition of India –Independence of India was not a joyful event for Sikhs, partition left Sikhs in a lot of discontentment with regard to their traditional lands being lost to Pakistan.
- The fight for a separate Sikh state owes its origins to the Punjabi Suba Movement. The Akali Dal – a Sikh-dominated political party – sought to create a separate Sikh Suba or Province.
- When the States Reorganization Commission, constituted to assess the demand for separate states by linguistic groups, made its recommendations, it rejected the Akali Dal's demand.
- But after a series of violent protests, the Indira Gandhi government relented in 1966.
- The state was bifurcated into Punjabi-majority Punjab, Hindi-majority Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Some hilly regions of the state were merged into Himachal Pradesh.
- However, the Anadpur Sahib resolution reignited the passion of Sikhs and sowed the seeds of Khalistan movement