

Sarkozy has an 'open mind' on turban issue: PM

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has assured Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that he has 'an open mind' and will have a 're-look' into the contentious issue of Sikh students wearing turbans in state-funded schools in France.

A day after Sarkozy made it clear that rules apply to everyone without exception when he addressed the press after the the India-EU summit in Marseille Monday, Manmohan Singh raised the issue again with him during summit talks in Paris.

'He (Sarkozy) said we have an open mind and we will look at it. He said he had an open mind in the light of what I had said. He said he will have a relook at it,' said the prime minister.

He also mentioned that he had raised the sensitive issue with Sarkozy when he came to [New Delhi](#) in January this year. Sarkozy was the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations.

Manmohan Singh, the first Sikh prime minister of India, told Sarkozy that the turban was 'a very essential part of the Sikh way of life because the members of the community are not allowed to cut their hair'.

He also told the French president that turban is one way that enables Sikhs to keep their hair bridled, the prime minister recalled while returning from a 10-day visit to the US and France.

'There are problems in France, when Sikh children go to school they are discouraged from wearing their turbans. And when seeking identity cards they are asked to remove their turbans. These are some inconveniences that Sikhs face,' he said.

Manish Chand (© IANS / India eNews)