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On Eid, bands against terror

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People offer namaz at Taj Mahal. (Agency Photo)

NEW DELHI: They wore black ribbons, carried placards of peace, sent out emails and SMSes reiterating harmony, and put up banners saluting those who died in the 26/11 terrorist attack. From Chennai's Thousand Lights Mosque to Delhi's Jama Masjid, from Khwaza Banda Nawaz dargah in Gulbarga, to the mosques of Mumbai — Bakr-Eid celebrations were subdued, in a symbolic declaration of Muslim protest against terrorism.

"At every dargah, prayers were said for the grieving families in Mumbai. In Ajmer Sharief, Kaliyar Sharief (Uttarakhand) and Barabanki's

Deva Sharief, the community came together burying their differences to focus on one thing: communal harmony. By showing our unity, we have spoilt the terrorists' Bakr-Eid," said Qari Mohd Miya Mazhari, editor, Secular Qayadat.

The festival of sacrifice also became a platform of protest both for celebrities as well as ordinary citizens.

In Mumbai, cerebral star Aamir Khan wore a black band on his arm. So did 'Jab We Met' director Imtiaz Ali, lyricist Javed Akhtar and his actor-director son, Farhan Akhtar. A news agency reported that other Bollywood biggies such as Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan too preferred to stay away from the festivities.

Some Muslims even avoided festival purchases such as new clothes. The trustee of Mumbai's Khar Jama Masjid, Zafar Iqbal, sent 500 emails and 250 SMSes reaffirming Islam's peaceful tenets.

In Delhi, theatre personality Aamir Raza Husain said the toned down festivities and black-ribbon protests were a message to the terrorists.

"They tried to divide our hearts and minds. This is to tell the terrorists they have failed. Muslims must be the first line of defence. Because if the society gets polarized, the ordinary Muslim will face the brunt," said theatre personality from Delhi Aamir Raza Husain.

In Chennai, chief Shia Qazi Ghulam Mohammed Mehdi Khan said, "I request each and every Indian regardless of their caste, community, state, religion or race to stand united against such inhuman groups because our sustenance and survival lies in our unity as Indians. No religion promotes terrorism and terrorism has no religion." Trader Navaz Currimbhoy described it as a landmark day. "This is the first time I have heard a Qazi categorically condemn an act of terror."

Taxi driver Ashfaq Hussain said, "Forget about celebrations, it just doesn't feel like Eid. There is no excitement in the neighbourhood and I just don't feel like feasting." Actor Shabana Azmi, though, pointed out the faint silver lining. Speaking to TOI, she said, "I have been flooded with messages this Bakr-Eid, many of them from people who never greeted me before. I think the terrorists failed to divide us. Indians have seen through their game."

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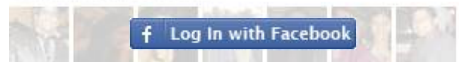
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