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'I don't care who buys my paintings

to disturb Raza's concentration. The celebrated painter, who calls himself 'ek adna sa aadmi', has it removed before he be-

OF INDIA

gins the interview. And with this simple gesture he sums up what his art, his lifelong obsession, has been all about. "I got the book removed because I want to concentrate on you... on our conversation. I am not a thinker, an author or a great man. I am just an ordinary painter. But when I speak to my audience, I want my message to go through. The same is true about the imagery that is a part of my paintings - the bindu. One single dot symbolises life, the five elements, the universe... so much is concentrated in a single dot!" exclaims the internationallyrevered Raza, whose paintings command crores in the art mar-

"Oh, all that is immaterial! I don't care who buys my paintings, and for how much," says the 85year-old patriarch of Indian art. With a wave of his hand, he adds, "I paint for God. After I finish a paint-

ing, I close my eyes and thank Him. Once that is done, what happens to my paintings is not my concern." Quoting poet Nirala and an anonymous Ajanta-Ellora sculptor, he drives home his point further, "The sculptor wonders whether he makes the statue or the statue makes itself. The same holds true for my oeuvre and what I translate onto the canvas." Quotes in chaste Hindi and Sanskrit flowing from a man who married a French lady, spent most of his the moment he switches over to French? "Maniye, main yahin ka hoon," Raza smiles, "I can speak better Hindi than people here. Yes, I

> went to France, married a French woman and I am settled there. but India is a part of me, my art... it never left me."

> > Appropriately eno-

ugh for a man capable of quoting Sanskrit and French literature in the same breath. Raza considers the marriage of the Western and the Oriental to be the real strength of Indian art, which, he believes, is "getting such acclaim because it is modern, yet rooted in the past." Art may have added to brand India, but is India doing justice to the freedom of artistic expression - a case in point being the controversy regarding MF Husain's paintings? shakes his head wist fully. "That is sad indeed. People should see painters at a higher level, and understand that they mean no ill-will through

And that brings him back to his beloved the bindu. "Anant

their religious im-

sambhavna... that is what art is all about, just like the bindu. Like a woman in her various moods... the bindu is different yet beautiful in all of them. I did a painting called Shanti recently with a yellow bindu in it, which was displayed at UNESCO's Global Peace Forum by my friend SK Modi. At the same time, I can show despair with a bindu!"

agery.

JYOTI SHARMA

SH Raza might be the toast of the art circuit, thanks to his paintings that fetch millions. But as he turns 85, the artist couldn't care less. For him, it's all about the ubiquitous dot, & Him



I am not a thinker, an author or a great man. I am just an ordinary man who wants his message to go through

As they say, it is all about perspective!

त, चंडीगढ़ और तथपुर से प्रकाशित महानार नई दिल्ली शुक्रवार, १३ फरबरी, २००७ रू. ३,०० (१२ पेज) दिल्ली, को



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देती हैं कलाएं'

जीवन मूल्यों को दिशा

समझौता एक्सप्रेस विस्फोट मामले में सात हिरासत में

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महंगाई रोकने के लिए प्रधानमंत्री ने बनाया निशेष प्रकोष्ठ

उत्तर प्रदेश विधानसभा चुनाव के महेनजर बजट सत्र के कायकम में बदलाव की उम्मीत