



A painting by Raza.

## Paris-based artist returns with show in Delhi, Mumbai

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**N**EXT week, eminent Paris-based painter Raza (born Sayed Haider Raza on February 22 in Babaria, MP) will be coming home for a huge 80th birthday party-exhibition-book release in Mumbai and Delhi.

And this even as the art world is abuzz with the rumour that this important contemporary artist — a founder of the Progressive Artists Group and alumnus of the prestigious Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts — is to be awarded a top honour by the French government. Though, Raza himself denies knowledge of this.

But whether he gets to wear a ribbon on his lapel or not, India is revving up for a major show of his kundalini-inspired works on February 21, presented by Sharan Apparao of Chennai at the Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai. A week later, Vadehra Gallery in the Capital will organise a smaller event.

Two limited edition portfolios of Raza's work will also be released in Delhi and Mumbai along with a book of conversations and poems with bureaucrat-writer Ashok Vajpeyi. They are being produced by Bookwise (New Delhi) and Paris-based publisher Ravi Kumar, who has known Raza for 44

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CAUGHT IN THE FRAME: French ambassador Bernard de Montferrand (right) releases a book on painter Sayed Haider Raza written by Ashok Vajpeyi (extreme left) at the ITC Maurya Sheraton Hotel in New Delhi on Thursday. (Saab Press)

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## Birthday Gift

**T**HE CAPITAL'S WANING ART season blazed briefly last week when S.H. Raza, the yogi of Menton, France, now in India for his 80th birthday celebrations, announced the setting up of the Raza Foundation to recognise and promote deserving talent in India. Convinced that the

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ART LIVES ON: Raza with the winners



younger Indian artists are among the best in the world, the Parisian patriarch has chosen Seema Ghuraiyya and Akhilesh to receive the first Raza award of Rs 1 lakh each. The works of the two gifted abstract painters from Madhya Pradesh are showing at Delhi's Art Today gallery. The show titled Ishara, curated by Akhilesh, is easily the best of abstract art in a long time. —S. Kalidas