

## Strife leads people to seek solace in Mahatma Gandhi

Fear struck after the string of terror attacks across the country and the continuing violence against minorities, many people made a beeline to Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat to seek solace on his 139th birth anniversary Thursday.

In the backdrop of violence that has gripped the country, many of those who visited Rajghat after the VIPs had paid their respects appealed for peace and a world free from strife.

'Hum naya Bharat banana chahte hain. Humain hinsa nahi chahiye, shanti chahiye, jaise Gandhiji bata kar gaye the (We want a new India. We don't want conflict, but peace - just like Gandhiji taught us),' said Upendra Ram Mehra, who visits Rajghat every year on Oct 2.

Mehra, 50 and struck with polio in his childhood, ambled gingerly with the help of crutches and managed to sit a few feet away from Gandhi's memorial, a quiet prayer on his lips.

'I visit this place every year. But this time it means a lot... more than ever, especially when the country is facing terror and violence everywhere. This has to stop,' he added.

A little distance away, nine-year-old Jaya was being told by her father Sunder Singh Bhandari that 'satya woh bhi hai jo doosron ko bachane ke liye bola jaye (Truth is also something that is used to protect somebody)'.

Bhandari, 38, a small-time businessman had decided a holiday needed to be spent well and purposefully. Along with his wife, Bhandari was making an effort to educate their three children on Gandhi's principles of truth, non-violence and honesty.

'I want to tell my kids why we came here today, why Gandhi was a great man and why his teachings are so important,' said Bhandari.

In another corner of the expansive memorial, a youngster, Azad was in thoughtful reflection.

'There's something in this day. My heart just drags me here,' Azad said with moist eyes.

'There is a serenity to this place and I pray that we will soon have good times.'

Children from a municipal school in Dilshad Garden in east Delhi were also there in large numbers to pay tributes to the Father of the Nation whose policy of non-violence can be a great source of inspiration in these times of strife.

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