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A NUH MODEL: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON HARYANA AND THE DETERMINATION OF THE POLITICAL EXECUTIVE

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The call by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and its affiliates to undertake a procession on August 28 in the communally volatile Nuh district in Haryana had the authorities on their toes. A similar procession on July 31 had led to clashes that claimed six lives. The administration rightly denied permission for the gathering citing the law-and-order situation and the upcoming G-20 summit in the national capital. After a face-off between the organisers and the administration, a few representatives of the Hindu outfits were allowed amid police escort to offer prayers at three local temples to mark the conclusion of a month that many faithful consider sacred. The security arrangements this time were unprecedented with a multi-layered security cordon on all roads leading to Nuh from across Haryana. Internet services and bulk SMSes in Nuh were suspended and prohibitory orders imposed in advance. All schools, colleges and banks were directed to remain shut on August 28. The police and paramilitary personnel were deployed in large numbers. The Haryana police chief held a meeting with senior police officers of neighbouring States, social media platforms were watched closely to identify possible troublemakers, and their entry to Nuh prevented. As many as 41 people were detained across Haryana.

Similar measures and earnestness on the part of administration could have prevented the situation on July 31, especially with inputs from the State CID unit on possible trouble during the religious procession. All stakeholders must learn their lessons after the tense day, which thankfully passed without a flare up. Hindus and Muslims must put the recent past behind them to restore mutual trust and harmony. And it is not just Nuh. The stakes are equally high for its rather prosperous neighbour Gurugram, an IT and automotive hub and financial capital of Haryana that abuts Delhi. The police and the administration must deal with any unscrupulous attempts to disrupt the peace of the region again with an iron hand and send across a clear signal to fringe elements that no one is above the law. The manner in which the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Haryana has handled the situation proves that communal conflicts can indeed be controlled when the political executive shows determination. Chief Minister M.L. Khattar himself made it clear through public statements and administrative action that the law will prevail. The inverse is also true — that the police and the administration are often complicit in communal violence.

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