

Secularism, harmony and tolerance India's DNA: Naqvi

NEW DELHI, NOV 3 /- Secularism, social harmony and tolerance is the DNA of India, said Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who was recognised as an 'Ambassador for Peace' by an international NGO Saturday. India is the world's hub of spiritual values and that is why it is the biggest secular democracy in the world, he said.

The Union minister of minority affairs was recognised as "Ambassador for Peace" by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) at a programme here.

"Peace is the passport of prosperity" and therefore, the world's prosperity is not possible without peace, he said. Naqvi was given the recognition for his contribution toward promoting harmony and peace in society and the world, and cooperation among various religious communities, the NGO said. The Union minister said harmony and development are the two sides of the same coin and development cannot be ensured without harmony. "Secularism, social-communal harmony and tolerance" is the DNA of India, a statement from Naqvi's office quoted him as saying.

The Modi government is working with commitment toward "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas" and "development with dignity" with complete honesty and without any discrimination, Naqvi said.

The government has broken every barrier of caste, religion, region and it is moving forward to ensure that not a single Indian is deprived of development, he said. The UPF was established and founded by Rev Dr Sun Myung Moon and Dr Hak Ja Han Moon is its co-founder. UPF, an international and inter-religious network of individuals and organisations, including representatives from religion, government, civil society and the private sector, is dedicated to achieving world peace, according to its website. The programme, organised by the North East MP's Forum and UPF, was attended by a large number of MPs, representatives from various fields from India and abroad, social and religious leaders and other intellectuals. (PTT)

Won't bow to pressure on testing fish for formalin: Goa minister

PANAJI, NOV 3 /- Goa will not bow to pressure from anybody on the issue of testing fish for the presence of formalin, state agriculture minister Vijai Sardesai said today. Sardesai was reacting to a reported statement by a Maharashtra politician allegedly threatening to stop vehicles from Goa from entering Sindhudurg district of Goa does not allow fish-carrying trucks from Maharashtra to enter. In the wake of fears that fish being brought into the state was laced with formalin, a potential cancer causing chemical, Goa Food and Drugs Administration has imposed stringent conditions, including testing, on fish trucks coming from outside the state.

3 lakh collegians in Gujarat to get tablet PCs for Rs 1000 each

AHMEDABAD, NOV 3 /- Three lakh first-year college students in Gujarat will get tablet computers worth Rs 11,000 for a token sum of Rs 1,000, said chief minister Vijai Rupani today. It is the second year that the students in the state are getting such tablets, christened 'Nameo-Tab', with Rupani stating that

AAP suspends Sukhpal Khaira, Kanwar Sandhu

CHANDIGARH, NOV 3 /- The Aam Aadmi Party Saturday suspended rebel leaders Sukhpal Singh Khaira and Kanwar Sandhu from the party for allegedly indulging in "anti-party" activities, it said. The decision was taken by the core committee of AAP Punjab unit, chaired by MLA Bhadr Ram in Chandigarh.

Both Sukhpal Singh Khaira and Kanwar Sandhu have been suspended for indulging in anti-party activities, AAP legislator and leader of opposition in

Punjab Assembly Harpal Singh Cheema said. He said the core committee has taken the consent of the Political Affairs Committee for the suspension of Bholaath and Kharaar legislators Khaira and Sandhu respectively.

Later the party in a statement said Khaira and Sandhu had been indulging in "anti-party" activities and continuously attacked the central and state party leadership. It said it has decided to suspend the two leaders with immediate effect after

exhausting all avenues. Reacting to his suspension from AAP, Khaira described the decision as "dictatorial" and said he will hold a meeting with legislators and party activists to decide his next action. "We will go to the people's court. Unity talks were torpedoed under a conspiracy after announcing five Lok Sabha candidates. It seems it is a planned strategy and conspiracy," Khaira said.

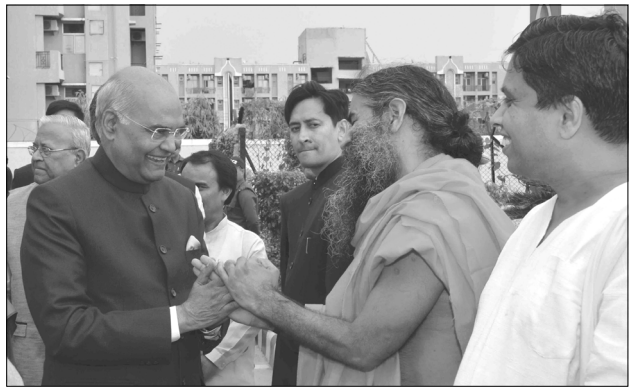
The suspension came nearly three months after Khaira was removed from

the post of Leader of Opposition and two days after AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal's visit to Chandigarh on November 3. During his visit, Kejriwal had virtually snubbed Khaira by saying, "My politics is not Sukhpal Khaira." "My politics is towards the people of this country. My politics is for a corruption-free India. My politics is for providing good education, setting up hospitals," Kejriwal had said. Khaira is leading a group of eight dissident legislators who had

revolted against the party after he was removed from the post of the Leader of Opposition in July. Thereafter, they set up a parallel ad hoc political affairs committee.

The rebel group has been seeking autonomy for the state unit, which they said was being controlled by the Delhi leadership. Talks between the rebel group and other AAP leaders of Punjab unit were held this month in an attempt to iron out the differences ahead of 2019 Lok Sabha polls. But

the talks "failed" to end infighting after rebel group charged the party for unilateral announcing five candidates for Lok Sabha polls and appointing some dissident presidents. Khaira had accused the AAP leadership of not being serious about the differences. He had given the party an ultimatum till November 8 to withdraw new appointments or he and other rebel leaders would start setting up parallel organisational structure of the party in Punjab. His group had blamed



President Ram Nath Kovind being received by Yog Guro Swami Rameed at the inauguration of "Gyan Kumbh" at Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar in Uttarakhand on Saturday.

The Week journalist wins IPI-India Award for 'Naga underground camps' story

NEW DELHI, NOV 3 /- Namrata Bijli Ahuja, a senior journalist at The Week has been chosen for the International Press Institute-India award this year for her story on "Naga underground camps" that explored the "parallel and secret" functioning of a state within a state, the forum said Saturday.

The IPI-India Award for Excellence in Journalism, which carries a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh, a trophy and a citation, will be given to Ahuja at a function later in Delhi, it said. "The award is for her exclusive story on Naga underground camps, bridging the parallel and secret Naga State functioning with all ministries inside Nagaland, interviews and first personal accounts of Naga 'ministers' and officials," the IPI-India said in a statement. She has been chosen for the "fact-based approach" she adopted to gather information about the "state within the state" functioning in the border state, and its implications for the state of Nagaland and for the country, it said.

The first-hand account reporting has contributed for a "better understanding of the long pending Naga is-

sue", the forum said. After considering the entries received for the Award, the jury of editors and publishers headed by former Attorney General of India Soli Sorabjee, unanimously selected Ahuja for the award. The other members of the jury were - N Ravi, Chairman, IPI-India & Director, The Hindu; M K Razdan, former Editor-in-Chief, Press Trust of India, Riyad Mathew, Chief Associate Editor, Malayala Manorama; and Sanjaya Baru, former Chief Editor, Financial Express and Business Standard. The statement said, IPI-India had instituted the annual award in 2003 to recognise and honour the best work done by an Indian media organisation or journalist working in print, radio, television and internet medium in furtherance of public interest, including safeguarding of freedom of the press and other freedoms such as human rights.

The first Award for Excellence in Journalism, 2003 was given to The Indian Express for its reporting of the Gujarat riots and its aftermath. NDTV

won the award in 2004 for its expose of the baby-swapping racket in Hyderabad, and the corruption trail of the Teigi stamp scam. The jury did not find any entry eligible for the award in 2005 and 2006. In 2008, the Award was given to The Indian Express for its investigations into the Bihar flood scam and vanishing tigers. In 2007, the Outlook magazine was selected for the investigation into two defence scams relating to purchase of Scorpene submarines and the leaks from the Navy war room. The Award in 2009 was jointly given to Bidisha Goshal of The Week for her investigation into the sexual victimisation of the widows of farmers who committed suicide in Vidarbha, and to The Indian Express for its investigation into the Hindu terror links in the Malagon and Modasa blasts. Theelka was the recipient of the Award in 2010 for its graphic expose of the cold-blooded execution of an innocent bystander by the security forces in Manipur. Previous recipients of the award include Karan Thapar, M Shajil Kumar of Malayala Manorama and Ritu Sarin of Indian Express.

Teachers must have a discerning eye: President Kovind

HARDIWAR, NOV 3 /- President Ram Nath Kovind said on Saturday that teachers can play a pivotal role in bringing about a qualitative change in higher education by discerning the special abilities of students and bringing out the best in them. Inaugurating a two-day conference called 'Gyan Kumbh' at Patanjali Yogpeeth here, the president said the discerning eye of a teacher plays a big role in the growth of a student. "So you must be sensitive towards your students and ensure that their merit does not go unnoticed because of their poverty or some other handicap," he said. Noting that history was full of examples where teachers honed the skills of their disciples to help them rise to eminent positions, the president cited the example of Chanakya who recognised the talent of Chandragupta who came from a humble background and made him one of the most illustrious kings of ancient India. "Every child is born with certain special ability. It is the teacher's responsibility to recognise that ability and bring the best out of him," he said.

Citing the example of a Brahmin teacher who mentored a lowly born boy called Bhim Rao after recognising his talent and gave him his surname Ambedkar after the completion of his studies, Kovind said that teacher had not come into the life of Dr Ambedkar; the country would have been deprived of the services of a Bharat Ratna.

Even former premier P V Narasimha Rao had a dream of becoming a rocket scientist after he along with a group of his classmates was taken to the seaside by a teacher who taught them about the flight of birds, "the president said and hoped that deliberations at the event will throw up ideas to revolutionise higher education in the country. The president also underlined the need to establish a higher education system which put equal emphasis on imparting knowledge to students and inculcating upon them a keen sense of values. Kovind also remembered Manoj Prasad, a student who dedicated efforts to establish a centre of higher learning like the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and asked teachers to be inspired by his missionary zeal.

Won't bow to pressure on testing fish for formalin: Goa Minister

PANAJI, NOV 3 /- Goa will not bow to pressure from anybody on the issue of testing fish for the presence of formalin, state Agriculture Minister Vijai Sardesai said Saturday. He was reacting to a reported statement by a Maharashtra politician allegedly threatening to stop vehicles from Goa from entering Sindhudurg district if Goa does not allow fish-carrying trucks from Maharashtra to enter. In the wake of fears that fish being brought into the state was laced with formalin, a potential cancer causing chemical, Goa Food and Drugs Administration has imposed stringent conditions, including testing, on fish trucks coming from outside the state. The Goa FDA has also made it mandatory for fish traders to have a licence to import fish. "We cannot be deterred by threats or pressure tactics from anybody within or outside Goa.

Social media posts claim Kashmiri Student has joined militant ranks

SRINAGAR, NOV 3 /- Days after a Kashmiri youth went missing from a private university in Uttar Pradesh, social media posts carrying purported pictures of him claimed that he had joined militant ranks in the Valley.

Ahesham Bilal Sofi (17), a resident of downtown Srinagar, was a first year graduation student at Greater Noida's Sharda University. He went missing on October 28 after he left the varsity with official permission to go to Delhi, days after he was mistakenly roughed up during a scuffle between Indian and Afghan students in the campus. A missing complaint was registered in the case at the Knowledge Park police station in Greater Noida as well as at Khanpura police station in Srinagar, officials said. The pictures on social media showed Sofi dressed in a black outfit and claimed he had joined militant group ISJK, an outfit influenced by ISIS ideology.

The UP Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) said it has been tracking the case since October 28 and has taken cognisance of the photos. "We are in touch with Jammu and Kashmir police. We are tracking the footprints of the boy from Greater Noida to Kashmir," Inspector General, ATS, Asim Arun told news agency PTI. The Jammu and Kashmir Police said they were "ascertaining" Sofi's presence in the Valley. The Gautam Buddha Nagar police, who had traced the last location of Sofi's mobile phone, a militancy-hit Punjab town in South Kashmir, is also probing the matter. "A missing complaint was registered and police teams are working on the case," a senior official told news agency PTI. According to the police here, Sofi had left for Greater Noida from Srinagar on October 28 and reached Pulwama a few hours later. They said his mobile phone details showed that he last spoke to his father, who lives in Srinagar, at 4.30 pm, when his location was traced to Pulwama.

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah today said that reports claiming a Kashmiri student of a private university joined militant ranks in the Valley were "hugely worrying." "If this is genuine (social media post about Sofi joining militant ranks), he's hugely worried. Sometimes seemingly small actions have huge consequences (sic)," Abdullah wrote on Twitter.

Rakesh Asthana case: Court denies bail to alleged middleman

NEW DELHI, NOV 3 /- A Delhi court on Saturday dismissed the bail application of Manoj Prasad, an alleged middleman arrested in connection with bribery allegations involving the agency's Special Director Rakesh Asthana. Special CBI Judge Santosh Snehi Mann denied bail to Prasad saying it was not at its stage to grant him relief. The agency had opposed the application saying that the accused was an influential person and if released on bail, he may tamper with the ongoing probe and flee from justice. In his bail application, Manoj Prasad had said he was not required for custodial interrogation and no purpose will be served by keeping him in further custody. Manoj Prasad, arrested on October 17, is currently in judicial custody. The court had on October 31 granted bail to co-accused and CBI's DSP Devender Kumar, but the others did not oppose his bail petition. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had registered an FIR against Rakesh Asthana and others on a written complaint of businessman Sathish Sana on October 15.

Besides Rakesh Asthana, Manoj Prasad and Devender Kumar, another alleged middleman Suresh Prasad has also been named as an accused in the case. The FIR had alleged that Devender Kumar, being the Investigating Officer (IO) in the case against meo (terrorist) Moyn Qureshi, was repeatedly calling the complainant to the CBI office to harass him and compel him to pay a bribe of Rs five crore for getting a clean chit in the case. (PTT)

Sheena Bora case: Indrani Mukerjea's bail plea rejected

MUMBAI, NOV 3 /- A sessions court here Saturday rejected the bail plea of Indrani Mukerjea, prime accused in the case of her daughter Sheena Bora. A special CBI court, while rejecting Indrani's bail plea, observed that the accused was facing trial on a serious charge and several important witnesses like Rahul Mukerjea, Indrani's stepson, are yet to record their evidence in the case. Indrani had sought bail citing ill-health and alleged threat to her life. This was the second time the court rejected her bail plea. Indrani, lodged in Mumbai's Byculla prison, in her application had mentioned two occasions when she was hospitalised - once for suspected overdose and again in April when she complained of difficulty in breathing. She had said someone inside the jail had tried to poison her. She was arrested in August 2015 for allegedly murdering her daughter Sheena on April 12, 2012. Apart from Indrani, the others arrested in the case are her husband and former media baron Peter Mukerjea, and her former husband Sanjeev Chhanna. Indrani's brother, Shivaywar Rai, was also arrested in the case but later turned approver. Rai's bail plea was rejected Friday. The trial in the case began last year and over 10 witnesses have deposed so far. (PTT)



People visit the "Statue of Unity" portraying Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel during its inauguration in Kevadia of Gujarat - REUTERS