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Democracy, freedom and unity are precious, eternal vigilance needed to safeguard them: Ker Guv

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Arif Mohammad Khan. Photo: PTI

Ahmedabad:Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan on Sunday termed democracy, freedom and unity as "precious things", and said there was a need for "eternal vigilance" to protect them.

Calling ignorance as the real enemy of peace, he said unity among people was important for progress.

"There is a need to protect precious things. Your democracy is precious because you have no right without it, your freedom is precious because a life of slavery is no life, and your unity is precious because you cannot progress without it and walk side by side with the world," he said.

"There is a famous saying in English - 'Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty'. Not just liberty, but for democracy, liberty, unity, progress and development - eternal vigilance is required for everything precious," he said.

Khan was delivering a lecture at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary.

"It doesn't sound very good that we continue to talk about 'India for all' even after 75 years of independence. It means we are feeling somewhere we are lacking in unity," he said.

Khan also termed the sense of the 'other' as a threat to peace. The 'other' comes into existence when one is ignorant about them, he said.

"Our own tradition tells us, the 'other' is always the source of fear, and fear always gives rise to hatred. Ignorance leads to your assumption about the other person, and the 'other' gives rise to hatred, and hatred gives rise to violence. This is how a vicious circle comes into existence," he said.

Later, Khan also spoke at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) in Gandhinagar on the topic of "Global peace and sustainability".

The fear of the 'other' can be tackled with the acquisition of knowledge and defeat of ignorance, he said.

"Knowledge is belief, happiness, peace. Ignorance is the opposite of that. The real enemy of peace is ignorance. Knowledge is power...India has believed in the divinity of truth, in the divinity of knowledge, in the divinity of goodness and in the divinity of perfect union," he said.

Khan also underscored the need for unity and said that it is important not just for safety like it used to be in the past, but more so for progress.

"Today it is much more important not just for safety, but for progress. In the race for modernity, you cannot afford to lag behind. It is not possible," he said.

Diversity is the law of nature, and therefore one has no option but to respect and accept diversity of every kind, he added.

"This has been the message of Indian culture. If you want to live in peace, then recognise diversity as a foundational virtue of civilisation," Khan further said.

India suffered at the hands of conquerors, because we celebrated the festival and burnt Ravana's effigy, but did not pay attention to the Ravana inside us. The real purpose behind the celebration of festivals like burning the effigy of Ravana is to direct our attention to our Ravani (evil) tendencies, he said. PTI