

Agriculture is backbone of our economy, says Venkaiah Naidu

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
GURGAON, SEPTEMBER 19

VICE-PRESIDENT M Venkaiah Naidu Sunday said that agriculture was the "backbone of our economy" and called for unshackling the potential of rural economy to ensure income security for farmers.

"Agriculture is the basic culture of India. Half of the country today depends on agriculture. Our villages not only produce foodgrains but they also inculcate values and principles," he said. "All governments should give priority to welfare of farmers and ensure remunerative prices. There must always be a dialogue between farmers and government; however farmers' problems should not be linked to politics. When it is linked to votes, division happens."

Naidu was addressing a gathering in Gurgaon after releasing five volumes of col-



M Venkaiah Naidu

lected works of speeches and writing of Sir Chhotu Ram, the co-founder of National Unionist Party and prominent politician in pre-independent India.

Heaping praise on the agriculture sector and work ethic of farmers, Naidu said even during Covid, when other sectors of the economy suffered, production in agricultural sector increased for two successive years.

"You must remember a government had fallen due to onion prices. There should be one market for all, without restrictions, and support prices should be raised from time to time. But, I am not in favour of government procuring all the produce. It should procure when there is no demand in the market. Otherwise, commission agents will exploit farmers," said Naidu, adding that he was not referring to any particular government on this.

"I am not in politics, I have retired from politics, but not tired from public life, I am myself son of a farmer," he added.

Naidu reiterated that there was a need to look beyond politics of freebies in addressing farmers' needs.

"Farmers need infrastructure - uninterrupted power supply for 12 hours, roads, water, timely credit, market, godowns. They need permanent projects, not populist schemes," he said.