

Former VP Naidu vows to protect strategic and national interests; slams selective US tariffs

NEW DELHI: Former vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday said that India will not compromise on its strategic or national interests and will continue to protect its energy security despite external pressures. The statement comes amid growing trade tensions with the United States. Speaking at the valedictory session of the MS Swaminathan Centenary International Conference, Naidu stated, "We will remain to safeguard energy security and we will stand firm on our strategic and national interest. No question of yielding to any threats. Threats will not work on India..." Naidu underlined that India is self-reliant while remaining committed to global cooperation guided by the principle of "share and care." His remarks came after US President Donald Trump raised



tariffs on Indian goods from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, calling India a "dead economy", a remark Naidu dismissed, citing India's strong growth. He noted that India is growing fast and gaining worldwide recognition while some countries are envious of nation's growth. "They are not able to digest our growth. They are suffering from indigestion problem," the former

vice-president said. He highlighted that India has moved up from fourth to third place in the global economic rankings and expressed confidence that with contributions from farmers, researchers and youth, the country will "definitely reach further heights". Naidu cited India as "sovereign and vibrant democracy" growing at 6.5-7 per cent annually

and contributing 18 per cent to global GDP growth, higher than the US' share of 11 per cent. He also questioned the fairness of selective US tariffs on allies like India, while America continues to import uranium and fertilisers from Russia and EU imports large quantities of Russian crude. "We were friends. We always admire America because they are the oldest democracy and we are the largest democracy. We respect each other, we have admiration, but what is happening, what is being said about India without any provocation, any reason, is really unfortunate," Naidu said. Despite the tensions, Naidu emphasised India's willingness to work with all nations which is rooted in Indian philosophy. "There is no reason for anybody to have any grouse against India or about India," he added.

Families recall Delhi wall collapse horror; 7 killed

NEW DELHI: Families in Delhi's Jaitpur woke up on Saturday to a nightmare they will never forget. "Some people were making roti, some were eating rice, and others were about to go to work when we heard the sound of the wall collapsing," said Ranjan, whose five family members, her parents, brother, and two young children, died in the tragedy. The Delhi Police received the first PCR call at 9.13am, reporting in Hindi, "Badi deewar gir gayi hai" (a big wall has fallen). Heavy overnight rain had weakened a wall near Mohan Baba Mandir in the low-lying neighbourhood. Around 9am, it came crashing down on the jhuggis beside it, trapping eight people inside. Locals said the victims included two children, a woman, and several men, many of them migrant workers from West



Bengal. "It fell on eight people, among them were two children, a woman, and several men. All were rushed to the hospital in serious condition," a resident said. Moina, a young girl from the area, said her father, a garbage collector, was among those pulled from the rubble. "I was sleeping when it happened. I didn't see anything," PTI quoted her saying. Police have launched an investigation into the incident, with the

exact cause of the wall collapse still unclear. Officials suspect that waterlogging and soil weakening from the night's heavy rain may have contributed to the tragedy. "We will look into the structural condition of the wall, ownership, and any negligence involved. Statements of witnesses and survivors will be recorded," PTI quoted the officer saying. The sole survivor, 27-year-old Hasibul, remains under treatment.

Kharge pays tribute to freedom fighters

NEW DELHI: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge today paid rich tributes to freedom fighters who participated in the historic Quit India Movement, launched on this day in 1942 under Mahatma Gandhi's call of "Do or Die." On his social media handle X, Kharge said the movement, led by the Indian National Congress, saw countless Indians rise against British rule, marking a pivotal moment in the freedom struggle. "In 1942, with the invaluable slogan 'Do or Die' by the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, the 'Quit India Movement' began against British rule, which infused new energy into the struggle for independence," Kharge said. He said, "Under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, countless Indians took to the streets during the Quit India Movement.

EC delists 334 unrecognised political parties in clean-up drive

NEW DELHI: As a part of a comprehensive and continuous strategy to clean up the electoral system, the Election Commission today delisted 334 Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs). According to an official statement, the action was taken after a thorough review. However, the delisted parties have the right to appeal before the Commission within 30 days. As per the press release, under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, there are currently six National Parties, 67 State Parties and 2,854 Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs) registered with ECI. The parties recognised as national parties include:



Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress (INC), and the National People's Party (NPP). According to rules, if a registered political party does not contest elections continuously for six years, it

is liable to be removed from the list. Additionally, registered parties are required to periodically submit specific details to the Commission. The Commission stated that in June 2025, it had instructed the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of states and union territories to examine 345 RUPPs for compliance with the registration

norms. During the verification process, notices were issued to these parties and they were given a chance to present their case. Reports submitted by the CEOs revealed that 334 of these parties were not complying with the registration requirements. The remaining cases have been sent back for further verification. Based on the findings and recommendations of the CEOs, the Commission has removed these 334 RUPPs from the list of registered political parties. As a result, out of the original 2,854 RUPPs, 2,520 now remain on the list. The delisted parties can file an appeal with the Election Commission within 30 days.

Delhi School Education bill passed; Atishi calls it attack on rights of parents

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Assembly on Friday passed the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) 2025 Bill. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and her ministers later greeted the media after the passage of the bill. AAP proposed eight amendments to the bill, but all were rejected by the BJP government. 41 BJP MLAs voted in its favour and 17 AAP MLAs voted against it. AAP leader Atishi opposed the bill. "The new Fee Regulation Bill of the BJP government in Delhi is a direct attack on the rights of the parents of Delhi. There is no provision in the bill to listen to the parents, and their right to go to court has also been



taken away from them. Every line in this law has been written for the benefit of private school owners. Our clear demand is... the bill should be sent to the select committee and the opinion of the parents should be heard," she wrote on X. Education Minister Ash-

ish Sood said on Thursday that after the passage of the bill, fees of all private schools would be regulated. "This bill replaces a toothless, reactive framework with a proactive, empowered, and transparent one. Earlier, the DoE could only approve the fee

increases by the schools under the land clause, while there are hundreds of smaller private schools where the fee increase goes unchecked. The parents of bigger schools complain, but if the fee of a small private school in Najafgarh increases from ₹1,000 to ₹1,500, it is a 50% hike. This is a huge burden for the parents of that school, but they, in most cases, do not complain," he was quoted as saying by Hindustan Times. He said after the passage of the bill, the land clause could be applied to all 1,443 schools in Delhi. Under the clause, schools built on subsidised DDA land are required to inform the Department of Education before hiking their fees.

Heavy rain lashes Delhi, Noida & Gurugram inundated

NEW DELHI: Heavy rains lashed the national capital and its surrounding areas, including Noida and Gurugram, causing widespread waterlogging and disrupting daily life. Several areas in Delhi, Noida, and Gurugram were inundated, with knee-deep water on roads, making it difficult for people to commute. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) today issued a red alert for Delhi-NCR, predicting moderate to heavy rainfall and thunderstorms throughout the day. The weather department estimated that the minimum temperature would be around 27 degrees Celsius and the maximum temperature would be around 36 degrees Celsius, with rain expected to continue for the

next few days. The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) advised passengers to contact their airlines for flight information, citing adverse weather conditions. Several flights were delayed, and airlines like IndiGo and SpiceJet alerted passengers about traffic congestion in the city. According to the IMD, heavy rainfall was recorded in several areas of Delhi, including Safdarjung (49.6 mm), Pusa (47.0 mm), Mayur Vihar (42.0 mm), and Pragati Maidan (40.6 mm). Waterlogging was reported in various parts of the city, including ITO, Munirka Metro Station Gate No. 1, Motilal Bagh, APS Colony, Akbar Road, South Avenue, Ranjit Singh Flyover, Mandi House, Minto Road, Sangam Vihar.

Kolkata Police launches lathi-charge on protesters demanding justice

KOLKATA: A year has passed since the horrific RG Kar rape and murder case in India's West Bengal. The family of the victim alleged that justice had not been served in the case. To mark one year into the case, a massive protest was organised in Kolkata on Saturday (August 9) - which later turned into chaos after police launched a lathi charge on the protesters. The protest was led by senior leaders Suwendu Adhikari and Agnimitra Paul. A section of the protesters also did a march demanding justice in the case. As part of the 'Nabanna Chalo Abhiyan', the protestors raised slogans for justice for the RG

Kar victim. The protest was joined by a pool of people at the request of the victim's family. Several BJP workers also participated after the call from the Leader of Opposition in the assembly, Suwendu Adhikari. He urged politicians to join the protest without any party flag. "The Mamata Banerjee administration is fearing this massive crowd, which has gathered in protest," Adhikari said. The father of the victim alleged that the Kolkata Police stopped the family from doing the march, even when the court had allowed them to organise a peaceful protest.

Railways launches 'Round Trip Package' to ease festival rush

NEW DELHI: The Union Ministry of Railways has unveiled an experimental scheme - Round Trip Package - designed to ease congestion and incentivise advance bookings for the upcoming Diwali and Chhath festivals. Bookings for the scheme will open on August 14, said a Ministry official today. Under the scheme, passengers booking both onward and return journeys within designated windows will be eligible for a 20% concession on the base fare of the return leg. The initiative is aimed at encouraging family travel and extended holiday plans. Onward journeys must fall between October 13 and October 26, while return trips can be reserved between November 17 and December 1, using the 'connecting journey' feature, said the official about the key feature of the scheme. The standard Advance Reservation Period (ARP) of 60 days will not be ap-



plicable for return tickets booked under this offer. According to the official, several conditions will govern the scheme. Only confirmed tickets will be considered valid in both directions, and the same class and origin-destination (O-D) pair must be maintained for the round trip. Refunds will not be permitted for tickets booked under the scheme. "The concession applies to all classes and trains - including special services - except those operating under the Flexi Fare system. No additional charges will

be levied during charting for these PNRs. However, the use of other promotional offers, coupons, passes, or loyalty discounts will not be permitted alongside this scheme," said the official. Both legs of the journey must be booked through the same channel - either online or at physical reservation counters. Officials expressed hope that the initiative will help disperse peak traffic more evenly across the holiday period, mitigate last-minute rush, and offer a more comfortable travel experience for festival-bound families.

SC asks IAF to look into exclusion of stepmother from pension scheme

NEW DELHI: Supreme Court heard the petition of a stepmother who raised an Indian Air Force (IAF) officer, who was denied pension benefits after his death. The court said "why should 'mother' be a static expression? Why should adoptive parents not be entitled (to pension)?" The mother raised the deceased officer since the age of six, the court noted that a case should be viewed on facts to ascertain who played a role in nurturing and shaping the child's life. Justice Ujjal Bhuyan was quoted by news outlet Live Law, "(Mother) need not be a biological mother". While the IAF counsel said that the apex court itself has held that 'mother' includes only 'biological mother'. And said, "Regulations are clear and they have not been challenged." Further adding that the if law-making authority could have included 'mother' should include 'stepmother'.

Sharad Pawar urges support for Centre against Donald Trump's tariff; terms it as 'pressure tactics'

NEW DELHI: NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday called for backing the Central government in the face of US President Donald Trump's steep tariff hikes, describing them as "pressure tactics" aimed at coercing India. "The imposition of a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods is a pressure tactic. We, the people of India, should support the government to protect the interests of the country," Pawar told reporters in Nagpur, as quoted by news agency PTI. The former Union minister refrained from directly blaming the Modi government's foreign policy for the tariff escalation but said Trump's impulsive style left little room for negotiation. "We saw the work style of Trump in his first term as US president earlier. I feel no one has control over



him. He speaks impulsively whatever comes to his heart," Pawar said. The US has announced two rounds of tariffs totalling 50% on Indian goods, an initial 25% effective from August 7, followed by another 25% three weeks later, targeting, among other things, India's oil trade with Russia. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had earlier termed it "one of the biggest setbacks

to India's foreign policy in recent times," warning that sectors including MSMEs, agriculture, dairy, engineering goods, electronics, gems and jewellery, petroleum products, and cotton clothing would be hit the hardest. Pawar also used the opportunity to caution Prime Minister Narendra Modi about growing regional strains. "We also cannot ignore our approach towards

our neighbouring countries. Today, Pakistan is against us, while countries including Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives are not happy with us. Our neighbours are moving away from us. I feel Modi saheb shouldn't ignore this aspect and should concentrate on improving the ties," he said. The ministry of external affairs earlier described the US move as "unfortunate" and reiterated that India would continue to act in its own national interest. Opposition leaders have sharpened their criticism of the government's handling of ties with Washington. Earlier, Rahul Gandhi called Trump's tariff action "economic blackmail" and alleged that PM Modi's muted response was linked to "the ongoing US investigation into Adani."

'Delhi govt soon bringing policy on bore well regularisation'

NEW DELHI: Delhi's Water Minister Parvesh Verma today made a series of announcements in the assembly while addressing the capital's water crisis, the issue of bore well sealing, and problems in unauthorised colonies, and also criticised the failures of the previous AAP government. The minister informed that while bore wells are being sealed in compliance with NGT guidelines, the government will soon be bringing in a clear and practical policy for their regularisation. The Minister emphasised, "The current situation in Delhi is a result of 11 years of negligence. Abruptly shutting all bore wells is not practical. Action is ongoing against those selling water from bore wells.

Indian community celebrates Rakshabandhan, National Handloom Day at Shanghai consulate

NEW DELHI: Members of the Indian community and friends of India in Shanghai gathered at the Consulate General of India today to celebrate Rakshabandhan and the bonds of love, protection, and positivity that the festival represents. As part of the ceremony, Sister Sapna from Brahmakumaris China tied a Rakhi to Consul General Pratik Mathur, symbolising the spirit of mutual respect and goodwill, a statement said. To mark National Handloom Day, participating women showcased India's rich textile heritage by wearing colourful traditional sarees, representing diverse weaving traditions from across the country. The vibrant display underlined the importance



of preserving and promoting India's handloom sector. The celebrations also featured an Art and Crafts Competition for children on the theme 'India of Our Dreams', encouraging creativity and reflection on India's future. In a patriotic tribute, the gathering invoked the

Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, with adults and children waving the Indian National Flag with enthusiasm and pride. The event brought together cultural traditions, community spirit, and national pride, highlighting the shared bonds that connect the Indian diaspora with their homeland.