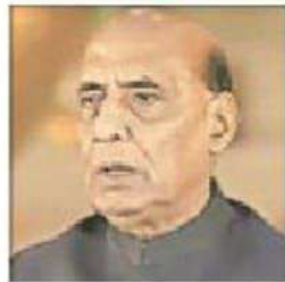


# India emerging as major defence exporter: Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI, Aug 18 (IANS)

UNION Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday praised the nation's overwhelming support for the Agnipath scheme, emphasising India's strides towards self-reliance in the defence sector and its emerging status as a major defence exporter.



Speaking during the 'Raksha Sutra-Sandesh to Soldiers' podcast by the Ministry of Defence, the Union Minister also expressed his deep gratitude to the Indian defence forces for their role in preserving the country's freedom.

"The entire country is extending its immense support to the Agnipath scheme. The youth are being extensively recruited into the forces through this initiative. In the first two batches, 40,000 Agniveers have completed their training and have just been allotted deployment in units, with 100 women included in each group," Rajnath Singh stated.

Highlighting India's progress in defence manufacturing, he said, "We are continuously moving towards self-reliance in the manufacturing of weapons, cannons, tanks, fighter ships, helicopters, missile systems, and more for the Armed Forces. Our Government, under Make in India, is ensuring that weapons made in India are in the hands of our soldiers."

The Defence Minister also pointed out that India, once primarily known as an importer of weapons, is now establishing itself as a significant exporter.

# Shinawatra Thai PM after Royal assent

BANGKOK, Aug 18 (AP)

PAETONGTARN Shinawatra, daughter of the divisive former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, became



Thailand's Prime Minister after receiving a Royal letter of endorsement Sunday, two days after she was chosen by Parliament following a court order that removed her predecessor. She replaces another leader from the same Pheu Thai Party, at the head of a coalition

## PM Modi wishes Shinawatra

NEW DELHI, Aug 18 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday congratulated Paetongtarn Shinawatra on becoming Thailand's Prime Minister and said he looks forward to working with her to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

that includes military parties associated with the coup that deposed the party's last Government.

Paetongtarn is the third Shinawatra to hold the job, after her billionaire father and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra. Both were removed from office and forced into exile in coups, although Thaksin returned to Thailand last year as Pheu Thai formed a Government.

She received the letter of appointment in a ceremony at the party's headquarters in Bangkok, attended by senior members of parties.

# Fortunate to have worked with exceptional people who shaped ISRO: Somanath

KOLKATA, Aug 18 (PTI)

DESCRIBING himself as a 100 per cent 'Made in India' product, ISRO chairman S Somanath on Sunday said the skills he acquired were derived from his experience at the Indian space agency.

Somanath, who was awarded the Special Life Fellow Award by IIT Kharagpur on its 74th foundation day. "Our work over the past 38 years, has focused on building key capabilities within this organisation. I am fortunate to have worked with exceptional people, and leaders who have shaped the Indian

Space Research Organisation into what it is today. I have had the opportunity to follow in their footsteps and contribute to projects like Chandrayaan-3 that make us all proud," Somanath said.

Addressing the students and he said, "What you are achieving as an institution is commendable, and it is crucial for ISRO and other scientific organisations, in this country and globally, to maintain a strong connection with you. There is a great vision ahead for all of us in ISRO and I will like you to be a part of it as well."

# B'desh edn instts reopen after a month

DHAKA, Aug 18 (PTI)

BANGLADESH on Sunday reopened all educational institutions, including universities, secondary schools and colleges, across the country after more than a month of closure due to violence centring the student-led protests that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The educational institutions in Bangladesh were closed indefinitely on July 17 to ensure the safety of students in the wake of clashes that erupted during the recent movement demanding reform of the job quota system. The Ministry of Education on Thursday issued a directive to reopen the institutions under its jurisdiction. All the educational institutions reopened on Sunday, after a month of closure.



Members of Hindu organisations protest over the violence against minorities in Bangladesh at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Sunday. (PTI)

According to Somoy Television, a Bengali news

channel based in Dhaka, "All concerned have been asked to

take necessary steps to resume academic activities in all the

educational institutions from August 18 following the instruction of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus," a notification signed by deputy secretary Mosammat Rahima Akhtar, said on August 15.

In the morning, school students in uniform were seen going to their institutions, many accompanied by guardians, the 'Daily Star' reported. Many points of Dhaka city are witnessing severe traffic congestion due to the reopening of educational institutions. The working week is from Sunday to Thursday in Bangladesh.

Initially, classes were scheduled to resume on August 4 in all government primary schools, except in the 12 city corporations and Narsingdi municipality, but this was also postponed.

# Sri Lankan President Wickremesinghe calls for deepening ties with India

COLOMBO, Aug 18 (PTI)

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe has emphasised the importance of strengthening economic cooperation and regional integration with Japan to India, with a special focus on deepening ties with New Delhi, as his country seeks to emerge from bankruptcy. Wickremesinghe's comments came as he was virtually addressing the Head of State Session of the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit, held under the theme "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future." From the north-central town of Anuradhapura yesterday.

The conference, chaired by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, brought together heads of state from various countries. Reflecting on Indo-Sri Lankan relations,

the President emphasised the "vision" statement shared between the two nations, which celebrates their historical cooperation and lays the foundation for future collaboration. He expressed optimism that this vision will lead to stronger integration between Sri Lanka and India across various sectors.

President Wickremesinghe highlighted Sri Lanka's strategic commitment to expanding economic partnerships across Asia, particularly through the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). The President noted that as the Bay of Bengal region emerges as a hub of economic growth, the significance of BIMSTEC continues to rise.

Sri Lanka, as a member, seeks closer economic integration with India and is exploring economic cooperation agreements

extending from Japan to India, his office said in a statement.

President Wickremesinghe also expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and the people of India for their support during Sri Lanka's recent economic crisis. The President acknowledged that India's assistance played a vital role in helping Sri Lanka navigate the challenges of the past two years and emerge from bankruptcy.

"Sri Lanka thanks India for hosting the third virtual seminar on Voices of the Global South. This series enables us to engage with each other to understand our different viewpoints while also helping us arrive at a common stance on many issues confronting the South," he said. "We have reached a point where the West can no longer dominate global leadership and, furthermore, has become part of the problem."

# India to set up Space Station by 2035, land human on Moon by 2040: Dr Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI, Aug 18 (IANS)

THE Indian space station -- Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS) -- is expected to be set up and running by 2035, said Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology.

The MoS said announcements made in the Union Budget 2024-25 relating to the space sector have a futuristic vision. He listed out the ambitious goal of sending an Indian to Space "by the second half of 2025" and landing the first Indian on the Moon by 2040.

"In 2023, we saw an investment of Rs 1,000 crore. The projection is that the space economy will grow five times in the next 10 years or around \$44 billion," Singh said. This is also expected to prevent "tal-

ent that might have gone abroad". He informed that Gaganyaan -- India's first human spaceflight mission -- delayed due to COVID, will take flight next year. "The trial flights are going on," he said.

In addition, India is also aiming to send "robot flights, where a female robot, Vayumitra, will be sent to space in 2025".

The robot will do all the activities of an astronaut, return to Earth, and be extracted from the landing craft.

Further, citing the 2023 New Space Policy, the Minister said it has liberated the sector in India and has also boosted digital space startups -- from just one in 2021 to nearly 300.

Singh noted that the policy opened doors for the private sector to participate in ISRO's activities, and helped the sector to achieve new heights.

