

# ISRO unveils model of 'BHARATIYA ANTARIKSH STATION'



A model of the 'Bharatiya Antariksh Station' module on display at the Bharat Mandapam as part of the National Space Day celebrations in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (PTI)

**INDIAN** Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday unveiled a model of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) module during the two-day National Space Day celebrations that began here.

India plans to launch the first module of the BAS, its own home-built space station, by 2028, marking its entry into the group of a hand-

**ISRO plans to launch the first module of the BAS by 2028. There will be 5 modules in place by 2035**

**BAS-01 module to weigh 10 tonnes and will be placed in a low Earth orbit at 450 km**

ful of nations that operate orbital laboratories. Presently, there are two orbital laboratories -- the International Space Station operated by five space agencies, and the Tiangong space station of China.

India plans to have five modules of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station in place by 2035 as part of its ambitious plans for the space sector.

The BAS-01 module is expected to weigh 10 tonnes and will be placed in a low Earth orbit at 450 km above the Earth. Salient features of the BAS include, indigenously-developed Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS), Bharat Docking System, Bharat Berthing Mechanism, automated hatch system, platform for microgravity research and technology demonstration, viewports for scientific

*(Contd on page 5)*

# Wickremesinghe arrested for misuse of funds

COLOMBO, Aug 22 (PTI)

SRI LANKA'S former President Ranil Wickremesinghe was arrested on Friday for allegedly misusing the State funds during his tenure as Head of State, police said.

Wickremesinghe, 76, was arrested at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) headquarters, where he was summoned to record a statement in connection with an investigation into the alleged misuse of Government funds, police said.

Later, the veteran Opposition leader was produced before a magistrates' court in Colombo.

Wickremesinghe, who served as President from 2022 to 2024, has been accused of using State funds to travel to England to attend a convocation ceremony of his wife, Professor Maithree, in September 2023.

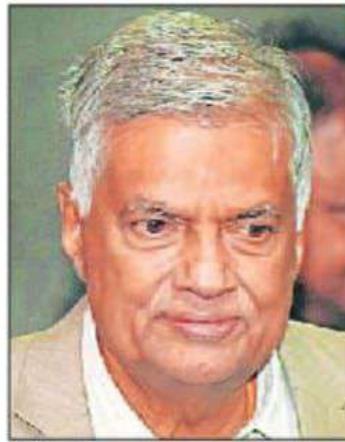
It has been alleged that Wickremesinghe was returning from the US after an official engagement and visited the UK at the State's expense to attend the private engagement of his wife.

The CID had previously questioned his staff about the travel expenses.

Wickremesinghe, who had replaced Gotabaya Rajapaksa as President to serve the balance term until the end of 2024, was credited with steering Sri Lanka out of the economic crisis of 2022.

Wickremesinghe, a lawyer-turned politician who had been in Parliament for more than five decades, also served six separate terms as Prime Minister.

Wickremesinghe, the nephew of Sri Lanka's first executive President Junius Jayewardene, was first appointed Prime Minister from 1993 to 1994 after the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa.



# Extreme heat endangering health, productivity: WHO-WMO report

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (PTI)

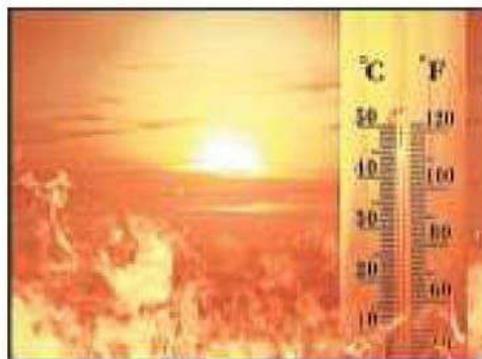
THE productivity of workers in extreme heat drops by two to three per cent for every degree above an ambient temperature of 20 degrees Celsius, highlights a report brought out by the United Nations' health and climate agencies.

Analysing evidence from studies from past five decades that "have provided conclusive evidence that workplace heat stress directly threatens workers' ability to live healthy and productive lives", the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have also outlined guidance on how the growing risks of heat can be mitigated in the section of society.

Extreme heat events around the world occur more often and have become intense, increasing risks for both outdoor and indoor workers, authors of the report say, adding that related health risks include heatstroke and dehydration, and brain and kidney disorders.

All of this can impact the long-term health and economic security of the workers' population, they said.

Vidhya Venugopal, professor of occupational hygiene and health at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research's faculty of public health, Tamil



Nadu, and an author on the report, told PTI, "The report acknowledges that extreme heat affecting workers worldwide has emerged as a significant and growing occupational crisis requiring urgent intervention." Venugopal was the lead author on a 2023 study which found that pregnant women exposed to extreme heat at work could be at double the risk of a miscarriage. The findings are published in the

British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

According to the WMO, the year 2024 was the hottest on record and daytime temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius and 50 degrees Celsius are becoming increasingly common. The WHO-WMO report further pointed out that about half the world's population suffers adverse consequences of high temperatures.

The figures call for immediate action to address the worsening impact of heat stress on workers worldwide, the authors said. Measures recommended under the guidance include developing policies related to the health hazard of heat at the workplace, with plans and advisories tailored to local weather, specific worker roles and vulnerabilities.

Highlighting key challenges in current climate strategies in India, Venugopal said, "Solutions must be developed with our cultural context in mind. Many climate adaptation strategies overlook the basic realities of our culture and are therefore failing."

# **USAID didn't receive funding of \$21 mn for voter turnout in India: US Embassy to MEA**

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (PTI)

THE US Embassy has said that "USAID/India did not receive or provide funding of \$21 million for voter turnout in India" from fiscal years 2014 to 2024, nor has it implemented any voter turnout-related activities in India, the Centre has told Rajya Sabha.

The Government said this in a written response to a query from CPI(M) MP John Brittas on Thursday, asking the status of the actions taken by it on the "reports suggesting the utilisation of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funds" to "increase voter turnout in Indian elections".

Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh, in his response said, on February 28, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) requested the US Embassy in New Delhi to "urgently furnish details" of expenditure incurred

on all USAID-assisted or funded projects in India over the last ten years (other than those being implemented under the seven Partnership Agreements with Government of India).

In his response, the MoS further said, "The Embassy also maintains that 'USAID/India did not receive or provide funding of \$21 million for voter turnout in India from fiscal years 2014 to 2024, nor has it implemented any voter turnout-related activities in India.' On July 29, the US Embassy conveyed to the MEA that it plans to bring all USAID operations to a close "by August 15, 2025," Centre told Rajya Sabha.

On August 11, the US Embassy in New Delhi, in a letter to the Department of Economic Affairs, "conveyed that all 7 Partnership Agreements signed with the Government of India would stand closed with effect from Aug 15, 2025", the Minister said.

# \$500 mn penalty against Trump

**Trump overstated the value of his properties and other assets to obtain favourable bank loans**

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NEW YORK, Aug 22 (IANS)

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A NEW YORK appeals court threw out a more than \$500 million penalty plus interest against US President Donald Trump in a civil fraud case.



In the 323-page ruling by a five-judge panel, the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court upheld the verdict, saying that the size of the fine was ‘excessive’ and that it “violates the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution.”

New York Attorney General Letitia James filed a lawsuit in 2022, accusing Trump and his company of overstating the value of his properties and other assets to obtain favourable bank loans or insurance terms, Xinhua news agency reported.

In February 2024, a judge found that Trump unlawfully inflated his wealth and ordered the President to pay the penalty, which has accumulated to more than \$500 million plus interest. His two sons, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump, were also told to hand over penalties respectively.

# Modi to visit Japan, China from Aug 29 to Sept 1

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a four-day visit of Japan and China on August 29, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Friday.

In the first leg of his trip, Modi will be in Japan on a two-day visit. From Japan, he will travel to China, primarily to attend the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The announcement of the Prime Minister's visit to the two Asian countries came just days after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's trip to India.

The MEA said Modi will be in Japan on August 29 and 30 to participate in the 15th India-Japan annual summit.

This will be Modi's eighth vis-

it to Japan as the Prime Minister.

The Ministry said Modi and his Japanese counterpart, Shigeru Ishiba, will review the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan.

It said the two Prime Ministers will deliberate on cooperation in the areas of defence and security, trade and economy, technology and innovation, and people-to-people exchanges, as well as discuss issues of regional and global importance.

In the second leg of his visit, Modi, at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, will travel to the neighbouring country from August 31 to September 1 to attend the SCO summit to be held in the Chinese city of Tianjin on August 31 and September 1.