

ISRO'S 'DISTRESS ALERT TRANSMITTER'

To send emergency messages from fishing boats

BENGALURU, Jan 17 (PTI)

ISRO has developed a second-generation 'Distress Alert Transmitter' (DAT), incorporating advanced satellite communication and navigation capabilities that allow fishermen at sea to send emergency messages from fishing boats and get acknowledgement in real time.

The DAT has been operational since 2010 and more than 20,000 of them are currently in use, the space agency said. The messages are sent through a communication satellite and

received at a central control station (INMCC: Indian Mission Control Centre) where the alert signals are decoded for the identity and location of the fishing boat, according to an ISRO statement.

The extracted information is forwarded to Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCCs) under the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). "Using this information the MRCC undertakes Search and Rescue operations to save the fishermen in distress," it said.

Taking advantage of technological developments in

satellite communication and satellite navigation, ISRO has improvised DAT with advanced capabilities and features, evolving to Second Generation DAT (DAT-SG).

The DAT-SG has the facility to send back acknowledgement to the fishermen who activate the distress alert from the sea. "This gives him an assurance that rescue (team) is coming to him. Apart from transmitting distress signals from the sea, DAT-SG has the capability to receive messages from the control centre," ISRO said.

Ayushman Bharat health scheme insurance cover likely to double

■ **By Payal Banerjee**

NEW DELHI, Jan 17 (PTI)

THE Government is working on finalising a proposal to double the insurance cover under its flagship Ayushman Bharat health scheme to Rs 10 lakh to ensure that serious diseases like cancer and transplants that entail more expenditure are supported by it, official sources said on Wednesday.

An announcement to this effect is likely to be made in the interim Union Budget on February 1, the sources told PTI.

The Union Health Ministry is also planning to double the beneficiaries to 100 crore under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan

Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) to include Kisan Samman Nidhi recipients, construction workers, non-coal mine workers and ASHA workers in the next three years.

"In order to ensure that serious illnesses requiring expenditure of more than Rs 5 lakh such as transplants and high-cost cancer treatments etc. are also covered under AB PMJAY, the ministry is working on finalising a proposal to increase the cover amount from Rs 5 lakh per family per year to Rs 10 lakh per family per year from 2023-24 onwards," the sources said.

The increase in coverage to Rs 10 lakh per family per year and increase in beneficiary

base to 100 crore individuals will involve an additional allocation of Rs 12,076 crore per annum, the sources stated.

The scheme has successfully catered to 6.2 crore hospital admissions amounting to more than Rs 79,157 crore till now since its launch in 2018.

If the beneficiary had availed the same treatment on his own outside the ambit of AB PM-JAY, the total cost of the treatment would have gone up nearly two times, the official said.

The budget allocated for Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY for the financial year 2023-24 is Rs 7,200 crore, which is likely to more than double to around Rs 15,000 crore in the financial year 2025.

Navy chief inaugurates CO2 based air conditioning plant

PUNE, Jan 17 (ANI)

INDIAN Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar inaugurated a transcritical CO2 air conditioning plant at INS Shivaji in Pune's Lonavala in Maharashtra on Wednesday. Speaking on the plant's inauguration, the Navy chief said, "Happy to be here today at the inauguration of this transcritical CO2 air conditioning plant. This compressor has been developed indigenously."

"This is a major step towards meeting the Government's commitment to reduce global

warming and emission of gases harmful to the environment," he added.

On the third aircraft carrier, Admiral Kumar said, "It is being processed through MoD. It has completed the Defence Procurement Board (DPB) clearance, but now it has to fill up the Defence Security Corps (DSC) so there are some staff work requirements. So it's under process."

Further, the Navy chief asserted that the aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant will go for a full operation clearance by the end of this year.

Targeted Iranian terrorists on Pak soil: Iranian Foreign Minister at Davos

DAVOS, Jan 17 (ANI)

AMID the diplomatic standoff over Iranian airstrike on a terror camp in Balochistan, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said the air attacks in Pakistan targeted an "Iranian terrorist group" and Tehran Government had asked Pakistan several times to take action on the group.

"The so-called Jaish al-Adl group, which is an Iranian terrorist group, was targeted," Abdollahian said on Wednesday on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"The group has taken shelter in some parts of Pakistan's Balochistan province. This group killed our security forces. We only targeted Iranian terrorist group on the soil of Pakistan. He emphasised that while Iran respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan, it would not "allow the country's national security to be compromised or played with".

"We have no hesitation when it comes to national interests and those terrorist groups inside Pakistan" the Iranian Foreign Minister said.

Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice),

a Sunni Muslim armed group, has previously launched attacks on Iranian security forces in the border area with Pakistan.

IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SPOKE TO HIS PAKISTAN COUNTERPART OVER AIRSTRIKES ON BALOCHISTAN: AMID the diplomatic standoff between Iran and Pakistan over Tehran airstrikes on Balochistan province, Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian had a telephonic conversation with his Pakistani counterpart, Iranian news agency Tasnim News reported on Wednesday.

During their conversation, the Iranian Foreign Minister emphasised that the attack was on the Iranian terrorist group and that no Pakistani citizens were attacked.

As per the Iranian news agency Tasnim News, the Iranian Minister said, "Yesterday's anti-terrorist operation was against this Iranian terrorist group, and no Pakistani citizens were attacked in this operation."

Moreover, Pakistan Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani emphasised that Iran's security is also Pakistan's security.

Macron promises stronger France to face world's challenges

PARIS, Jan 17 (AP)

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron made a point of showing his leadership hasn't faded in more than two hours of answering questions at a news conference in which he promised a stronger France to face the world's challenges.

"I still have three years and a half in office," he said, describing an ambition to both change the daily life of the French and tackle global crises.

Macron's wide-ranging news conference followed the appointment last week of France's youngest-ever Prime Minister.



The 46-year-old Centrist President promised "audacity, action, efficiency" in the hopes of strengthening his legacy through a series of reforms, starting with an economic bill meant to boost growth and tax cuts for middle-class households. He also detailed how he would preserve France's struggling health system and accelerate changes at schools. He advocated for uniforms in public schools, learning the national anthem at a young age and expanding a two-week training period in high schools to promote French values and encourage youth to give back to the community.



Teenaged chess superstar R Praggnanandhaa defeated world champion Ding Liren of China in fourth round of Tata Steel Chess Tournament in Wijk Aan Zee, The Netherlands. (PTI)

PRAGG STUNS WORLD CHAMP

Surpasses Viswanathan Anand as No 1 Indian

PTI, Jan 17 (PTI)

TEENAGED Indian chess superstar R Praggnanandhaa defeated world champion Ding Liren of China in the fourth round of the Tata Steel Chess Tournament here, a win which also helped him surpass the legendary Viswanathan Anand as the top-rated Indian player.

After the victory late on Tuesday night, the 18-year-old Praggnanandhaa has 2748.3 points as against 2748 of five-time world champion Anand in the

FIDE live ratings. The world chess body publishes the ratings at the start of each month.

With the 62-move win with black pieces, Praggnanandhaa became the second Indian after Anand to defeat a reigning world champion in classical chess.

Praggnanandhaa had also beaten Liren at the 2023 Tata Steel tournament.

He is now third in the standings with 2.5 points in the Masters event.

"That feels good!" Praggnanandhaa said after

the win.

Explaining his game strategy, Praggnanandhaa said, "From the opening itself, I was the one pushing. I got a pawn early on and I felt just pushing without any risk in a position, which is a bonus with black."

His focus at the moment is to just give his best.

"My personal goals in this tournament would be to give my best. It is a very tough tournament. Usually tournaments have nine rounds but this one has 13 rounds. So it's like playing one tournament more. I

want to give my best and see how it goes," said Praggnanandhaa.

The teenaged Indian GM has been in good form in recent times, having finished runner-up in the World Cup to Magnus Carlsen last year to qualify for the Candidates tournament to be held in April to identify the challenger to Liren.

The Masters group saw Dutch player Anish Giri emerge as the sole leader heading into the first rest day. Giri's endgame prowess secured him victory against teenaged

Indian GM D Gukesh to take him to 3.5 points. Alireza Firouzja is half a point behind the leader on 3 points.

The third Indian player in the fray, Vidit Santosh Gujrathi was held to a draw by Jorden Van Foreest in round four. He has 2 points from four rounds.

In the fifth round on Thursday, Praggnanandhaa runs into the leader Anish Giri while his compatriots Gukesh and Gujrathi will take on Ian Nepomniachtchi and Max Warmerdam respectively.