

Air India's first A350 aircraft arrives in Delhi

GURUGRAM, Dec 23 (ANI)

AIR India officially took delivery of its first Airbus A350-900 on Saturday, making history as the first Indian carrier to operate the aircraft type.

"Air India, India's leading global airline, today welcomed the first of 20 Airbus A350-900 aircraft, registered VT-JRA, in the airline's bold new livery, marking a turning point in its ongoing transformation story," an official statement issued



Air India's first Airbus A350-900 (VT-JRA) touches down at Delhi Airport in New Delhi on Saturday. (ANI)

by the airline said. The aircraft arrived in New Delhi at 13:46 Hrs (local time) on Saturday from the Airbus facility in Toulouse, France.

The delivery flight, operated using a special call sign AI350, was welcomed by Air India representatives. Air India's Senior Commander Captain Monika Batra Vaidya, who is among the first few Indian pilots to be trained on A350, was on board as an observer.

Govt focused on investing in green, clean technologies: Jaishankar

GANDHINAGAR (Gujarat), Dec 23
(ANI)

HIGHLIGHTING the imperative to invest in environmentally friendly technologies, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar emphasised that the Government is currently directing its efforts towards this crucial area.

The Minister underscored the necessity of considering the security implications associated with external dependence on renewables or fossil fuels. "If we invest in green and clean technologies--not exactly, not surprisingly--that is exactly where the Government is focused today. We have great



skill at hedging the risks of external energy exposure, but when it comes to fossil fuels, that same awareness, let alone response, is not yet there in

much of the world when it comes to renewables," Jaishankar said, while speaking at the 3rd convocation of Rashtriya Raksha University in Lavad, Gandhinagar.

"A serious consideration of the security implications of external dependence on renewables is very much the need of the day," he said.

"Water security is another looming issue, where new thinking on harvesting, usage and conservation has already made its impact across the country. The growing demand of an expanded population depends on growing demand for water resources," Jaishankar said.

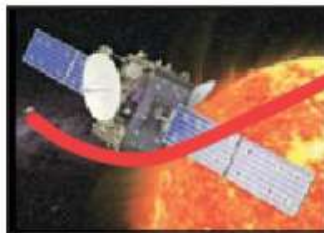
Aditya-L1 will reach destination L1 point on Jan 6: ISRO Chairman

AHMEDABAD, Dec 23 (PTI)

INDIA'S maiden solar mission Aditya-L1 will reach its destination, the Lagrangian point (L1) which is located 1.5 million km from the Earth, on January 6, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath has said.

The mission, the first Indian space-based observatory to study the Sun from a halo orbit L1, was launched by the ISRO on September 2 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota.

"Aditya-L1 will enter the L1 point on January 6. That is what is expected. Exact time will be announced at appropriate time," Somanath told media-persons here on Friday on the



"Once it is successfully placed on L1 point, it will be there for the next five years, gathering all the data which are very important not for India alone but for the entire world. The data will be very useful to understand the dynamics of Sun and how it affects our life," Somanath said.

sidelines of the Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan organised by Vijnana Bharati, an NGO working to popularise science.

"When it reaches the L1 point, we have to fire the engine once again so that it does not go further. It will go to that point, and once it reaches that point, it will rotate around it

and will be trapped at L1," he said.

"Once it is successfully placed on L1 point, it will be there for the next five years, gathering all the data which are very important not for India alone but for the entire world. The data will be very useful to understand the dynamics of

the Sun and how it affects our life," the ISRO chief said.

How India is going to become a technologically powerful country is very important, he said while addressing the gathering.

ISRO has made a plan to build an Indian space station, called 'Bharatiya space station' during the 'Amrit Kaal' as per our Prime Minister Narendra Modi's instructions, Somanath said.

"In the space sector we are seeing an emergence of new actors... We are going to support, encourage and build the economy around the new generation," he said, adding that India cannot become a leader in everything, but it should focus on the sectors where it can.

INFILTRATION BID FOILED

Terrorist killed along IB



An Army personnel during a cordon and search operation after the recent ambush on two Army vehicles in Poonch district, on Saturday. (PTI)

JAMMU, Dec 23 (PTI)

ONE terrorist was killed as Army troops guarding the International Border (IB) scuttled an infiltration attempt here early Saturday, officials said.

The operation happened when a group of four heavily-armed terrorists was noticed sneaking into this side from across the IB in the Khour sector of Akhnoor in the early hours, the officials said.

Army's Jammu-based White Knight Corps said the suspected movement of terrorists was captured through surveillance devices during the intervening night of December 22 and 23.

"Effective fire brought down. Terrorists seen dragging one body back across the IB," it posted on X. A defence spokesman shared a clip recorded on a surveillance device, showing four terrorists making an attempt to crossover into India from across the border under the cover of darkness.

The officials said the area was kept
(Contd on page 5)

DRONE attack

On merchant
vessel with
20 INDIANS
No loss of life

■ By Ajit Dubey
NEW DELHI, Dec 23 (ANI)

AN INDIA-BOUND merchant vessel MV Chem Pluto with 20 Indian and one Vietnamese crew member caught fire after it was attacked by a suspected drone and was later secured by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Saturday, ICG said in an official statement.

The merchant vessel reportedly commenced its voyage from the UAE on December 19 and was bound for New Mangalore port with an arrival date of December 25.

The official statement said that on December 23, the Indian Coast Guard Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Mumbai received information regarding a fire onboard MV Chem Pluto, reportedly attacked by a suspected drone strike or aerial platform.

The Indian Coast Guard Maritime Coordination Centre (MRCC) established real-time communication with the vessel's agent, ascertained no

loss of life and assured all assistance. It was also learned that the vessel fire has been doused by the crew. For augmenting the vessel's safety, MRCC Mumbai has activated ISN and immediately diverted other merchant vessels in the vicinity of Chem Pluto for assistance.

The statement read further, "The Indian Coast Guard also pressed Offshore Patrol vessel Vikram and Coast Guard Dornier maritime surveillance aircraft into action for rendering assistance to Chem Pluto. The Coast Guard Dornier aircraft has sanitised the area and established communication with Chem Pluto. The vessel has started making its way towards Mumbai after undertaking damage assessment and repairs on its power generation systems."

The vessel is likely to enter Mumbai and seek escort assistance due to steering issues. Indian Coast Guard Ship Vikram will be escorting the ship during its passage. The Indian Coast Guard Operations Centre is monitoring the situation closely.

France completes military withdrawal from Niger

ABUJA (Nigeria), Dec 23 (AP)

FRANCE on Friday completed the withdrawal of its troops after they were asked to leave Niger by the country's new junta, ending years of on-the-ground military support and raising concerns from analysts about a gap in the fight against jihadi violence across the Sahel region of Africa.

The last French military aircraft and troops departed Niger by the December 22 deadline set by the junta which severed ties with Paris after the coup in July, the French Army General Staff told 'The Associated Press' by email. France already announced this week that it would close its diplomatic mission in Niger for "an indefinite period."

However, the country would continue to be involved in the Sahel — the vast expanse south of the Sahara Desert which has been a hot spot for violent extremism — although differently, President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday during a visit to a base in Jordan.

"I decided on some important reconfigurations," Macron said. "We will continue to protect our interests over there but our armies won't be as present permanently, will be less stationary and also less exposed," he said.