

Isro to provide healing touch to Siachen soldiers

New Delhi: In an effort to provide emergency medical treatment to security forces deployed in remote areas like Siachen Glacier, Isro has recently signed an agreement with the defence ministry for setting up telemedicine nodes. The space agency will establish 53 more such nodes in the first phase to existing 20 set up for the Army, Navy and Air Force across the country.

Explaining the significance of these nodes, Isro chairman K Sivan told TOI, "In remote areas like Siachen Glacier, there is no permanent hospital. Through our satellite-based telemedicine programme, we can pro-



Ailing soldiers at Siachen can use satellite-linked telemedicine hubs to interact with city doctors for diagnosis

vide medical services to soldiers deployed in these far-flung areas. We set up telemedicine hubs in these areas and link them to big hospitals like AIIMS in cities through our Gsat satellites. Specialist doctors interact with ailing or injured soldiers and prescribe them

medicines. The prescribed medicines are then provided to the soldiers from the stock in that place." The highest battleground in the world, Siachen remains cut off during winter due to extreme climate. Besides the enemy, soldiers have to brave freezing temperatures and avalanches. The only mode of evacuation is by helicopters, and this also may not be feasible for days at times. In such a difficult condition, medical treatment through the satellite-enabled nodes is a boon for soldiers.

Sivan said, "Isro is setting up these nodes not only for soldiers in remote areas, but also for rural people who can't come to cities to avail of medical services during medical emergency."