

India To Launch Exclusive Satellite To Track Natural Disasters

November 1 2005

In the wake of the recent earthquake which caused havoc in India and Pakistan, killing thousands of people, the Government of India has decided to launch an exclusive satellite that can track natural disasters, a top official said.

G Madhavan Nair, chief of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), stated in Bangalore that India would launch the Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT), configured for disaster management, with in a couple of years.

"Most of the disasters that happen relate to climate or the weather, like cyclones or the floods have, and we have to look through the clouds. The radar imaging satellites has become important. We are working on that and we hope such satellites will be operational within a couple of years," Nair told a function to celebrate the 32nd foundation day of the Bangalore chapter of premier business school, Indian Institute of Management.

India, which has launched 10 remote sensing satellites since 1988 in addition to several broadcast satellites, launched this year a satellite that can map every house and street in the sub-continent.

CARTOSAT-1 would help urban and rural planning, land and water management, relief operations and environmental assessments.

Experts say some 56 million Indians are hit by disaster each year but there is no long-term policy to prepare for and manage these natural and

man-made calamities.

A recent report on the calamities said that on average, disasters in India kill 5,063 people, affect more than 56 million people and cost some 1.88 billion dollars every year.

It said floods hit 11.2 per cent of the land and 28 percent is hit by drought.

More than half the land is vulnerable to earthquakes and the 7,516-km (4,700-mile) coastline is whipped by cyclones that pummel the eastern coast, specially in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.

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