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Accurate quake forecast in 2 decades

Special Correspondent

Satellites, observation systems to help track seismic activity

India is augmenting its space platforms and land-based observation network in a bid to predict earthquakes accurately in the next two decades, Shailesh Nayak, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, has said.

Delivering a plenary lecture at the International Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Management (i3CDM) which began here on Thursday, Dr. Nayak said the network of satellites, GPS stations, and other observation systems would help scientists keep a close tab on seismic phenomenon in the region and generate critical inputs for quake prediction.

Role of space tech

Underlining the role of space technology in managing natural hazards, he said effective disaster response depended on the quality of knowledge about the hazards, expertise of the organisations responding to the crisis, and hazard consciousness of the communities involved. India, he said, was also working on its surface, ocean, and space observation systems and data assimilation techniques for improved weather prediction. “We could forecast and track cyclone Hudhud effectively and predict the floods in Jammu and Kashmir three days ahead. A network of 300 seismic stations, 25 buoys, and 100 tidal stations has been established to provide data for the regional tsunami warning system operational from 2011.”

Dr. Nayak said aircraft-based experiments to measure the wind profile over the Arabian Sea would be carried out in collaboration with NASA next year. The data would be used for more accurate weather forecast, he said.

ISRO Chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar said India would need improved satellite observation systems for effective weather prediction and understanding climate change. He said the country depended on 12 satellites, along with airborne and land observation platforms in addition to ships and buoys, to provide data for and early warning.

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