

NISAR satellite to be declared operational on Nov 7: ISRO

NEW DELHI, Nov 5 (PTI)

NASA and ISRO are all set to declare their first-ever jointly developed NISAR satellite operational on Friday, ISRO chairman V Narayanan said here on Wednesday.

The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR), said to be the most expensive Earth observation satellite ever built, has the



ability to monitor most of the planet's land and ice surfaces twice every 12 days.

The 2,400 kg NISAR satellite was launched on July 30 from ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre using the GSLV rocket. "Entire data calibration has been completed, and we will have a conclave on November 7 to declare the satellite operational," Narayanan said at the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) here.

India-Japan partnership enhances stability in Indo-Pacific: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI, Nov 5 (PTI)

THE India-Japan partnership enhances the strategic stability in the Indo-Pacific region and contributes to economic growth at the global level, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday.

Jaishankar said maintaining a "free and open" Indo-Pacific is a stronger imperative but also a more complex challenge.

He was speaking at the India-Japan Indo-Pacific Forum organised by the Delhi Policy Group and the Japan Institute of International Affairs.

"Our partnership that has deepened so much in the last few decades has greater value than ever before. It serves to enhance strategic stability in the Indo-Pacific and contribute to the economic one at a global level," Jaishankar said.



"Maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific is a stronger imperative but also a more complex challenge," he noted.

Jaishankar said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent phone conversation with his Japanese counterpart, Sanae Takaichi, as soon as she assumed office, is testimony to the priority that both sides attach to the relationship.

"Looking ahead, the India-Japan partnership must focus on leveraging our strengths, bol-

stering our supply chains and investing in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, critical minerals, clean energy and space," he said.

Jaishankar said as two major democracies and maritime nations, India and Japan have a larger responsibility towards the Indo-Pacific.

"The Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative, where Japan co-leads the maritime trade, transport and connectivity pillar, has the potential to advance our contributions," he said.

Jaishankar highlighted new initiatives, such as the Next Generation Mobility Partnership, Economic Security Initiative, Joint Crediting Mechanism and Joint Declaration on Clean Hydrogen and Ammonia and an MoU in the field of mineral resources, as examples of an evolving contemporary agenda.

India consistently protects interests of vulnerable sectors in FTAs: Goyal

AUCKLAND, Nov 5 (PTI)

COMMERCE and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said India consistently protects the interests of vulnerable sectors like dairy and MSMEs in free trade agreements.

He also said that significant progress has been made in the negotiations of the proposed trade agreement with New Zealand. The fourth round of negotiations is underway here for a pact between senior officials of India and New Zealand.

"India never compromises on the interests of dairy, farmers and MSMEs. We consistently protect the interests of vulnerable sectors," Goyal told reporters.

The remarks are important as New Zealand is a major dairy player in the world, and it may seek

greater market access in the sector. The Minister said that both countries have agreed to respect each other's sensitivities.

India has never given any duty concessions in any of its previous trade agreements. Dairy and agriculture are politically sensitive areas. "We respect each other's sensitivities.

We will not touch such issues," he said, adding that "a trade deal is clearly on the table".

He, however, said that India can look at increasing cooperation in farming technologies, like dairy machinery. Goyal is here on a four-day official visit. He is leading a business delegation.

When asked if more rounds of

negotiations would happen, the Minister said, "We may not need many more rounds as significant progress has been made".



He also said that various sectors hold huge potential between India and New Zealand to enhance cooperation, including in defence, agriculture, space,

education and tourism sectors.

When asked about the movement of skilled professionals in the FTA, Goyal said it is part of the services chapter. "Services also get included in FTAs. We can compete in services and business, and in that, automatically, service providers have to come. To that extent, the FTA will benefit from

that (movement of professionals). But we never discuss immigration in FTAs."

Mobility is more for service provision, or student mobility, or internship, or training for 2-3 years, he said, adding that one should be cautious about fraudulent agents, who make false promises for admission and jobs in foreign countries.

When asked whether the trade deal between India and New Zealand is going to happen before the pact with the US, Goyal said: "I don't think we ever discuss deadlines when we finalise, or discuss, or negotiate a treaty. Every agreement stands on its own legs, and every agreement is important. Every agreement is tailored based on the situation in each country, and every agreement will happen at the right time".

Typhoon Kalmaegi kills 85 in Philippines

MANILA, Nov 5 (AP)

TYPHOON Kalmaegi has left at least 85 people dead with 75 others missing in the central Philippines, many in widespread flooding that trapped people on their roofs and swept away cars in a hard-hit province still recovering from a deadly earthquake, officials said on Wednesday.

Among the dead were six people who were killed when a Philippine air force helicopter crashed in the southern province of Agusan del Sur on Tuesday. The crew was on its way to provide humanitarian help to provinces battered by Kalmaegi, the military said. It did not give the cause of the crash.

Kalmaegi blew away from western Palawan province into the South China Sea before noon Wednesday with sustained winds of up to 130 kph (81 mph) and



Residents clean up outside their homes after Typhoon Kalmaegi caused devastation in communities at Talisay City, Cebu province, central Philippines on Wednesday. (AP/PTI)

gusts of up to 180 kph (112 mph), according to forecasters.

Central province was hit hardest by the storm: Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV, deputy

administrator of the Office of Civil Defence, and provincial officials said many of the deaths were reported in the central province of Cebu, which was

pummeled by Kalmaegi on Tuesday, setting off flash floods and causing a river and other waterways to swell.

The resulting flooding engulfed residential communities, forcing startled residents to climb on their roofs, where they desperately pleaded to be rescued as the floodwaters rose, officials said. The Philippine Red Cross received many calls from people needing rescue in Cebu from their roofs, its secretary-general Gwendolyn Pang said Tuesday.

At least 49 people drowned in floods, and others died as a result of landslides and falling debris in Cebu, where 13 people were reported missing, the Office of Civil Defence said.

It added that 62 others were reported missing in the central provinces of Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental, which are located near Cebu.