

## India to launch dedicated satellite for youth

India is launching a dedicated satellite for youth next year carrying scientific instruments developed by students from Indian and foreign universities, a top space agency official said Thursday.

'The mini-spacecraft will be launched in 2009 as a piggyback on board a polar satellite launch vehicle (PSLV), carrying a remote sensing satellite, from the Satish Dhawan space centre at Sriharikota (about 90 km from Chennai),' Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman G. Madhavan Nair told IANS.

The various instruments, developed by graduate and postgraduate students of universities from India, Russia and other countries, will study and share data on earth imaging, atmospheric applications, solar emission and galactic observations.

'The less than 100-kg spacecraft is being built at our satellite development centre in Bangalore. The dedicated youth satellite is the brain-child of former president A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who proposed such a mission during his visit to Russia two years ago,' Nair said on the sidelines of an international conference on Indian aerospace science and technology here.

As an auxiliary satellite, it will be a dedicated platform for aerospace students to conduct experiments, which will also give some idea about the coupling between sun and earth.

The Indian space agency plans to christen the mini-satellite as YouthSat.

Kalam, who inaugurated the three-day tech event, said a dedicated satellite for youth would enable the next generation of aerospace scientists and technologists to leverage their knowledge and skills for exploring new frontiers in space.

'The objective is to create a common platform for aerospace students across the world to jointly conduct experiments in space for the benefit of future generations and humanity as a whole,' Kalam noted.

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