

Indian satellite data can be helpful for UAE, Gulf: Kasturirangan

Data received from Indian satellites can prove to be very useful to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in its infrastructure development work, according to K. Kasturirangan, former chairman of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) K. Kasturirangan.

'The data received from our constellation of satellites have a lot of relevance for the UAE and also for this region as a whole,' Kasturirangan, who was here to attend a conference on e-governance in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), told IANS in an interview here.

'ISRO also has a ground station here in Dubai and the data received here can be very useful in their (UAE) infrastructure development work,' said Kasturirangan, director of India's National Institute of Advanced Studies.

Asked to elaborate, he said through the use of geographical information system (GIS) technology, authorities in this Gulf nation can help identify places best suitable for key projects.

'For example, GIS can help them identify where to set up a pipeline, where to build a hospital and the like,' he said.

During the course of the conference, in which an official RAK government e-services portal was launched, Kasturirangan gave a presentation on 'Technology Trends in GIS and IT'.

The conference, organized by RAK e-Government Authority (RAK-eGA), was attended, among others, by RAK's Crown Prince and deputy ruler Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi.

During the course of his presentation he suggested to the RAK authorities to develop a good educational system and a research and training institute so that a good e-governance system is put in place.

'The RAK authorities want to have a good e-governance system in place. I also suggested to them not to develop the system on their own but to also join hands with the other emirates of the UAE in this endeavour,' said Kasturirangan, who is also a member of Rajya Sabha.

Apart from RAK, the other emirates in the UAE are Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujeirah, Sharjah and Umm Al Qawain.

The eminent scientist made three key suggestions in his presentation: to create a database on the lines of India's National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) by integrating the servers of the seven emirates; to create a good educational system that could yield suitable manpower to handle the e-governance system; and to establish a quality institute for education, research and training.

The NSDI portal provides access to information on spatial data that has been developed by several government agencies in India.

An Indian company, Navayuga Spatial Technologies headed by former ISRO scientist Mukund Rao, was last year awarded a contract by the RAK-eGA to develop and implement an enterprise GIS turnkey solution for the emirate.

The company is now engaged in GIS-wiring the entire emirate within 18 months of being awarded the contract.

'RAK is in the process of creating a lot of database regarding land use patterns and related developments,' Kasturirangan said.

'GIS is a key tool that can help them in their efforts.'

During the course of his visit to RAK, the scientist also had a one-on-one meeting with Crown Prince Sheikh Saud.

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