

# ISRO, FRENCH AGENCY TO SET UP MARITIME SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

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National space agency ISRO and its French counterpart CNES on Wednesday sealed an agreement to set up a joint maritime surveillance system in the country in May.

The two nations will explore putting up a constellation of low-Earth orbiting satellites that will identify and track movement of ships globally – and in particular those moving in the Indian Ocean region where France has its Reunion Islands.

Before that, they will initially share data from their present space systems and develop new algorithms to analyse them, according to the Paris based National Centre for Space Studies.

The agreement comes a year after the broad collaboration plan the two governments initiated during French President Emmanuel Macron's visit in March last 2018.

K.Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, and Jean-Yves Le Gall, President of CNES of France, signed the agreement in Bengaluru. "The CNES-ISRO agreement [intends] to supply an operational system for detecting, identifying and tracking ships in the Indian Ocean. [It] provides for a maritime surveillance centre to be set up in India in May this year; sharing of capacity to process existing satellite data and joint development of associated algorithms," the CNES statement said.

"For the next phase of the programme, studies for an orbital infrastructure to be operated jointly by the two countries are ongoing. CNES is working with its industry partners and with ISRO to devise the most appropriate technical solution."

The two agencies have put up two climate and ocean weather monitoring satellites Megha-Tropiques (of 2011) and SARAL-AltiKa (2013) that are considered a model.

"This fleet will be augmented with the launch of Oceansat-3-Argos mission in 2020 along with a joint infrared Earth-observation satellite," the CNES said.

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