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INDIAN SPACE ASSOCIATION

Targeting the Next Frontier for India's Space Programme

INDIA'S space programme has always evoked a sense of pride among the country's citizens. From a modest beginning nearly six decades back, when a Nike-Apache sounding rocket was launched on 21 November 1963, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has transitioned to creating world-class facilities and developing precision launching expertise. Along the way, it notched up enviable successes like launching the lowest-cost mission to the Moon and Mars.

The transformation of the Indian space programme from its humble beginnings to facing technology denials and to a situation today where foreign countries look up to ISRO for the launch of their satellites is truly remarkable. ISRO's successes and its endeavours over the years have truly positioned India as one of the major space-faring nations in the world.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi recently heralded the next major transition for India's space programme when he launched the Indian Space Association (ISpA) – a premier industry association of space and satellite companies. This has opened up the space sector for further accelerated expansion of India's space industry aiming at making the country not only Atmanirbhar but a leading global player in the space arena.

The founding members of ISpA include Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro, Nelco (Tata Group), OneWeb, Mapmyindia, Walchandnagar Industries and Alpha Design Technologies. Other core members include Godrej, Hughes India, Ananth Technology Limited, Azista-BST Aerospace Private Limited, BEL, Centum Electronics, Maxar India.

The creation of ISpA is expected to give further fillip to India's global space ambitions by creating an ecosystem for global networking of the Indian space industry, bringing in critical and advanced technologies and investments while at the same time creating high skill jobs. Working in close coordination with the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACE) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), among the stated objectives of ISpA are the creation of space hubs and incubators and supporting space start-ups – a recognition of India's large pool of talent and home-grown technology startups.

According to ISRO, the current size of the global space economy stands at about USD 360 billion. However, India accounts for only about 2% of the space economy with a potential to capture 9% of the global market share by 2030. The coming years are expected to unravel exciting possibilities in the space arena as the Indian Space Association teams up with the official space agencies to make India a leader in space with a strong 'Make in India' element.

Hasan Jawaid Khan



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