ISRO, MAPMYINDIA JOIN HANDS TO TAKE ON GOOGLE MAPS/EARTH

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Through the combined partnership with ISRO, MapmyIndias end user maps, apps and services will now integrate with ISROs huge catalogue of satellite imagery and earth observation data. | Photo Credit: Twitter/@MapmyIndia

Indian Space Research Organisation and location and navigation technology solutions provider MapmyIndia announced an initiative to partner together to offer India's best, and fully indigenous, mapping portal and geospatial services.

It combines the power of MapmyIndia's digital maps and technologies with ISRO's catalogue of satellite imagery and earth observation data, according to MapmyIndia's CEO and Excutive Director, Rohan Verma.

He termed it a path-breaking milestone in India's journey towards 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', wherein Indian users would not be dependent on foreign organisations for maps, navigation and geospatial services, and leverage made-in-India solutions instead.

"You don't need Goo*le Maps/Earth any longer", Mr. Verma said in the headline in an article on LinkedIn.

According to ISRO, the Department of Space (DoS) — ISRO comes under it — has joined hands with MapmyIndia to combine their geospatial expertise and build holistic solutions by leveraging their geoportals.

DoS entered into an MoU with geospatial technology company CE Info Systems Pvt Ltd, which owns MapmyIndia, on Thursday.

Under the partnership, the combined geospatial expertise of the DoS and CE Info Systems would be leveraged through their respective Geoportals, according to Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO.

The collaboration will enable them to jointly identify and build holistic geospatial solutions utilising the earth observation datasets, 'NavIC', Web Services and APIs (application programming interface) available in MapmyIndia, 'Bhuvan', 'VEDAS' and 'MOSDAC' geoportals, the space agency said in a statement.

Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) called NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation, is India's own navigation system, developed by ISRO.

Bhuvan is the national geo-portal developed and hosted by ISRO comprising geospatial data, services and tools for analysis.

VEDAS (Visualisation of Earth observation Data and Archival System) is an online geoprocessing platform using optical, microwave, thermal and hyperspectral EO data covering applications particularly meant for academia, research and problem solving, according to ISRO.

MOSDAC (Meteorological and Oceanographic Satellite Data Archival Centre)is a data repository

for all the meteorological missions of ISRO and deals with weather related information, oceanography and tropical water cycles.

Mr. Verma said there are many reasons why Indians are better off with an indigenous solution for maps and geospatial services.

"MapmyIndia, being a responsible, local, Indian company, ensures that its maps reflect the true sovereignty of the country, depicting India' s borders as per Government of India, and hosts its maps in India," he said.

Through the combined partnership with ISRO, MapmyIndias end user maps, apps and services will now integrate with ISROs huge catalogue of satellite imagery and earth observation data, a MapmyIndia statement said.

It would be a much better, more detailed and comprehensive, as well as privacy-centric, hyper local and indigenous mapping solution for Indians, compared to foreign map apps and solutions, it said.

Mr. Verma said foreign mapping solutions come with a lot of hidden costs.

For example, foreign search engines and companies claim to offer "free" maps, but in reality they make money by targeting the same users with advertising based on invading user privacy and auctioning those users private location and movement data," he claimed.

"This should be very alarming to all citizens".

"On the other hand, MapmyIndia has an ethical point of view against advertising led business models of such companies, and hence, does not have an advertising business model. By using MapmyIndia maps and applications instead of the foreign map apps, users can better protect their privacy," he said.

The "sustainable and direct, clean business model" ensures that MapmyIndias maps and apps can be kept free of cost as well as free of ads for users, according to him.

"MapmyIndias maps cover all 7.5 lakh villages, 7500+ cities at street and building-level, connected by all 63 lakh kilometres of road network pan India and within cities, in total providing maps for an unparalleled 3+ crore places across India," the company statement said.

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