

'IN-SPACE WILL BE SPACE INDUSTRY REGULATOR'

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Space Technology & related matters

K. Sivan

IN-SPACE, a new entity of the Department of Space, will have its own chairperson and Board, and regulate and promote building of routine satellites, rockets and commercial launch services through Indian industry and start-ups.

These activities had been largely the domain of the 50-year-old Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) until now, but the change will not upset the core research activity of ISRO, K. Sivan, Secretary, Department of Space, and ISRO Chairman, said in a televised briefing on Thursday.

IN-SPACE, or Indian Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, is touted as the body that will ensure a level playing field for Indian industry in a fast-growing global space sector. It will function autonomously and parallel to ISRO "without taking away anything from it", Dr. Sivan said.

The entity was approved by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday and was unveiled by Minister of State for Space Jitendra Singh in Delhi.

Own set-up

IN-SPACE will have its own directorates for technical, legal, safety and security, monitoring and activities promotion.

The year-old NSIL [NewSpace India Ltd] will be strengthened and empowered with a larger role in what the government has called the new "open and inclusive" space sector. It will work with IN-SPACE and enable industry consortia to take on some of the activities of ISRO. These include launch vehicles and satellite production, launch services and space-based services.

Over the past two years, ISRO has been in the process of finding industry partners who could take up these services; industry teams had been involved in assembling and testing satellites and also launched one navigation satellite last year.

Dr. Sivan said, "This [restructuring] will allow ISRO to allocate more time and resources for R&D endeavours. ISRO will continue to carry out its present activities with greater emphasis on development of advanced technology, human space flight missions and capacity building besides supporting private endeavours in the space sector."

"The reforms in the space sector are aimed at tapping the potential of the entire country for unlocking its potential by enabling private enterprises and start-ups to undertake end-to-end space activities. They are also aimed at mitigating the large investments required to set up facilities for undertaking space activities through sharing of such existing facilities under ISRO."

A large number of jobs will be created, he said.

Navigation policy

A new satellite navigation policy, which has a strategic military element to it, is being proposed.

The older ones, namely Remote Sensing Data Policy and the SatCom Policy of 2000, are being revised. These are apart from a proposed policy for space activities that has seen a draft.

IN-SPACe will be in place in three to six months. Meanwhile, the DoS will immediately start receiving and processing applications from private sector industries.

In about two weeks, a webinar on space sector reforms is planned to tell the industry the contours of the new set-up.

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