

ISRO, AUSTRALIAN SPACE AGENCY TO BOOST BILATERAL COLLABORATIONS IN SPACE TECH

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Australia

Australian Space Agency head Enrico Palermo with his delegation members and space entrepreneurs at Bengaluru Space Expo in Bengaluru, on September 5, 2022.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Australian Space Agency (ASA), an entity that is responsible for the development of the country's commercial space sector, have decided to intensify their interactions with a view to developing and growing space technology markets for both India and Australia.

As a precursor to this, the space entities on Monday facilitated signage of half a dozen MoUs between Australian and Indian startups focused on space tech at Bengaluru Space Expo (BSX) in Bengaluru.

Australia's Space Machines Company has entered into a collaboration with Bengaluru-based aerospace and defence manufacturer Ananth Technologies on product integration, testing, technology development, and joint-space missions.

Australian startup HEX20 would work with Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace to provide launch services, spacecraft avionics, and components to Australian Space Initiatives. Perth-based QL Space also partnered with Skyroot Aerospace to develop launch facilities in Australia and support joint mineral exploration missions in space.

QL Space has partnered with Chennai-based GalaxEye to develop a hybrid optic and radar payload to reduce the adverse environmental impact of critical mineral exploration in Australia. The Australian firm would also work with Bengaluru-based SatSure to build a satellite and AI-based solutions to support the agriculture, mining, and defence industries and apply this technology to the outer space environment.

Also, Australia's SABRN Health, Altdata, and India's DCube would work together on the development and integration of hardware, sensor technology, and software to provide health support to astronauts.

"It's great to see so many commercial links developing in the domain of high technology among the space entities of both the countries," said ISRO Chairman, also Secretary Department of Space (DOS), S. Somanath, while speaking at the inaugural session of the expo.

He said India (ISRO) appreciated the time, energy, and attention Australia has given to growing the space relationship with India and recognised Australian strengths in downstream applications.

Led by Enrico Palermo, head of the ASA, Australia is participating in the expo with a 40-member delegation comprising representatives of federal and state governments, officials from large enterprises, startups, and academicians.

"Our (India's and Australia's) commercial space sectors are at similar levels of development, making us perfect partners, said Mr. Palermo adding, "We also recognise the significance of India's national space programme and are glad to be supporting the inspirational Gaganyaan

human space flight mission.”

Mr. Palermo said the new India International Space Investment initiative would further cement the collaboration between the countries. ”This will unlock valuable opportunities for the two countries to partner in the space sector,” he added.

The establishment of a Consulate-General in Bengaluru from 2023 would allow Australia to further develop the space relationship, Mr. Palermo stated.

Commenting on the start-up scenario, Mr. Somanath said the country already has over 100 startups that were exploring diverse opportunities in the space technology sector.

“The new environment appeared extremely promising for the country considering the importance and potential of encouraging the production of satellites while boosting the participation of global customers,” he added.

According to the ISRO chief, new opportunities are opening up for handling space debris, making space cleaner besides fuelling satellites in orbit. In addition to that, the whole business of satellites, related to servicing and building infrastructure on the ground, offered more avenues.

Some 1,000 delegates from 15 countries are participating in the three-day biennial space expo that began on Monday. Over 100 companies are showcasing their expertise and products at the expo. Conferences are organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) under the theme ‘Nurturing New Space in India’, in association with ISRO, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE), and NewSpace India Limited.

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