

Government to open space sector for private players

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a set of structural reforms for various sectors. She announced giving the private sector a role in India's space programs, including in satellite, launches, and space-based services. The decision was to boost private participation in space activities.

The government will provide a better playing field for private companies in the satellite launches and space-based services. FM Nirmala Sitaraman said that it will bring a profit of Rs 1000 crore per year. Also, they will provide a regulatory environment and predictable policy for private players, said FM while announcing the fourth tranche of the economic package.

To improve the capacities of the private sector they will be allowed to use ISRO facilities. FM also announced that there will be six more airports to put up for auction on PPP (public-private partnership). Along with that, an additional investment of Rs 13,000 crore will be made by private players in 12 airports auctioned in the first and second rounds. The finance minister also disclosed that future projects for planetary exploration and others would be opened for private entities.

Also, she added that *"Liberal geospatial data policy for providing remote- sensing data to tech entrepreneurs. There are a lot of geospatial data available in India. Currently, startups and private companies have to go abroad, but that will now change. This is a sensitive area and will follow strict guidelines, but will make information available to startups and private firms"*, the finance minister said.

These reforms will bring a major change in the space sector

that will be beneficial for private sectors and encourage more private players to join the space-based services.

The Indian private sector will be the co-traveler in India's space sector journey and they will provide a predictable policy and regulatory environment for private players, said Ms. Sitharaman. It is considered as a new opportunity for private players to boost private participation in space activities.

FM Sitharaman announced that this project will help in the future and it will allow the use of ISRO facilities and other space travel for the private sectors.

Responding to the government announcement ISRO also responded by saying that "*Department of space will follow government guidelines and enable private players to carry out space activities in the country*". It is considered beneficial for India in the long term.