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FDI in Space Sector: A Catalyst for Innovation, Collaboration, and Global Leadership

India's liberalization of FDI in its space sector aims to attract global capital and expertise, enhancing its space ambitions amidst a competitive global landscape.

Written by [Huma Siddiqui](#)

August 21, 2024 15:40 IST

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Foreign Direct Investment being recognized as the catalyst in India's space sector. (Image: IE)

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is increasingly recognized as a vital catalyst for the advancement of India's burgeoning space sector. As the global space race

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intensifies, India's strategic move to liberalize FDI policies in this sector signals a significant shift toward embracing foreign capital, technology, and expertise. This approach is not just about financial inflows; it is about leveraging global partnerships to propel India's space ambitions to new heights.

Technology Transfer: Bridging the Gap

One of the most significant benefits of FDI in the space sector is the transfer of [technology](#). Amit Sharma, Managing Director & CEO of Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE), highlighted this in an exclusive conversation with FinancialExpress.com: "Foreign investments often involve advanced technologies and expertise, which can help develop cutting-edge space technologies and infrastructure." This transfer is crucial for [India](#), as it aims to bridge the technological gap between itself and leading space-faring nations.

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According to him, advanced technologies from international partners can accelerate the development of critical infrastructure and satellite systems. By integrating these technologies, India can enhance its capabilities in satellite manufacturing, launch vehicles, and space exploration missions. This collaborative approach is poised to position India as a global leader in space technology.

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Boosting Innovation Through Collaboration

Collaboration with international companies under FDI agreements is expected to foster innovation within India's space sector. Sharma underlined, "FDI can

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Hiranandani's JV with Blackstone lines up Rs 4,500-cr investment

Business Updated: August 22, 2024 08:16 IST

Greenbase Industrial and Logistics Parks, a joint venture between Hiranandani Group and Blackstone, will invest Rs 4,500 crore to expand its industrial park presence to 20 million sq ft in India over the next five years. The company's Oragadam project in Chennai has already attracted top automotive and ancillary companies.

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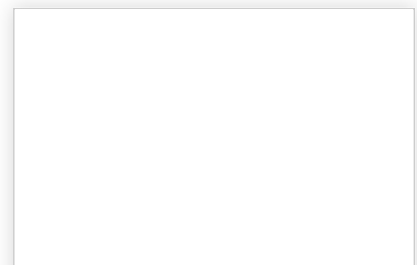
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| Name | LTP | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Nifty 50 | 24,817.60 AD Ratio: 1.55 | 47.40 0.19% |
| Nifty Bank | 50,951.95 AD Ratio: 5.00 | 266.40 0.53% |
| Nifty Next 50 | 74,629.60 AD Ratio: 2.44 | 451.10 0.61% |
| Nifty 100 | 25,921.00 AD Ratio: 1.94 | 67.80 0.26% |
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strategically benefit the [space](#) sector by bringing in much-needed capital, technology, and expertise.” This synergy between foreign and domestic companies can lead to the development of new space technologies and applications, driving innovation at an unprecedented pace.

India’s space sector has already seen a remarkable increase in the number of start-ups, growing from just one in 2014 to 189 in 2023. These start-ups are at the forefront of innovation, developing everything from small satellite technologies to advanced propulsion systems. The infusion of foreign capital and expertise can further stimulate this ecosystem, enabling Indian companies to experiment with new ideas and push the boundaries of space technology.

Access to Global Markets: Expanding India’s Reach

FDI is also a gateway to global markets. As Sharma noted, “FDI can help domestic space companies gain access to global markets, enhancing their competitiveness and [market](#) reach.” This is particularly important as the global space [economy](#) continues to expand, with India’s share currently valued at approximately US\$8.4 billion in 2023, accounting for 2-3 percent of the global [industry](#).

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The Indian government’s recent decision to permit up to 100 percent FDI in the space sector is a game-changer. This policy shift is expected to attract significant foreign investments, helping India achieve its ambitious target of growing its space economy to US\$44 billion by 2033. By accessing global markets, Indian companies can not only increase their revenues but also establish themselves as key players in the international space arena.

The Role of Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) in India’s Space Sector

Tata Consulting Engineers Limited (TCE), India’s leading pure-play design engineering consultant, is well-positioned to play a pivotal role in this evolving landscape. With over four decades of experience in collaborating with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), TCE has developed several strategic project managements (SPM) systems and automated solutions for satellite launch vehicles. This extensive experience makes TCE an ideal partner for foreign conglomerates looking to enter the Indian space sector.

As Sharma explained, “TCE emerges as the ideal partner for foreign conglomerates seeking to enter the Indian space sector.” By leveraging its domain expertise, TCE can facilitate the seamless integration of advanced foreign technologies into India’s space projects. This collaboration will not only enhance India’s technological capabilities but also ensure that foreign investors have a reliable and experienced partner on the ground.

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Manufacturing and Satellite Systems: Pioneering Innovation

The satellite manufacturing industry is undergoing a rapid transformation, driven by technological advancements and increased demand for satellite services. India's satellite manufacturing sector, in particular, is experiencing significant growth, fuelled by a burgeoning ecosystem of start-ups and innovative advancements.

One of the key trends in satellite manufacturing is miniaturization. Small satellites, known as SmallSats, are gaining popularity due to their cost-effective designs and the ability for mass production. Modular designs are also becoming more common, allowing for easier upgrades and repairs, thereby extending the operational [life](#) of satellites.

Advanced manufacturing technologies, such as 3D printing and robotics, are revolutionizing the production of space products. These innovations are enabling the development of large space structures, reusable launch vehicles, and advanced satellite sensors. "Smart propulsion systems are also a key trend in SpaceTech," noted Sharma, referring to environmentally friendly fuels like hydrogen and oxygen.

TCE has been at the forefront of these advancements, developing several SPMs and automated systems that ensure the rapid and reliable integration of satellite launch vehicles. With its expertise in designing complex systems, TCE is poised to lead the development of new technologies that will drive the future of space exploration.

Creating Demand for Launches: Enhancing India's Space Capabilities

India's space capabilities have captured the imagination of people around the world, from its missions to the moon to its upcoming mission to the sun. The Indian Space Research Organisation ([ISRO](#)) has been instrumental in driving this progress, and there are several strategies in place to further enhance both domestic and global interest in India's space sector.

Government initiatives, such as the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe), are playing a crucial role in facilitating private sector participation in space activities. These initiatives provide access to ISRO's resources and create a conducive environment for space exploration.

The Indian government's amendments to the FDI policy, allowing up to 74 percent FDI in satellite manufacturing and operation, and 49 percent for launch vehicles and spaceports, are expected to attract significant foreign investments. These investments will help India enhance its expertise in emerging technologies, foster a conducive research and development (R&D) environment, and create high-tech employment opportunities.

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SILVER ₹848.6/10GM ₹-2.90 >

PETROL ₹103.44/LTR ₹0.00 >

DIESEL ₹89.97/LTR ₹0.00 >

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TCE is also well-positioned to contribute to this growth. As Sharma pointed out, "TCE, as India's leading design engineering consultants, are well-positioned to take a leading role in the development of a state-of-the-art spaceport." This facility will be equipped with cutting-edge equipment, AI-integrated automation systems, and innovative technologies to reduce carbon footprints.

SatCom and Space: An Ongoing Narrative of Innovation

The story of satellite communications (SatCom) and space technology is one of relentless innovation. From the early days of Sputnik to the latest advancements in satellite internet and deep space missions, the drive for better connectivity and exploration has been a constant force.

Key innovations in SatCom include miniaturization and cost reduction, with small satellites like CubeSats and SmallSats making space missions more affordable. Technological advancements in AI, machine learning, and robotics are also enhancing satellite capabilities and enabling more complex missions.

TCE is poised to make a significant contribution to this ongoing narrative. As Sharma concluded, "TCE is set to play a key role in the development of reusable rockets and the advancement of AI/ML tools and robotics, propelling growth in this sector."

In conclusion, the liberalization of FDI in India's space sector is a strategic move that promises to bring significant benefits. By attracting foreign investments, India can enhance its technological capabilities, foster innovation, and expand its presence in the global space economy. With key players like Tata Consulting Engineers at the helm, India is well on its way to becoming a leading space-faring nation.

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First published on: 21-08-2024 at 15:40 IST

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