

# Artemis deal may help private players lift off

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India recently became the 27th country to sign the Artemis Accords, opening up fresh co-operation between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) in space exploration. This is, according to industry experts, likely to help India's private sector space players to expand their presence globally, giving a push to India's efforts to increase the country's share in the global space economy.

Based on government estimates, India's share in the global space economy of \$360 billion is hardly around 2 per cent. Both Nasa and Isro have decided to have a joint mission to the International Space Station or ISS in 2024. According to sources, the details of this decision will be worked out between both organisations in coming meetings. A government source said that the future of space missions is dependent on collaborations, especially science missions to the moon and beyond, due to their exorbitantly high cost. "This may also open up doors for private players in India to collaborate with global players in commercial missions," he added.

"There will be a large lunar economy, which will get triggered by the Artemis Accords, which will help India and Indian private players to participate," said A K Bhatt,



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## THE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT

- Under the Artemis programme, Nasa plans to land the first woman and the first person of colour on the moon
- The Artemis Accords, launched by the US in 2017, is a non-binding agreement between the US and other nations in the programme
- International partnerships are expected to play a key role in achieving the first human mission to Mars

director general, Indian Space Association (ISpA). Nasa and Isro are developing a strategic framework for human spaceflight cooperation this year.

The Artemis programme is lined up by Nasa and other countries with an aim to return humans to the moon by 2025 and expand space exploration to Mars and beyond. The Accords is a non-binding agreement between the US government and other governments involved in the Artemis programme. The programme was launched by the US in 2017, targeting to send the first woman and the next man to the moon.

"It is quite positive for space agencies, considering that there are a lot of private ventures in the US which are also aiming for the moon. I think we will see the Indian indus-

try supporting some of those missions. Instead of having a buyer and seller kind of relationship, a much larger relationship can be established," said Sanjay Nekkanti, founder of Hyderabad-headquartered Dhruva Space, which is among India's first exclusively space-focused start-ups. This comes at a time when the space tourism concept is also gathering momentum.

At present, companies like Virgin Galactic, SpaceX, Blue Origin, Orion Span, Boeing, Space Adventures, and Zero 2 Infinity are in the space tourism sector globally. According to data shared by ISpA, as many as 13 tourists have visited the International Space Station since 2001 and around 27 people have had suborbital rides, so far, through various companies.