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**Title:** Regarding Remote Sensing Data Policy.

**12.04 hrs.**

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES, AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING, DEPARTMENT OF PENSIONS AND PENSIONERS WELFARE OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): Remote sensing data is an important source of information for managing the nation's natural resources, supporting and monitoring developmental activities at the local level, supporting disaster management activities, ocean state and weather forecasting and environmental monitoring. Today, the Indian Remote Sensing Satellite (IRS) series provides an immense imaging capability to the national and global user community. As per defined Guidelines, IRS data is acquired and distributed to Government, private organisations and academia for a variety of operational applications and the data is also marketed all over the world.

With the availability of high resolution (1m resolution) images from commercial US satellites, images of any part of the world, including Indian regions, are available and these have immense potential to support local level development and cadastral applications. India also has plans for having such high resolution imaging satellites in the near future. These high resolution images also have strategic value and thus a regulated distribution of such high resolution images can not only take care of the user community requirements but also the national security interests.

With this in mind, the Government has approved and adopted a comprehensive Remote Sensing Data Policy (RSDP) for the acquisition and distribution of satellite remote sensing data – from Indian and foreign satellites for civilian users in India. The policy comprehensively covers guidelines for satellite data acquisition and distribution in the country and also for licensing the IRS capacities to other countries. Department of Space (DoS) will be the nodal agency for implementing the Policy.

As per the policy, Government permission is required for operating a remote sensing satellite from India and also for distribution of satellite images in India. The National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) has been identified as the national acquisition/distribution agency for all satellite data within India and has been allowed to enter into agreements for any foreign satellite data distribution in India. Antrix Corporation (of DoS) is identified to license IRS capacities outside of India.

The policy has safeguards for ensuring that images of sensitive areas are screened out, so that national security interests are protected. In particular, the Policy streamlines the distribution of high-resolution data to Government users; private users involved in developmental activities with Government and other private/academic/foreign users.

The RSDP is a step forward towards makes transparent the procedures of satellite data distribution, including those from high resolution imaging systems, and without being restrictive, would help regulate the process of image distribution so that Indian users are not denied access to this valuable tool which has become a mainstay in the developmental and natural resources management activities of the country.