Draft Space Activities Bill, 2017

Why in news?

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The Department of Space has released a draft Space Activities Bill, 2017.

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What are the key provisions?

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- The provisions of the legislation shall apply to every citizen of India.
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- And also to all sectors engaged in any space activity in India or outside India.
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- **Regulatory mechanism** - The central government is responsible for setting mechanisms and promoting space activity.
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- This includes exploration and use of outer space, and development of the sector.
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- The central government can:
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i. grant, transfer, or terminate licenses to any person for commercial space activities
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ii. provide professional and technical support, and authorisation to launch or operate space objects
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iii. regulate the procedures for conduct and operation of space activity by monitoring the conformity with international space agreements to which India is a party
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iv. ensure safety requirements and investigate any incident or accident in connection with the operation of a space activity

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- **Licences** - A non-transferable licence shall be provided by the Central Government to any person carrying out commercial space activity.
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- A license granted by the central government includes -
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i. permission for the central government to inspect any space activity and documents related to space activity
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ii. obligation on the licensee to insure himself/herself against any liability incurred due to any activity authorised by the license
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- **Liabilities** - A licensee should compensate the central government against claims brought against the government.
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- This would be regarding damages arising out of commercial space activities covered under the license.
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- **Penalties** - The draft Bill provides for penalties in case of:
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i. unauthorised commercial space activity
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ii. furnishing false information or documents
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iii. causing environmental damage
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iv. entry into prohibited areas
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v. disclosure of restricted information
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- **Protection** of action taken by the central government i.e. no legal

proceedings can lie against the central government with respect to anything done in good faith in pursuance of space activity.
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- **IPR** - Intellectual property rights developed during the course of space activity will be protected under the law.
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- Further, any intellectual property right developed onboard a space object in outer space will be deemed to be the property of the central government.
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What does the bill aim for?

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- Currently, space activities are regulated by policies such as the Satellite Communication Policy, 1997 and Remote Sensing Data Policy, 2011.
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- The proposed Bill addresses the need for a legal environment for orderly performance and growth of the space sector.
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- It aims at encouraging both the public and private sectors to participate in the space programme.
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- The Bill specifically facilitates for the participation of non-governmental/private sector agencies in space activities in India.
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Source: PRS India, The Hindu

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