

INDIA HAS 217 SPACE OBJECTS ORBITING EARTH; WORKING TOWARDS REDUCING SPACE DEBRIS: REPORT

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Space Technology & related matters

ISRO has also set up the Directorate Space Situational Awareness and Management at its headquarters to deal with issues related to space debris. File image for representation. | Photo Credit: AP

India has 103 active or defunct spacecraft and 114 objects categorised as 'space debris' in orbit and it has embarked on research to reduce such fragments from outer space.

“Presently, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has taken up research activities to study the feasibility and technologies required to undertake active debris removal (ADR),” Minister of State in PMO Jitendra Singh told parliament.

According to Orbital Debris Quarterly News issued in March by NASA, India had 103 spacecraft, including active and defunct satellites, and 114 space debris objects, including spent rocket bodies orbiting the earth. So, the country has a total of 217 space objects orbiting the earth.

Mr. Singh said Active Debris Removal (ADR) was one of the active methods suggested by the Space Debris Research Community to contain the growth of space debris objects. “ADR is a very complex technology and involves policy and legal issues. Technology demonstration studies have been taken up by many countries, including India. Developmental studies for finalising necessary technologies are initiated to demonstrate ADR,” he said.

A top ISRO official had told a technology conclave last year that the space agency was working on futuristic technologies such as self-eating rockets and vanishing satellites as part of measures to reduce space debris.

According to the Orbital Debris Quarterly News, the U.S. has 4,144 spacecraft (active and defunct), and 5,126 objects that can be categorised as space debris in the earth's orbit.

China has 517 spacecraft, active and defunct, and 3,854 objects, including spent rocket bodies, orbiting the earth.

Mr. Singh said ISRO has also set up the Directorate Space Situational Awareness and Management at its headquarters to deal with issues related to space debris.

A dedicated Space Situational Awareness Control Centre is set up in Bengaluru to coordinate all space debris related activities within ISRO and to safeguard Indian operational space assets from collision threats, he said.

The minister added that ISRO was also planning to have its own observational facilities to track and catalogue the space objects.

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