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Q87

**With reference to 'Astrosat', the astronomical observatory launched by India, which of the following statements is/are correct? 1. Other than USA and Russia, India is the only country to have launched a similar observatory into space. 2. Astrosat is a 2000 kg satellite placed in an orbit at 1650 km above the surface of the Earth. Select the correct answer using the code given below (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2**  
**Official key: D.**

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2016 · General Studies · 2 marks · Art and Culture

Indian art, architecture, culture - Prelims GS Paper I.

**Explanation****(a)**

Statement 1 claims that besides the USA and Russia, only India has launched a similar space observatory. Other agencies (ESA, Japan, and NASA-ESA partnerships such as Hubble) have flown astronomical satellites. 1 only is therefore false.

**(b)**

Statement 2 says Astrosat is a 2000 kg satellite in a 1650 km orbit. Astrosat is about 1,500 kg class in a roughly 650 km near-equatorial orbit, not 1650 km. 2 only is wrong.

**(c)**

Both statements fail on uniqueness and on mass/orbit figures, so both is not the key.

**(d) Official key**

- **Neither statement is correct:** India is not the only country besides the USA and Russia with a space observatory, and the 2000 kg / 1650 km description does not match Astrosat. (d) is the official key.

**Summary**

Official key is (d) neither 1 nor 2. **Astrosat (2015)** is India's first dedicated multi-wavelength space observatory, a genuine ISRO milestone, but it is not unique in the world after only two other countries. Mass and altitude in statement 2 are inflated relative to the actual PSLV-launched spacecraft in low Earth orbit. Pride in a first national observatory should not be stretched into false global or orbital claims.

**Related possible facts**

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

**Launch**

28 September 2015, PSLV-C30, from Sriharikota

**Orbit**

About 650 km, 6° inclination

**Instruments**

UV, optical and X-ray payloads (UVIT, LAXPC, CZTI, SXT, SSM)

**Hubble / XMM-Newton / Suzaku**

Examples of non-US-only / non-Russia observatories

**Chandrayaan / MOM**

Other ISRO science missions; not substitutes for statement 1

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