

Space Activities Bill

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Background

India is a State Party to UN Treaties on Outer Space activities. The obligations under these treaties, such as international responsibility for national activities in outer space and liability for damages caused by its space activities and space objects are to be implemented through national/domestic legislations. India's space policy currently does not cover liabilities for damage to third party space assets although the country is a signatory to the UN Treaties on Outer Space activity.

Key features of the Bill

- The current Bill will enable the formulation of necessary **Rules under the Space Activities Act, to deal with damages** under the liability provisions and mode of securing financial guarantee for compensating the damages.
- Consequent to enactment of Space Activities Act, **space activities of non-governmental sector in India would be authorized through a licence** issued by the Government on certain terms and conditions.
- It would **address the liability issues arising from their space activities**, in a suitable/ rational manner, at par with international practices.
- Space Activities Bill" that is designed to encourage domestic private rocket and satellite companies to offer services for Indian and global customers.

Importance

It is expected to address a long-pending concern on covering

liabilities in the event of a mishap or damage to spacecraft.

UN Treaties on Outer Space activity

The treaty also known as the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. It forms the basis for International space law. It was enacted in 1967. As of today 109 countries are parties to the treaty, while another 23 have signed the treaty but have not completed ratification. Following are the key highlights of the treaty;

- It prohibits the placing of nuclear weapons in space.
- The treaty establishes that space shall be free for exploration and use by all nations, but that **no nation may claim sovereignty of outer space** or any celestial body.
- The Outer Space Treaty does not ban military activities within space, military space forces, or weaponization of space, with the exception of the placement of weapons of mass destruction in space
- Among its principles, the treaty **bars the states parties to the treaty from placing weapons of mass destruction in Earth orbit, installing them on the Moon or any other celestial body**, or otherwise stationing them in outer space.

The space treaty **exclusively limits the use of the Moon and other celestial bodies to peaceful purposes** and expressly prohibits their use for testing weapons of any kind, conducting military maneuvers, or establishing military bases, installations, and fortifications