GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF SPACE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1730

TO BE ANSWERED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2018

PROGRESS IN THE FIELDS OF ASTRO-BIOLOGY AND BIO-ASTRONAUTICS

1730. SHRI MAHESH PODDAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has made any progress in the fields of astro-biology and bio-astronautics and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PG & PENSIONS AND IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH):

ISRO had initiated astro-biology experiments on balloons and look for new life forms unknown on earth. Two Astrobiology Balloon Experiments were carried out in 2001 and 2005. Both these experiments yielded seven new species of bacteria, six Bacillus and one Janibacter. Of these, three new species of bacteria, which are not found on Earth and are highly resistant to ultra-violet radiation, have been discovered in the upper stratosphere. One of the new species has been named as Janibacter hoylei, after the Distinguished Astrophysicist Fred Hoyle, the second as Bacillus isronensis recognising the contribution of ISRO in the balloon experiments which led to its discovery and the third as Bacillus aryabhatta after India's celebrated ancient astronomer Aryabhatta and also the first satellite of ISRO.

*****