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BIG NEWS

THE SPACE SWEEPER

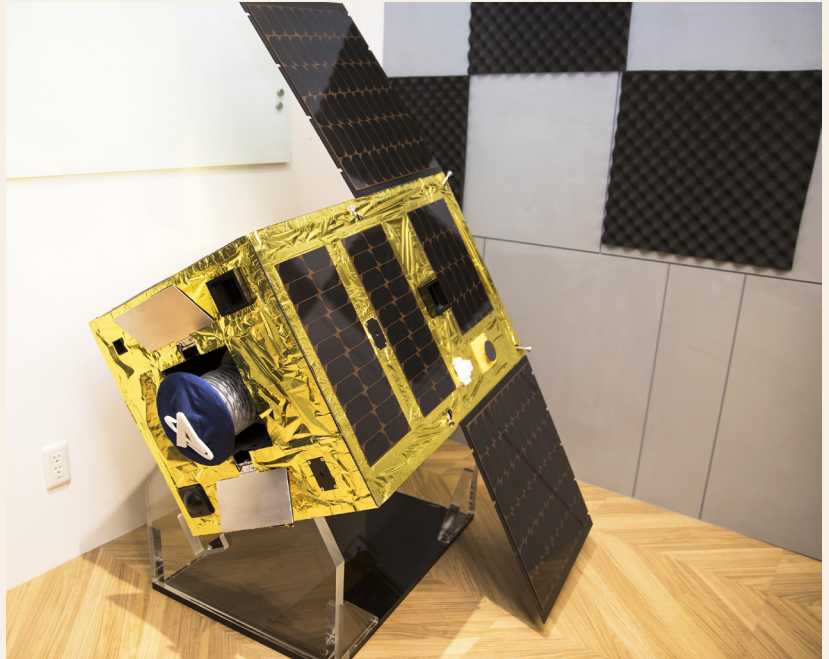
A MISSION is underway to test a new way of collecting space junk.

There are about 9,200 tonnes of space debris speeding around the Earth’s orbit. At any point, they could collide with one of the 3,000 active satellites above us, including ones that we rely on for forecasting the weather or for mobile data.

A Tokyo-based company called Astroscale is looking to clean up that space mess. On Monday (22 March), a Soyuz rocket launched from Kazakhstan’s Baikonur Cosmodrome, carrying two spacecraft.

These two spacecraft will attempt to clean up the space debris that surrounds the Earth in the first mission of its kind. The mission has been called the End-of-Life Services by Astroscale demonstration, or ELSA-d.

One of the spacecraft is called the servicer – which will collect the space debris – and the other is called the client,



which will act as the debris itself. The servicer will chase the client and dock with it before separating again. This will be repeated several times so that Astroscale can prove that its spacecraft is capable of finding and latching onto old and broken satellites.

The two spacecraft will be controlled by technicians working at the In-Orbit Servicing Centre in Oxfordshire, UK.

If the mission is successful, Astroscale hopes that it will be hired to be a much-needed space cleaner. Currently, space companies aren’t responsible for clearing up their space junk.

ACROSS

- 3) A launching site for spacecraft (noun 10)
- 6) Able to achieve (adjective 7)
- 7) Depend on with full trust or confidence (verb 4)
- 8) People skilled in the details of something complex, eg, a spacecraft (plural noun 11)

DOWN

- 1) The act of calculating or predicting something, eg, weather (verb 11)
- 2) Causing to move or be apart from something (verb 10)
- 4) Attaching to an object (verb 8)
- 5) Scattered pieces of rubbish or remains (noun 6)

