

### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

#### President's Address to Parliament

- Article 87 provides two special occasions on which the President addresses a joint sitting.
  - The first is to address the opening session of a new legislature after a general election.
  - The second is to address the first sitting of Parliament each year.
    - The purpose of this address is to inform Parliament of the causes of its summons.
- The President's speech essentially highlights the government's policy priorities and plans for the upcoming year.
  - The address provides a broad framework of the government's agenda and direction.
- Apart from this, the President has a right to address any one or both Houses together.
  - He may also send messages to either House with respect to a Bill or otherwise.

#### Key highlights of the President's Address - Vision for a Developed India

- **Upcoming Union Budget: Historic Steps**
  - The President announced that the Union Budget next month will introduce many historic steps along with significant economic and social decisions to accelerate the country's development.
- **Accelerated Reforms**
  - Murmu highlighted the government's commitment to accelerating the pace of reforms in line with the aspirations of the Indian people for rapid development.
- **Reference to Emergency and Constitutional Resilience**
  - The President recalled the Emergency imposed in June 1975 by the Congress government as the "biggest and darkest chapter of direct attack on the Constitution."
- **Article 370 and Jammu & Kashmir**

- Murmu noted that the Constitution has now fully come into force in Jammu and Kashmir following the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, which granted the region special status.
- **High Voter Turnout in Jammu & Kashmir**
  - The President highlighted the unprecedented voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir during the Lok Sabha elections, noting it as a significant response to internal and external elements spreading false propaganda about the region.
- **Election Mandate: Trust in Governance**
  - The President underscored that the 2024 election was a mandate of trust in the government's policy, intention, dedication, and decisions.
  - She listed the key areas of trust: strong and decisive governance, good governance, stability, continuity, honesty, hard work, security, prosperity, and India's resolve to become a "Viksit Bharat" (developed India).
- **Defence of EVMs and Electoral Integrity**
  - She defended the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) amidst Opposition criticism, praising the Election Commission for the successful conduct of the elections.
- **Commitment to Fair Examinations**
  - President Murmu assured a fair investigation and strict punishment for the culprits.
- **Call to Action Against Misinformation**
  - She warned against disruptive forces both within and outside the country, which aim to weaken democracy through misinformation and rumor-mongering.
  - She called for collective efforts to counter these threats.
- **Appeal for Parliamentary Cooperation**
  - The President disapproved of parliamentary disruptions and stressed the need for smooth parliamentary functioning to maintain public confidence in the government and the system.
- **Highlighting Government Achievements**

- She highlighted the achievements of Modi government over the last decade, including:
    - welfare schemes such as free ration distribution to 80 crore people, Kisan Samman Nidhi payments to farmers,
    - significant increase in defence exports,
    - record GST collections,
    - construction of PM Awas houses, and
    - abolition of interviews for Group C and D posts in the Central government.
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## WHAT ARE MOTOR NEURON DISEASES (MND)?



The annual conference on MND 'Awareness, Care, and Management' held at Nimhans, Bengaluru, stated that symptomatic and supportive treatments help manage the condition better.

- MNDs are a group of **progressive neurological disorders** that destroy motor neurons, the cells that control skeletal muscle activity such as walking, breathing, speaking, and swallowing.
- **Motor neurons are found in the brain and spinal cord**, and they help tell your muscles what to do.
- MND can **appear at any age**, but the symptoms usually appear after the age of 50 years.
- Early signs of MND include **weakness and slurred speech**. This eventually leads to paralysis.
- It affects more males than females.

### **Causes:**

- The **exact cause of MND is not known**. Generally, MND is believed to be caused by a combination of environmental, lifestyle, and genetic factors.
- Most cases of MND develop without an obvious cause.

- Around 1 in 10 cases is 'familial', meaning the **condition is inherited**. This is due to a genetic mutation, or an error in the gene.
  - This group includes **diseases such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, progressive bulbar palsy, primary lateral sclerosis, progressive muscular atrophy, spinal muscular atrophy, Kennedy's disease, and post-polio syndrome.**
  - The **most common type of MND is amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).**
    - It **affects both the upper and lower motor neurons**—the neurons in the brain and spinal cord—which then affects the muscles of the arms, legs, mouth, and respiratory system.
    - On average, **people with ALS live for 3–5 years** after receiving the **diagnosis**, but with supportive care, some people live for 10 years or longer.
  - **Treatment:**
    - There is **no cure or standard treatment** for the MNDs.
    - **Symptomatic and supportive treatment can help** people be more comfortable while maintaining their quality of life.
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## WHAT IS THE JUNO PROBE?



**New findings from NASA's Juno probe provide a fuller picture of how widespread the lava lakes are on Jupiter's moon Io.**

- JUNO is an acronym for **Jupiter Near-Polar Orbiter**.
- It is a **NASA spacecraft** designed to orbit the planet Jupiter.
- Juno was launched by an Atlas V rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on August 5, 2011.
- The Juno spacecraft initially embarked on a 5-year journey to the largest planet in our solar system, Jupiter.
- **Main Goal:** Learn more about **Jupiter's origins** and how the planet has changed.
- Since it arrived at Jupiter in 2016, it has been **probing beneath the dense, forbidding clouds encircling the giant planet** – the first orbiter to peer so closely.

- Juno orbits Jupiter every 11 days in a highly elliptical orbit (4,400 by 2,700,000 km [2,700 by 1,700,000 miles]) over the planet's poles.
- It is solar-powered.
- Though Juno's **primary mission wrapped in July 2021**, it's been granted an extended mission that's expected to end in 2025.
- During the extended mission, Juno is exploring even more of the Jupiter system, including some of the planet's most intriguing moons: Ganymede, Europa, and Io. Juno will also investigate Jupiter's atmosphere and rings in greater detail.

## SAARC & CURRENCY SWAP AGREEMENT



- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia.
- It was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka in 1985.
- The SAARC includes eight south Asian countries:  
**Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka**
- There are currently nine countries with '**Observer**' status: Australia, China, European Union, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar, United States of America

### SAARC Structure:

- **SAARC Summits:**
  - The Meetings of the Heads of State or Government of Member States is the highest decision-making authority under SAARC.
  - Summits are usually held biennially hosted by a Member State in alphabetical order.
  - The Member State hosting the Summit assumes the Chair of the Association.
- **Secretariat:**

- The SAARC Secretariat was established in Kathmandu on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1987.
- Its role is to coordinate and monitor the implementation of SAARC activities.

### Decision-making:

- Decisions at all levels are to be taken on the basis of **unanimity**.
- Bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from the deliberations of the Association.

### About Currency Swap Agreement:

- A currency swap agreement is a financial contract between two parties to exchange principal and interest payments in different currencies.
- The primary purpose of such an agreement is **to secure more favourable loan terms or to hedge against currency risk**.

### Benefits of Currency Swap Agreements:

- **Hedging:** Companies can hedge against currency fluctuations and interest rate changes.
- **Access to Capital:** Firms can access capital in foreign currencies at more favourable rates.
- **Cost Savings:** It can lead to cost savings due to better loan terms in the foreign currency market.

### India's Currency Swap Agreements:

- So far, the Commerce Ministry, Government of India, has finalised arrangements with some 23 countries with whom Indian can trade in local currencies.
- In simple terms, the importer or exporter in both the countries has to quote and receive settlements in their own currencies.
- No third country currency is involved, thereby eliminating the need to worry about exchange variations.
- **India's emphasis has been to persuade countries to come to this arrangement, where India has substantial or sizeable trade deficit with that country.**



- By doing so, the dues are still payable in rupees, thus saving the need to settle in "foreign exchange" in say, US dollars, Euros, or whatever.
- Once the Finance Ministry approves the country with whom such an arrangement would be mutually beneficial, Commerce Ministry takes over the responsibility to start the bilateral talks to arrive at a suitable agreement.

### Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC countries:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a revised Currency Swap Framework for SAARC countries, effective from **2024 to 2027**.
- This framework enables bilateral currency swap agreements between the RBI and SAARC central banks to address short-term foreign exchange liquidity needs or balance of payments crises.
- A new INR Swap Window with concessions for Indian Rupee support, **totalling ₹250 billion**, has been introduced.
  - Additionally, a US Dollar/Euro Swap Window with a corpus of \$2 billion will continue.
- All SAARC member countries can access the facility, provided they sign the bilateral agreements.

### [BHUVAN PANCHAYAT GEOPORTAL 4.0](#)

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology will launch the two Geoportals namely Bhuvan Panchayat (Ver. 4.0) & National Database for Emergency Management (NDEM Ver. 5.0) on 28th June in New Delhi.



- It is an **online geospatial data and services dissemination platform** to support integration and utilisation of space-based information into governance and research initiatives involving spatial planning up to Gram Panchayat level.
- **Developed by:** This WebGIS platform developed by NRSC, ISRO.

- It enables visualisation, analysis, sharing of web map service (WMS) services of all thematic data products generated at 1:10k under the **Space based Information Support for Decentralized Planning (SISDP) project.**

## What is the National Database for Emergency Management (NDEM) portal?

- It provides a comprehensive uniform, structured, multi-scale scale **geospatial database** for the entire country for situational assessment and effective **decision-making during disasters/ emergency situations.**
- It acts as a **national level geo-portal to provide space-based information** with the amalgamation of DSS tools and services of disaster forecasting organisations with value addition addressing all natural disasters in all phases of disasters for an effective Disaster Risk Reduction in the Country.
- It will also act as a **Disaster Recovery and Data Provider node** for the Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER) being established by MHA, New Delhi.

## WHAT IS ABHYAS?

Recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully **completed six consecutive developmental trials of High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) ‘ABHYAS’ in Chandipur, Odisha.**



- It is a **High Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT).**
- It has been designed by DRDO’s **Aeronautical Development Establishment, Bengaluru**, and developed through Production Agencies - Hindustan Aeronautics Limited & Larsen & Toubro.

### Features

- It offers a **realistic threat scenario** for weapon systems practice.





# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- This indigenous system is designed for **autonomous flying** with the help of an autopilot, a laptop-based Ground Control System for aircraft integration, pre-flight checks, and autonomous flight.
- It also has a feature to record data during flight for post-flight analysis.
- The booster has been designed by Advanced Systems Laboratory and the navigation system by Research Centre Imarat.

## Key Facts about DRDO

- It was formed in **1958** from the amalgamation of the then-existing **Technical Development Establishment (TDEs)** of the Indian Army and the Directorate of Technical Development and Production (DTDP) with the Defence Science Organisation (DSO).
  - It is the R&D wing of the **Ministry of Defence**, of India, with a vision to empower India with cutting-edge defence technologies and a mission to achieve self-reliance in critical defence technologies and systems.
  - It has a **network of laboratories** engaged in developing defence technologies covering various fields, like aeronautics, armaments, electronics etc.
  - **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
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