# DRDO's High-Altitude Platform flies successfully

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## News

The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully flight-tested its indigenous **High-Altitude Platform System (HAPS)** on **6 October 2026**. It climbed to **21 km** above sea level, held about **20 km for over 30 minutes**, then descended on command and was **recovered safely**.

## Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Built by** | **ADRDE** (Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment), **Agra** |
| **Type** | **Lighter-than-air**, long-endurance surveillance platform |
| **Altitude** | **21 km**, in the stratosphere |
| **Data** | Live video and vehicle data sent to the Ground Control Station |
| **Same week** | **Advanced High-Altitude Parachute (AHAP)**: first live jump from 16,000 ft at **Nyoma, Ladakh** |

## Background

- **Why HAPS?** Like a **pseudo-satellite**, it can hover over one area for long periods for **surveillance, reconnaissance and communications (ISR)** and disaster monitoring; it is cheaper than a satellite and can be recovered and repaired.

- **Layers of the atmosphere:** troposphere (0-12 km, weather) → **stratosphere (12-50 km, ozone layer)** → mesosphere (50-80 km, meteors burn up) → thermosphere (ionosphere).
- **Earlier trial:** in **May 2025** DRDO flew a stratospheric airship to about 17 km (56,000 ft) for 62 minutes at **Sheopur**, Madhya Pradesh.
- **DRDO:** set up in **1958**; HQ New Delhi; about 50 labs under the Defence Ministry.

**Tamil Nadu link:** DRDO's **CVRDE** (Combat Vehicles R&D Establishment) at **Avadi**, Chennai, designed the **Arjun** tank. Tamil Nadu's **Defence Industrial Corridor** (Chennai, Hosur, Coimbatore, Salem, Tiruchirappalli) is growing aerospace and defence manufacturing.


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