



MQ-9B Drone Deal

[Source: HT](#)

Recently, India signed a **defence deal** worth **USD 3.5 billion** with the **US** to acquire **31 MQ-9B Predator armed drones** for its armed forces. **General Atomics**, the manufacturer of the drones, will set up a **maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility** in India.

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MQ-9B

Predator Drones



Max Gross Takeoff Weight: **5,670 kg**

Fuel Capacity: **2,721 kg**

Payload Capacity: **2,177 kg across 9 hardpoints (8 wing, 1 centerline)**



Crew:

Two pilots in ground control stations



Weapons

Laser guided missiles

Anti-tank missiles

Anti-ship missiles



Missions

- **Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief**
- **Search and Rescue**
- **Law Enforcement**
- **Border Enforcement**
- **Defensive Counter Air**
- **Airborne Early Warning**

Missions

- **Electronic Warfare**
- **Anti-Surface Warfare**
- **Anti-Submarine Warfare**
- **Airborne Mine Counter Measures**
- **Long-Range Strategic ISR**
- **Over-the-Horizon Targeting**



- The deal has been conducted under the [foreign military sales \(FMS\)](#) system.
 - FMS is the US Government's program for transferring **defence articles, services, and training** to its international partners and international organisations.
- It will first help India boost "**deterrence by detection**" enabling India to **detect early adversarial advances** on land and at sea, particularly from China, helping to prevent conflict.
 - These [high-altitude long-endurance \(HALE\) drones](#) are capable of remaining airborne for **over 35 hours** and can carry **four Hellfire missiles** (short-range tactical missile) and around **450 kgs of bombs**.
- **India-US Defence Partnership:**
 - The US was the **3rd largest supplier of arms** to India during **2018-22** after **Russia and France**. Defence procurements from the US stands at almost **USD 20 billion** in **2023**.
 - Key defence agreements include the [Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement \(2016\)](#), [Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement \(2018\)](#), [Industrial Security Agreement \(2019\)](#), and [Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement \(2020\)](#).

INDIA-US PARTNERSHIP

Economic Relations

- US became India's biggest trading partner in 2022-23 followed by China and UAE
- The bilateral trade has increased by 7.65% in 2022-23 (compared to 2021-22)

Defence Cooperation

- **India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X), 2023:** Start-ups and tech companies to collaborate on the co-development and co-production of advanced technologies
- **Fighter Jet Deal, 2023:** GE's F414 engine technology and manufacturing will be transferred for India's Tejas Mk2 jet, enhancing its indigenous capabilities
- **Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), 2012:** To facilitate collaboration in defence manufacturing, research and development, and technology transfer
- **New Framework for India-US Defence Relations, 2005:** Updated for 10 years in 2015

India intends to procure armed MQ-9B SeaGuardian UAVs

Science & Technology

- **Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET), 2022:** Cooperation on CETs in areas including AI, quantum computing, semiconductors and wireless telecommunications
- **Critical Minerals Partnership:** Recently, India joined the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) to boost global critical energy and minerals supply chains
- **Collaboration in Space:** NASA to train ISRO astronauts, aiming for a joint International Space Station (ISS) mission in 2024
 - **Artemis Accord:** A US-led alliance seeking to facilitate international collaboration in planetary exploration and research; signed by India
 - **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR):** For understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems and other environmental changes

Civil Nuclear Deal

- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** Bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement signed in October 2008

Energy & Climate Change

- **Joint Clean Energy Research and Development Centre (JCERDC), 2010:** To promote clean energy innovations by teams of scientists from India and the United States
- **Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership:** Launched at the Leaders climate summit 2021
- **Global Biofuel Alliance (India, Brazil and US), 2023:** Aimed at facilitating cooperation and intensifying the use of sustainable biofuels, including in the transportation sector

Security

- **Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Initiative, 2010:** To expand collaboration on counter-terrorism, information sharing and capacity building

Four Foundational Agreements:

■ **General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), 2002:** Allows militaries to share intelligence gathered by them

- ◆ **Industrial Security Annex, 2019** is a part of GSOMIA

■ **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), 2016:** Both countries gain access to designated military facilities for refuelling and replenishment.

■ **Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), 2018:** A legal framework for the transfer of highly sensitive communication security equipment from the US to India

■ **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA), 2020:** Allow both countries to share geospatial and satellite data with each other

In 2015, both countries issued **Delhi Declaration of Friendship and adopted a Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region**

Popular Visa Among Indians include **H-1B, L**. Indian citizens set to become **largest foreign student community in the US (20% growth in 2022)**



Read More: [India Approves Acquisition of MQ-9B Armed Drones from the US](#)

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