



Sea Guardian Drones from US

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Why in News

Recently, **two American MQ9B Sea Guardian unarmed drones** have been inducted by the Indian Navy.

The drones **would be on lease with India for one year.**

Key Points

- **MQ9B Sea Guardian:**



- It is the **maritime variant** of the **Predator MQ9 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)**.
- It has a maximum **endurance** of **40 hours** and a maximum flying **altitude** of **40,000** feet.
- It has a **3600 maritime surveillance radar** and an optional multimode **maritime surface search radar**.
- It can be **used in operations** such as Anti-Surface Warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief, Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement (Drug Trafficking, Illegal Immigration and Piracy), etc.

- **Procurement:**

- The Navy has for the **first time inducted two surveillance drones** through a **lease agreement** with an American firm, using the **emergency powers granted by the Centre to the Armed forces amid the China standoff**.

Under the emergency power, the government has granted **emergency funds up to Rs. 500 crore** per procurement project to the three armed services to **buy ammunition and weapons** in view of the escalating border standoff with China.

- Drones were procured under the option for leasing military platforms introduced in the **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020**.

- **Significance:**

- The drones are meant for carrying out **surveillance in the Indian Ocean Region and can be deployed on the China border** if asked for and if needed.

- Already the Navy's **P8I Poseidon aircraft** have been deployed in Ladakh.
- The **P-8I aircraft** is a variant of the **P-8A Poseidon aircraft** that have been developed by Boeing company.
- Boeing's P-8A Poseidon is designed for long-range Anti-Submarine warfare (ASW), Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW), and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions.

- As part of its force **restructuring to offset budgetary constraints**, the Navy is looking to induce more unmanned solutions in future.

- **Till the time the government approves buying the drones**, which has to get the **Defence Acquisition Council's nod**, leasing is a more economic and viable option.

The Defence Acquisition Council is the **highest decision-making body** in the Defence Ministry for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard.

Source:TH