



P-8I Patrol Aircraft

For Prelims: P-8I Patrol Aircraft, COMCASA Agreement.

For Mains: India-US Defense Ties.

Why in News?

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing has delivered the 12th [P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft](#) to the Indian Navy. This completes the follow-on clause for four additional P-8I aircraft contracted in 2016.

What are the Key Details of P-8I Aircraft?

- It is a **long-range Maritime Reconnaissance and Anti-Submarine Warfare Aircraft**.
- It is an **Indian variant of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft** that Boeing company developed as a replacement for the US Navy's ageing P-3 fleet.
- With a maximum speed of 907 kmph and an operating range of over 1,200 nautical miles, the P-8Is detect threats and neutralize them if required, far before they come anywhere near Indian shores.
- The **Indian Navy became the first international customer** for the P-8 aircraft in 2009.
 - The Navy had procured eight P-8Is under a USD 2.2 billion deal in 2009. The aircraft are **part of the 312A Naval Air Squadron based at Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu**.
 - In 2016, the Navy exercised the optional clause for four more P-8Is in a deal worth over USD 1 billion.
 - Further in May 2021, the US State Department approved the possible sale of six additional P-8I aircraft and related equipment, to India.
 - The six P-8Is will come installed with encrypted communication systems since India has now signed the foundational agreement **Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) with the US**.

How are Indo-US Defense Ties?

- This proposed sale (approved in 2021) will help to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship.
 - For the US, India continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia region.
- Defense purchases from the United States have been increasingly an integral part of growing ties between the two countries.
 - From near zero in 2008, India-US defence trade touched USD 20 billion in 2020, helped along by major policy upgrades.
- The US designated India a Major Defence Partner (in 2016) and then granted it the same access to defence technology as [NATO](#) allies and Australia, Japan and South Korea under Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA) in 2018.

What is the COMCASA Agreement?

- COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) is **meant to provide a legal**

framework for the transfer of communication security equipment from the US to India that would facilitate “interoperability” between their forces — and potentially with other militaries that use US-origin systems for secured data links.

- It is **one of the four foundational agreements** that the US signs with allies and close partners to facilitate interoperability between militaries and sale of high end technology.
- It is **an India-specific version of the Communication and Information on Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA)**.
- **Four Foundational Agreements between the US and its Partners:**
 - **General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)** - Signed by India in 2002.
 - Allows militaries to share the intelligence gathered by them.
 - **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)** - Signed by India in 2016.
 - Allows both countries to have access to each other’s designated military facilities for refueling and replenishment.
 - **Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA)** - Signed by India in 2018.
 - Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) is the India specific version of CISMOA.
 - **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)** - India has [signed BECA](#) in 2020.
 - Allows India and US militaries to share geospatial and satellite data with each other.

[Source: TH](#)

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