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MoD Signs Rs 858 Crore Contracts – Tunguska Air Defence and P8I Aircraft Maintenance

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MoD Signs Rs 858 Crore Contracts — Tunguska Air Defence and P8I Aircraft Maintenance

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed two contracts worth a combined **Rs 858 crore** at Kartavya Bhawan-2, New Delhi on March 27, 2026, in the presence of Defence Secretary **Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh**. The contracts cover procurement of the **Tunguska Air Defence Missile System** for the Indian Army and **Depot-Level Inspection of P8I Long-Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft** for the Indian Navy.

CONTRACT 1 — TUNGUSKA AIR DEFENCE MISSILE SYSTEM (RS 445 CRORE)

The first contract, valued at **Rs 445 crore**, was signed with **JSC Rosoboronexport** (Russia's sole state intermediary for defence exports) for the procurement of **Tunguska Air Defence Missile Systems** for the Indian Army.

What Is the Tunguska System?

The **2K22 Tunguska** (NATO designation: **SA-19 Grison**) is a Russian-origin **Short-Range Air Defence (SHORAD)** system designed to protect ground forces against low-flying aircraft, helicopters, drones (UAVs), and cruise missiles. The system is manufactured by the **KBP Instrument Design Bureau** (Tula, Russia).

Technical Specifications

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Designation	2K22 Tunguska / 2S6M (vehicle designation)
NATO Reporting Name	SA-19 Grison
Manufacturer	KBP Instrument Design Bureau, Tula, Russia
Type	Self-propelled SHORAD (Short-Range Air Defence)
Chassis	GM-352M tracked chassis (shared with Buk-M1 SAM system)
Armament — Guns	Dual 2A38M 30mm autocannons
Rate of Fire (combined)	3,900–5,000 rounds per minute
Ammunition Capacity	1,904 rounds
Gun Engagement Range	0.2–4.0 km
Armament — Missiles	8 x 9M311 SAMs (4 per side)
Missile Range	Up to 8 km
Fire Control	Computerised fire control system with radar tracking
Protection	NBC (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical) protection system
Night Capability	Night vision aids integrated

The Tunguska is a **combined gun-missile system** — a relatively rare design philosophy that gives it both **close-range rapid-fire capability** (guns for targets within 4 km) and **medium-range engagement** (missiles up to 8 km). This makes it particularly effective against modern threats like **swarming drones and cruise missiles** that require both reaction speed and extended reach.

Why the Indian Army Needs Tunguska

The Indian Army already operates the Tunguska system in limited numbers. This new procurement replenishes **missile stocks** and enhances India's **multi-layered air defence architecture** at a time when the drone threat has become acute — as demonstrated in the **Russia-Ukraine War** (2022–present) and the **Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict** (2020), where low-cost drones devastated armoured formations lacking adequate SHORAD protection.

India's Layered Air Defence Architecture

LAYER	SYSTEM	RANGE	ROLE
Long Range	S-400 Triumf (Russia)	400 km	Strategic area defence
Medium Range	Akash Mk-1/Mk-2 (India)	25–40 km	Mobile air defence for field formations
Medium Range	Barak-8 / MRSAM (India-Israel)	70–100 km	Navy and Army variant
Short Range	Tunguska 2K22 (Russia)	8 km (missile), 4 km (gun)	SHORAD for forward formations
Very Short Range	Igla-S MANPADS (Russia)	6 km	Man-portable, infantry-level
Point Defence	CIWS / ZSU-23-4 Shilka (Russia)	2.5 km	Gun-based close-in weapon system

The Tunguska fills the critical **SHORAD gap** — protecting mechanised columns and forward-deployed formations from low-altitude threats that longer-range systems like S-400 and Akash are not designed to intercept.

CONTRACT 2 — P8I AIRCRAFT DEPOT-LEVEL INSPECTION (RS 413 CRORE)

The second contract, valued at **Rs 413 crore**, was signed with **Boeing India Defense Private Limited** under the **Buy Indian** category with **100% Indigenous Content (IC)** for the **Depot-Level Inspection** of the Indian Navy's P8I Long-Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft fleet.

What Is the P8I Poseidon?

The **Boeing P-8I Poseidon** (also called P-8I Neptune by the Indian Navy) is India's primary **Long-Range Maritime Patrol (LRMP) and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)** aircraft. It is a military derivative of the **Boeing 737-800ERX** commercial airliner.

P8I Fleet Details

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Manufacturer	Boeing Defense, Space & Security (USA)
Base Platform	Boeing 737-800ERX (Extended Range)
Indian Navy Fleet	12 aircraft (8 original + 4 under option clause)
First Contract	January 1, 2009 — \$2.1 billion for 8 aircraft
Additional Order	4 more aircraft under option clause
Indian Navy Base	INS Rajali, Arakkonam (Tamil Nadu)
Primary Role	LRMP, ASW, ASUW (Anti-Surface Warfare), ISR
Length	39.47 m
Wingspan	37.64 m
Maximum Takeoff Weight	85,139 kg

P8I Capabilities

The P8I is equipped with a suite of sensors and weapons systems that make it one of the most capable maritime patrol aircraft in the world.

Sensors: AN/APY-10 maritime surveillance radar, sonobuoys (dropped to detect submarines), Magnetic Anomaly Detector (MAD), Electro-Optical/Infrared (EO/IR) turret.

Weapons: Harpoon anti-ship missiles, Mk-54 lightweight torpedoes, depth charges. The aircraft can carry weapons internally in a bomb bay and on external hardpoints.

Indian-Origin Components: The P8I integrates several Made-in-India systems — **BEL (Bharat Electronics Limited)** Data Link II communication suite, BEL IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) Interrogator, **Avantel** Mobile Satellite Service (MSS), and **ECIL (Electronics Corporation of India Limited)** speech secrecy system.

Significance of the “Buy Indian” Contract

The Rs 413 crore contract for Depot-Level Inspection is categorised under **Buy Indian with 100% Indigenous Content**. This means that Boeing India Defense Private Limited will perform all maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) work at an **in-country facility** — aligning with the government’s **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** (Self-Reliant India) and **Make in India** defence manufacturing initiatives.

Previously, Depot-Level Inspection (the most comprehensive overhaul of an aircraft — involving structural inspection, system testing, and component replacement) required the aircraft to be sent to Boeing’s facilities in the United States. This contract localises the capability in India, reducing turnaround time and cost while building indigenous MRO expertise.

DEFENCE ACQUISITION PROCEDURE — DAP CATEGORIES

Both contracts fall under India’s **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020**, which categorises all defence procurement into priority tiers.

DAP 2020 Procurement Categories (in order of priority)

PRIORITY	CATEGORY	INDIGENOUS CONTENT (IC)
1 (Highest)	Buy (Indian-IDDMM) — Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured	Minimum 50%
2	Buy (Indian)	Minimum 60%
3	Buy and Make (Indian)	Minimum 50% (minimum 50% through Indian vendor)
4	Buy (Global — Manufacture in India)	Minimum 50% IC by Indian partner
5 (Lowest)	Buy (Global)	30% offset obligation

The Tunguska contract falls under the **Buy (Global)** category — as it is a direct purchase from Russia’s Rosoboronexport. The P8I contract falls under **Buy (Indian)** — as Boeing India Defense will perform MRO at an Indian facility with 100% indigenous content.

INDIA-RUSSIA DEFENCE PROCUREMENT TREND

India has been the **largest buyer of Russian military equipment** for decades, though the share has been declining as India diversifies its procurement sources.

Shift in India's Arms Imports (SIPRI Data)

PERIOD	RUSSIA'S SHARE OF INDIA'S ARMS IMPORTS	KEY TREND
2009–2013	~70%	Russia dominant supplier
2014–2018	~58%	France (Rafale), Israel, US gain share
2019–2023	~36%	Sharp decline; France becomes 2nd largest supplier
2024–2026	~30% (estimated)	Continued diversification; indigenous production rising

India continues to procure Russian-origin systems for **legacy platforms** (MiG-29, Su-30MKI, T-90 tanks, S-400, Tunguska) while investing heavily in **indigenous alternatives** (Tejas LCA, Akash SAM, BrahMos, Arjun MBT) and Western platforms (Rafale, P8I, C-17, Apache).

The **CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act)** risk remains a factor — the US law can sanction countries purchasing Russian defence equipment. India received a presidential waiver for the **S-400 deal (\$5.43 billion, 2018)**, but future Russian procurements carry sanctions risk.

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Tunguska 2K22 (SA-19 Grison), P8I Poseidon, Boeing 737, DAP 2020 categories, Rosoboronexport, BEL, DRDO, CAATSA, S-400, Akash missile, SIPRI.

MAINS GS-2:

India's relations with Russia (defence procurement, CAATSA implications).

MAINS GS-3:

Security — India's air defence architecture, defence indigenisation, Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence, MRO localisation.

INTERVIEW:

Should India continue purchasing Russian military equipment given CAATSA sanctions risk and diversification needs?

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MOD CONTRACT DETAILS:

Total contract value: Rs 858 crore (signed March 27, 2026)

Tunguska missiles contract: Rs 445 crore (with JSC Rosoboronexport, Russia)

P8I inspection contract: Rs 413 crore (with Boeing India Defense Pvt Ltd)

Venue: Kartavya Bhawan-2, New Delhi

Defence Secretary present: Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh

P8I contract category: Buy Indian with 100% Indigenous Content

TUNGUSKA 2K22 SYSTEM:

NATO name: SA-19 Grison

Type: Self-propelled SHORAD (gun-missile combined)

Manufacturer: KBP Instrument Design Bureau, Tula, Russia

Guns: Dual 2A38M 30mm autocannons; combined rate of fire 3,900–5,000 rpm

Missiles: 8 x 9M311 SAMs; range up to 8 km

Gun range: 0.2–4.0 km

Ammunition: 1,904 rounds

Chassis: GM-352M tracked (shared with Buk-M1)

P8I POSEIDON (INDIAN NAVY):

Fleet strength: 12 aircraft (8 original + 4 option clause)

First contract: January 1, 2009 (\$2.1 billion for 8 aircraft)

Base platform: Boeing 737-800ERX

Primary base: INS Rajali, Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu

Roles: LRMP, ASW, ASUW, ISR

Indian components: BEL Data Link II, BEL IFF, Avantel MSS, ECIL speech secrecy

DAC cleared 6 additional P8I in 2025 (alongside 114 Rafale)

DAP 2020 CATEGORIES (HIGHEST TO LOWEST PRIORITY):

Buy (Indian-IDDMM) — minimum 50% IC

Buy (Indian) — minimum 60% IC

Buy and Make (Indian) — minimum 50% IC

Buy (Global — Manufacture in India) — minimum 50% IC

Buy (Global) — 30% offset obligation

INDIA-RUSSIA DEFENCE TIES:

Russia's share of India's arms imports (2019–23): ~36% (SIPRI)

Key Russian platforms in Indian service: Su-30MKI, MiG-29, T-90S, S-400, INS Vikramaditya, BrahMos (joint venture)

S-400 deal: \$5.43 billion (signed October 2018)

CAATSA: US law that can sanction countries buying Russian defence equipment

India received S-400 CAATSA waiver from US President

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Rosoboronexport: Russia's sole state intermediary for defence exports (established 2000)

BEL (Bharat Electronics Limited): Defence PSU under MoD; HQ — Bengaluru

ECIL: under Department of Atomic Energy; HQ — Hyderabad

INS Rajali: Indian Navy's premier air station on the east coast (Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu)

Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan: launched May 12, 2020 by PM Modi

India's defence budget (FY 2026-27): Rs 6.81 lakh crore (approx.)

India is the world's largest arms importer (SIPRI, 2019–2023)

Sources: [PIB](#), [ANI](#), [Business Today](#), [Boeing](#)

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