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MoD Signs Rs 1,943 Crore Deal to Lease Two MQ-9B Sea Guardian Drones for Navy

18 August 2026 ·

SECURITY & DEFENCE

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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MoD Signs Rs 1,943 Crore Deal to Lease Two MQ-9B Sea Guardian Drones for Navy

18 August 2026 · 1 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

*The Ministry of Defence signed a **Rs 1,943 crore** contract with **General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. (GA-ASI)** on **August 17, 2026**, to lease two **MQ-9B Sea Guardian High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE)** drones for the **Indian Navy**.*

What Was Signed

The contract, signed in the presence of Additional Secretary and DG (Acquisition) **A. Anbarasu** at Kartavya Bhawan-2, New Delhi, covers a **30-month lease** of the two Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS). The systems are intended to boost **Maritime Domain Awareness** across the Indian Ocean Region.

Why This Matters

Leasing, rather than outright purchase, lets the Navy rapidly field persistent, long-endurance surveillance capability while broader indigenous or larger-scale acquisition programmes for such platforms remain under negotiation, a model increasingly used to bridge capability gaps in India's evolving drone and maritime-ISR architecture.

UPSC Relevance

This is a useful case study for GS3 questions on defence procurement models, specifically the lease-versus-purchase trade-off, and on persistent ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) capability in India's Indian Ocean Region maritime security strategy.

 FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA**MQ-9B SEA GUARDIAN LEASE, 2026:**

Signed: August 17, 2026; value: Rs 1,943 crore

Vendor: General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. (GA-ASI)

Lease duration: 30 months; units: 2 MQ-9B Sea Guardian HALE RPAS

End-user: Indian Navy; purpose: Maritime Domain Awareness, Indian Ocean Region

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Signing location: Kartavya Bhawan-2, New Delhi

Sources: PIB, ANI, Ministry of Defence

Source: MoD Signs Rs 1,943 Crore Deal to Lease Two MQ-9B Sea Guardian Drones for Navy — Ujiyari.com | Free
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