

INDIA-US MARITIME DEAL - SECURITY

NEWS: Recently, The U.S. State Department has approved a potential **Foreign Military Sale (FMS)** to India, valued at \$131 million, for maritime surveillance under the **IPMDA initiative**.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

India–U.S. Deal in the Maritime Domain

1. Key Features of the Deal

- **Scope of the Deal:**
The agreement includes the procurement and implementation of **SeaVision software**, which enhances maritime domain awareness.
- **Technical Support and Training:**
It encompasses **requested software enhancements, Technical Assistance Field Team (TAFT) training, remote analytics support, access to system documentation, and logistics support.**
- **Contracting Entity:**
The **U.S.-based firm Hawkeye 360** is the **principal contractor** involved in the execution of the deal.



Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Program

- **Nature of the FMS Program:**
FMS is a **U.S. government-to-government arms transfer mechanism**, managed by the **Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA).**

- **Principles of Operation:**
The process ensures **transparency, legal compliance, and alignment with U.S. foreign policy**, allowing trusted allies to acquire U.S. military equipment and services.
- **Strategic Rationale:**
This deal reflects the U.S. policy to promote India as a “**Major Defense Partner**” and a **pillar of stability and development** in the Indo-Pacific region.

Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) Initiative

Origin and Purpose

- **Launch Timeline:**
The **IPMDA** was launched in **2022** during the **Quad Leaders’ Tokyo Summit**.
- **Nature of Initiative:**
It is a **technology- and training-driven program** aimed at boosting **maritime security, situational awareness, and information sharing** across the Indo-Pacific.

Objectives of IPMDA

- **Tracking of “Dark Shipping”:**
It focuses on identifying and tracking vessels that operate with **disabled or spoofed AIS (Automatic Identification System)**, commonly known as “**dark ships**.”
- **Real-Time Operational Picture:**
Aims to provide **partner nations with a real-time, integrated maritime operational picture**, improving collective surveillance and threat detection.
- **Geographic Scope:**
The initiative covers **three strategic maritime regions**:
 - Pacific Islands
 - Southeast Asia
 - Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

Technologies Employed

- **Satellite and AI Integration:**
Uses **commercial radio frequency (RF) satellite data, artificial intelligence, and integrated software platforms** to detect anomalies and track vessel activity.

- **Use of SeaVision:**
Platforms like **SeaVision** are leveraged for **monitoring ship movements**, enhancing transparency and identifying potential illegal or suspicious activities.

Operational Mechanisms

- **Regional Information Hubs:**
Establishes **regional coordination centers** to enable **data sharing, inter-agency collaboration, and coordinated responses**.
- **Phased Implementation:**
Initially piloted among Quad countries, the initiative is gradually moving toward **full-scale operational deployment**.

Significance of IPMDA

- **Improved Monitoring Capabilities:**
Enhances the ability of regional states to **detect and respond to**:
 - Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing
 - Maritime trafficking and piracy
 - Unauthorized naval movements
 - Dark ships bypassing AIS monitoring
- **Non-Escalatory Deterrence:**
Offers a **technology-based, non-confrontational method** to counter **China's aggressive maritime presence**, especially in contested Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

India–U.S. Defense Cooperation: Recent Developments

8. New 10-Year Framework Agreement

- **Renewed Strategic Partnership:**
India and the U.S. plan to **sign a new 10-year framework agreement** to further **deepen defense collaboration** and advance the **Major Defense Partnership** model.

Major Defense Platforms Procured by India

- **U.S. Platforms Inducted:**
 - **C-130J Super Hercules** (tactical transport aircraft)

- **P-8I Poseidon** (maritime surveillance aircraft)
- **AH-64E Apache** (attack helicopters)
- **MQ-9B drones** (long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles)
- **Operational Advantage:**
These platforms have significantly enhanced **India's surveillance, combat, and logistical capabilities** across land and maritime domains.

Upcoming Procurements and Joint Production

- **Planned Acquisitions:**
 - **Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missiles**
 - **Co-production of Stryker Infantry Combat Vehicles** to promote **defense indigenization and manufacturing under Make in India.**

Facilitating Technology Transfer and Procurement

- **Streamlining Regulations:**
Both nations are working to **review the U.S. International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR)** to ease technology transfer.
- **Reciprocal Defense Procurement (RDP) Agreement:**
Negotiations are underway to enable **mutual recognition of defense procurements**, reducing bureaucratic delays.

Collaboration on Emerging Defense Technologies

- **ASIA Initiative:**
The **Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance (ASIA)** has been launched to facilitate **co-development of AI-enabled autonomous systems**, including:
 - **Maritime surveillance technologies**
 - **Anti-Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) solutions**

Broader Strategic Importance

- **Maritime Governance and Regional Cooperation:**
Enhances **cooperative maritime governance** among Quad and like-minded Indo-Pacific nations through **shared situational awareness and joint response mechanisms.**

- **India's Role in SAGAR and Blue Economy:**
The initiative supports India's **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** vision and its ambition to develop the **Blue Economy** sustainably.
- **Reinforcing India's Strategic Position:**
Strengthens India's role as a **net maritime security provider** in the Indo-Pacific and aligns with its geopolitical and economic interests.

Conclusion

- The India–U.S. collaboration under the IPMDA reflects a **shared commitment to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific**.
- It **empowers India's maritime domain capabilities**, contributes to **regional stability**, and promotes **technological and strategic cooperation** in a critical geopolitical space.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/us-notifies-potential-sale-of-ipdma-related-equipment-worth-131-million-to-india/article69522550.ece>