

## Primus Partner Report

Published in BW Business World

June 09, 2026

# India Must Build War Reserves, Distributed Drone Supply Chains: Report



Authored by BW Online Bureau

**Read on:** <https://www.businessworld.in/article/india-must-build-war-reserves-distributed-drone-supply-chains-report-610017>

### Article Content:

*India needs logistics-focused drone warfare preparedness to sustain prolonged conflicts*

India must shift its focus from simply acquiring advanced drone technologies to building war reserves, distributed manufacturing networks and resilient supply chains if it is to withstand future high-intensity conflicts, according to a report by consulting firm Primus Partners.

The report argues that recent conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have demonstrated that military success increasingly depends on the ability to sustain drone operations over long periods rather than merely possessing sophisticated unmanned systems.

"India's real risk is not that it lacks ideas," the report said. "The strategic chokepoints are upstream and downstream: critical inputs before production, and sustainment functions after induction."

According to Primus Partners, India has made significant progress in drone warfare capabilities since 2022. By mid-2024, the country's armed forces had commissioned an estimated 2,000-2,500 drones into operational use, supported by investments of USD 361 million-421 million in drone technologies and a USD 3.5 billion order for 31 MQ-9B Predator platforms.

The report noted that dedicated drone platoons are being incorporated into infantry battalions, while specialised training institutions have been established in locations including Dehradun, Mhow and Chennai. The Border Security Force also launched a Drone Warfare School in Tekanpur in 2025.

However, Primus Partners said technological advances alone would not be enough in future wars dominated by attrition and mass drone deployments.

Drawing lessons from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israel-Iran confrontation, the report highlighted how logistics failures and inadequate stockpiles can undermine military operations.

Russia's drone attacks on Ukrainian supply lines contributed to Kyiv's withdrawal from the Kursk region in late 2024, while Iran sustained missile and drone attacks for weeks despite having around 92 per cent of its known launch infrastructure destroyed, thanks to dispersed stockpiles and pre-positioned reserves, the report said.

The report pointed to what it described as the growing cost asymmetry in modern warfare. During recent conflicts, low-cost drones costing tens of thousands of dollars forced defenders to expend expensive interceptor missiles worth millions of dollars each.

"The logic of firing an imported USD 13 million interceptor at a locally produced USD 20,000 drone is not a sustainable defensive reaction," the report said.

India's current indigenous loitering munition ecosystem produces drones at roughly Rs 4.5 lakh per unit and at volumes of 400-500 units annually. While describing this as a credible start, the report said production would need to increase dramatically to create meaningful wartime reserves.

It recommended that India emulate Ukraine's model of geographically distributed manufacturing, arguing that multiple smaller production facilities would be more resilient than concentrated industrial clusters vulnerable to attack.

The report also called for a transition from "just-in-time" logistics towards a "just-in-case" reserve model, with hardened stockpiles positioned near potential conflict zones.

India's varied geography presents additional logistical challenges, according to the study. High-altitude deployments in Ladakh, dense forests in the northeast and the corrosive coastal environment each require specialised maintenance and support infrastructure.

Primus Partners warned that a centralised production model without forward-deployed maintenance hubs and repair facilities could create vulnerabilities during prolonged military engagements.

The report further recommended a decentralised operational structure supported by standardised drone systems, dedicated unmanned systems units and integrated theatre-level command arrangements.

It also urged greater investment in low-cost indigenous counter-drone technologies, including directed-energy weapons, interceptor drones, swarm-defence systems and artificial intelligence-enabled command networks.

India's ongoing initiatives, including Mission Drone Shakti and Mission Sudarshan Chakra, provide a strong foundation, the report said. However, it argued that policymakers should now focus on creating a comprehensive logistics doctrine linking manufacturing, deployment, maintenance and replenishment across multiple theatres.

"The future battlefield will reward nations capable of maintaining operational endurance amid prolonged attrition," the report said. "Wars are sustained by logistics, not merely by technology."