SITUATIONAL REPORTS

Why India Is Buying Javelin Now?

Author: CNAWS Research Team • **Published:** August 31, 2026 • **Source:** Centre for New Age Warfare Studies



EXECUTIVE BRIEF & KEY FINDINGS

India's decision to acquire the American FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank guided missile should not be interpreted as a simple purchase of another anti-tank weapon. Nor does the available evidence support the conclusion that India has abandoned its indigenous Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile programme.The development is considerably more interesting. On 28 August 2026, India finalised an agreement with the United States for the acquisition of the Javelin weapon system. The procurement had been cleared by the U.S. State Department in November 2025 under the Foreign Military Sales route. The authorised package had an estimated maximum value of $45.7 million and covered up to 100 Javelin rounds, one fly-to-buy missile and 25 Lightweight Command Launch Units or Block 1 Command Launch Units, together with training, simulation, spares, lifecycle support and technical assistance. The final publicly announced agreement did not disclose its precise financial value or confirmed quantities, so the November FMS notification should be regarded as the approved ceiling rather than automatically equated with the final contracted configuration.Only two days later, on 30 August, the strategic significance increased substantially. Tata Advanced Systems Limited and the Raytheon-Lockheed Martin Javelin Joint Venture signed an agreement to explore co-production of Javelin All Up Rounds in India. Tata has been selected as the prime Indian partner for future in-country production. The proposed model includes final assembly and integration in India and the development of component-production capability, while certain sub-assemblies and guidance electronics would continue to be supplied from the United States.The sequence is therefore important. India is first obtaining a relatively small quantity of a mature combat-proven foreign missile while simultaneously creating a pathway towards local assembly and larger-scale production. At the same time, New Delhi is continuing to move its indigenous MPATGM towards induction. The DRDO missile successfully engaged a moving target in top-attack mode in January 2026, and in July the Defence Acquisition Council formally approved procurement of MPATGM systems for the

> *Army.CNAWS assesses that the Javelin procurement is therefore best understood as a bridge, benchmark and industrial hedge rather than a replacement for India's indigenous anti-tank programme.The broader shift is even more significant. The Indian Army is moving away from treating anti-tank guided missiles as an isolated specialist capability and towards a layered precision-fire architecture. Infantry-carried ATGMs, tracked Nag systems, tank-launched missiles, loitering munitions, kamikaze drones, improved surveillance and active protection systems are increasingly being developed and procured as complementary components.Operation Sindoor accelerated this transformation, although there is no public evidence establishing that lessons from Sindoor alone caused the Javelin decision. What can be established is that the Ministry of Defence expanded emergency procurement after the operation across precision ammunition, drones, counter-drone systems, electronic warfare and other weapon systems. By late 2025, 58 Army capital schemes had been planned under the emergency procurement framework.The significance of Javelin is therefore not simply that an Indian infantryman will acquire another weapon capable of destroying a tank. The more consequential development is that India is attempting to give small combat units greater autonomous reconnaissance, precision engagement and survivability, while building multiple domestic and foreign supply chains so that no single missile programme becomes a critical point of failure.*

1. What India Has Actually Bought

The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress on 19 November 2025 of a possible sale to India of Javelin systems and associated equipment at an estimated maximum value of $45.7 million.

The authorised package included 100 FGM-148 Javelin rounds, one additional fly-to-buy missile and 25 Lightweight Command Launch Units or conventional Block 1 Command Launch Units. It also included basic-skills trainers, simulation rounds, operator manuals, spare parts, technical assistance and lifecycle-support equipment.

The distinction between the authorised package and final contract matters. DSCA notifications establish the maximum quantities and value that may be sold. The agency itself states that final values can be lower depending on negotiations, budget authority and final requirements. Reuters reported on 28 August that the acquisition agreement had been finalised but that the financial details and scale were not publicly disclosed.

Analytically, however, even the authorised ceiling tells us something important. One hundred missiles and 25 launchers would constitute a limited initial capability, not the wholesale conversion of Indian infantry anti-tank units to Javelin.

India possesses an Army of more than a million personnel and maintains extensive anti-armour requirements across both its western and northern fronts. A first tranche of this scale is more suitable for selected operational formations, training, familiarisation, doctrine development and establishment of an initial inventory. That strongly suggests that the first purchase should be regarded as the beginning of a pathway rather than its final scale.

2. From Rejection to Co-Production: India’s 16-Year Javelin Journey

The Javelin story is best understood as a 16-year stop-start procurement cycle, not 16 years of uninterrupted negotiations. India considered the missile seriously in 2010, abandoned it in favour of Spike, periodically reopened industrial discussions, and only returned to an actual acquisition path in 2024–25.

2.1 India–Javelin procurement timeline

Period	Development	Why it mattered

Oct 2009	Indian troops used the Javelin during the India–US Yudh Abhyas exercise at Babina.	This appears to have been the Army's first meaningful operational exposure to the system.
Jul–Aug 2010	India publicly moved towards procuring Javelin. Defence Minister A. K. Antony told Parliament that the MoD planned to issue a Letter of Request under the US Foreign Military Sales route, including transfer of technology.	This was the first formal procurement phase. The Army was then facing a major shortage of modern ATGMs and relied heavily on Milan and Konkurs systems.
2010–2012	Negotiations became bogged down over technology transfer and U.S. conditions.	India wanted substantially deeper ToT than Washington was prepared to release, particularly involving sensitive missile technologies. Indian reporting also cited U.S. reluctance regarding Indian field trials.
2012	A U.S. Congressional Research Service assessment recorded that India had effectively turned down a Javelin package despite a co-production offer.	The CRS highlighted end-use monitoring requirements, price and restrictions surrounding advanced U.S. technology as complicating factors. The original procurement path was effectively dead.
Sep 2013	Washington dramatically upgraded its offer. Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter proposed co-development of a next-generation Javelin, specifically for India under the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative.	Instead of simply selling existing Javelins, Washington offered India participation in developing and producing the next generation, potentially for international customers. Carter described it as an unprecedented India-specific proposal.
2013–2014	India considered the new U.S. proposal while simultaneously evaluating Israel's Spike.	Javelin was no longer merely an import offer. It had become a test case for whether U.S.–India defence ties could move into genuine co-development.
Oct 2014	India selected Israel's Spike rather than Javelin. The Defence Acquisition Council approved a plan for roughly 8,356 Spike missiles and 321 launchers, with local production envisaged.	Israel was viewed as offering more workable technology-transfer and localisation arrangements. This effectively ended Javelin's first major procurement cycle.
2015–2016	The Spike contract itself became bogged down in price negotiations, technical concerns and debate over indigenous alternatives.	The inability to conclude Spike reopened space for Javelin.
Apr 2016	Indian officials considered reviving the U.S. Javelin co-production offer ahead of U.S. Defence Secretary Ashton Carter's visit.	The missile returned to the conversation because the Spike contract had failed to progress as expected.
31 Aug 2016	Raytheon-Lockheed Martin's Javelin Joint Venture signed a Letter of Intent with Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division to explore co-development and production in India.	This was the first substantial private-sector industrial framework for an Indian Javelin. It covered dismounted infantry, vehicles and even rotorcraft applications.
2016–2017	Despite the Tata arrangement, no major Army Javelin order followed. India continued pursuing Spike while DRDO argued that an indigenous man-portable ATGM should be developed.	Without an Indian Army order, the industrial proposal could not mature into production.
Dec 2017	India cancelled the large Spike procurement in favour of the indigenous DRDO MPATGM programme.	Paradoxically, this did not immediately benefit Javelin because government policy was now prioritising an indigenous solution.

2019	With the indigenous missile still unavailable in sufficient numbers, India purchased limited quantities of Spike-LR under emergency provisions.	The Army's ATGM shortage persisted despite years of procurement decisions.
6 Feb 2020	The Javelin Joint Venture signed an MoU with Bharat Dynamics Limited to explore co-production in India.	Javelin had not disappeared. The focus had shifted from an immediate import to preserving an industrial pathway for future Indian requirements.
2020–2023	No large Javelin procurement followed. India continued with Spike purchases and development of MPATGM.	This was effectively another dormant period rather than active acquisition negotiations.
June 2024	India and the United States formally reopened discussions on joint production of Javelin in India, reportedly during a high-level U.S. visit associated with NSA Jake Sullivan's engagements.	This was the beginning of the current procurement cycle. The Army still required substantial numbers of modern ATGMs, while the relationship with Washington had moved strongly towards co-production rather than simple imports.
11 Feb 2025	At Aero India, Javelin JV renewed its MoU with BDL and announced that it was examining Indian co-assembly and co-production through a competitive partner-selection process.	This showed that the American companies were preparing an actual Indian industrial base rather than merely marketing imported missiles.
13 Feb 2025	Modi and Trump formally announced plans to pursue new Javelin procurements and co-production arrangements in India, alongside Stryker vehicles.	Javelin moved from company-level negotiations to the highest political level of the India–US relationship.
May 2025, Operation Sindoor	India's short war with Pakistan intensified attention to ammunition stocks, precision weapons, drones and rapid procurement.	Sindoor was not the origin of the Javelin programme, but it accelerated an already revived requirement.
Jul 2025	India was negotiating two Javelin tracks simultaneously. One was an emergency purchase to meet an immediate Army requirement. The second was a larger, longer-term arrangement involving Indian co-production.	This is probably the decisive change in the entire procurement story. India stopped trying to solve the immediate and industrial requirements through one contract.
Aug 2025	U.S.–India relations temporarily deteriorated after Washington imposed higher tariffs linked to India's Russian oil purchases. Reuters reported that planned arms purchases including Javelin were affected, although the Indian government disputed reports of a formal pause.	Political friction slowed momentum but did not kill the programme.
19 Nov 2025	The U.S. State Department formally approved a possible Javelin FMS package worth up to $45.7 million, comprising up to 100 Javelin rounds, one fly-to-buy missile and 25 launch units, plus trainers, spares and support.	This was the first definitive U.S. government clearance that put India on a practical acquisition path.
Late 2025–2026	India and the U.S. continued negotiating both the immediate procurement and larger co-production arrangement.	By this point, the argument was no longer whether India would ever acquire Javelin but how much would be imported initially and how production would eventually be structured.
28 Aug 2026	The Indian Army signed the Letter of Offer and Acceptance under the FMS system, completing the immediate procurement. Reporting indicates this emergency purchase is worth roughly ?292 crore and involves around 60 missiles, though the earlier DSCA notification allowed a larger maximum package.	Sixteen years after India first announced its intention to buy Javelin, the Army finally became a customer.

30 Aug 2026	Tata Advanced Systems and the Javelin Joint Venture signed a new agreement to pursue co-production of Javelin All Up Rounds in India.	This is the continuation of the second, strategically more important track. The small emergency purchase is intended to open the door to a much larger industrial relationship.

2.2 The procurement history in four phases

Phase I, 2009–2012. Immediate Army requirement. India encountered Javelin during Yudh Abhyas and quickly concluded that it could address the Army's severe third-generation ATGM deficiency. The Army wanted the weapon, but New Delhi did not want an off-the-shelf purchase alone. It demanded technology transfer. Washington's restrictions on sensitive technologies, end-use arrangements and associated conditions prevented the deal from moving forward.

Phase II, 2013–2016. From purchase to co-development. The Americans realised that an ordinary FMS sale was unlikely to satisfy India. Ashton Carter therefore offered something much more ambitious in September 2013, namely participation in developing the next-generation Javelin. Washington explicitly said the proposal was unique to India. The offer nevertheless arrived while India was already moving towards Spike, and New Delhi finally selected the Israeli missile in 2014. The failure to conclude the Spike contract subsequently reopened the Javelin option, culminating in the Tata Power-JJV industrial agreement of 2016.

Phase III, 2017–2023. Indigenous priority and dormancy. The government increasingly preferred DRDO's MPATGM. Even the much larger Spike programme was cancelled in 2017 because India expected the indigenous missile to satisfy the requirement. The Army nevertheless had to procure limited Spike systems as an interim measure. Javelin remained alive industrially through the 2020 BDL MoU, but there was still no government order.

Phase IV, 2024–2026. Acquisition plus co-production. The critical change came in June 2024 when government-to-government discussions on Javelin co-production restarted. By February 2025, the Javelin JV was actively selecting Indian industrial partners, BDL had renewed its MoU, and Modi and Trump had publicly committed both countries to new Javelin procurement and production arrangements. After Operation Sindoor, India separated the requirement into an immediate emergency procurement and a longer industrial programme. Washington approved the first FMS case in November 2025 and the Army finally signed the LOA on 28 August 2026.

2.3 Why did it take 16 years?

The fundamental problem was that India and the United States originally wanted different deals.

Washington was prepared to sell a highly capable missile through FMS, subject to American technology-protection and end-use rules. New Delhi wanted something closer to the traditional Russian model, with extensive transfer of technology and domestic manufacturing. That gap killed the original 2010 effort. The U.S. progressively improved its offer, first through next-generation co-development in 2013, then Indian industrial partnerships in 2016 and 2020, and eventually a formal co-production agenda in 2024–26.

At the same time, India's own procurement policy kept changing. Javelin competed first against Spike, then against the expectation that DRDO's MPATGM would remove the need for another imported weapon. The Army's operational requirement, however, never disappeared. That is why both Spike and Javelin repeatedly returned despite attempts to rely entirely on indigenous development.

The most important difference in 2025–26 is that India finally stopped trying to resolve everything through one procurement. The current strategy effectively separates the problem into buy now, manufacture later, and continue indigenous MPATGM simultaneously. That is why the Javelin programme has succeeded this time where the earlier

attempts failed.

3. Why Javelin Is Operationally Attractive

Javelin provides several features that are particularly valuable to infantry operating against mechanised forces.

It is a man-portable fire-and-forget system. Once a target has been acquired and the missile launched, the gunner does not need to continue guiding the weapon throughout its flight. This reduces the time during which the firing team remains exposed. The system can engage armoured vehicles as well as bunkers and fortified positions. Its command launch unit also functions as a surveillance device rather than merely a missile launcher.

The latest Lightweight Command Launch Unit is especially important. According to Raytheon, the LWCLU is approximately 30 percent smaller and 25 percent lighter than the previous launcher while providing roughly twice the target detection and recognition range. The system offers day and night engagement capability and its optics can be used independently for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

This changes how the system should be evaluated. The launcher is not simply the device that fires the missile. It is also a sophisticated thermal observation system carried by the infantry. For formations operating in mountainous terrain, along prepared defensive positions or in areas where armoured movement must be detected before engagement, improved observation can be almost as valuable as the missile itself.

The fire-and-forget characteristic contributes a second advantage. Older generation wire-guided or command-guided missiles generally require the operator to remain exposed and maintain guidance until impact. Against an opponent equipped with modern thermal sights, drones, artillery and counter-fire capability, the exposure window can become dangerous. Javelin allows the firing team to launch, disengage and reposition more rapidly. The weapon therefore improves not only lethality but survivability and tactical mobility.

4. The Western Front Remains the Most Obvious Anti-Armour Requirement

Pakistan continues to invest substantially in its armoured forces. Its mechanised formations operate the domestically produced Al-Khalid family alongside Chinese-origin VT-4 tanks and other legacy platforms. Pakistan's state defence industry continues to market the Al-Khalid series, while Pakistan Army exercises have publicly demonstrated VT-4 tanks with its strike formations.

India's own acquisition documents explicitly identify the need to maintain anti-armour superiority on the western frontier. The Ministry of Defence described the Nag Missile System tracked programme as an operational requirement intended to provide effective anti-tank defence and maintain combat overmatch against adversary armour on the western front. The Army has already contracted the tracked Nag system for mechanised infantry.

Javelin fills a different tactical layer. NAMIS is a vehicle-mounted anti-armour system designed to operate within mechanised formations. Javelin is far more distributable. Infantry detachments can carry it into terrain where deploying a tracked missile carrier may be impractical or unnecessarily conspicuous.

That distinction becomes particularly relevant in areas where tanks may be channelled through limited approaches. An anti-tank system does not need to destroy an entire armoured formation by itself to influence operations. Distributed precision weapons can force armour to alter routes, slow movement, deploy additional reconnaissance and infantry protection, and devote greater attention to suppressing possible anti-tank positions. The operational effect therefore

extends beyond the number of tanks physically destroyed.

---

5. The China Front Cannot Be Ignored

The northern theatre creates a different requirement. The People's Liberation Army continues to operate modern light armour suited to high-altitude environments. Chinese military reporting in August 2026 showed ZTQ-15 light tanks undergoing live-fire training with formations under the PLA Xinjiang Military Command.

The India-China border has simultaneously entered a more politically stable phase compared with the immediate post-Galwan period, with both governments continuing negotiations on the boundary question. Political improvement, however, does not remove the requirement for military preparedness.

For high-altitude infantry, weight and observation capability matter greatly. A lighter launcher that doubles as an advanced thermal-surveillance system provides utility even before a missile is fired. The ability of small units to observe routes, identify vehicles and engage targets without maintaining missile guidance can be valuable in terrain where movement is physically demanding and cover is limited.

Javelin should therefore not be viewed exclusively through the Rajasthan or Punjab tank-battle paradigm. Its attraction lies precisely in its portability across different theatres.

That said, Javelin does not eliminate the requirement for longer-range weapons, artillery, attack helicopters, drones or vehicle-mounted anti-tank systems. Mountain warfare can involve large engagement distances and complex lines of sight. A man-portable ATGM remains one component of a broader anti-armour network.

---

6. Javelin Is Not Replacing the Indigenous MPATGM

This is the most important point in assessing the acquisition. India's indigenous MPATGM programme is progressing at almost exactly the same time.

On 11 January 2026, DRDO successfully tested the third-generation fire-and-forget MPATGM against a moving target. The missile demonstrated top-attack capability and incorporates an indigenous imaging-infrared seeker, tandem warhead, fire-control system and propulsion technologies. Bharat Dynamics Limited and Bharat Electronics Limited are development-cum-production partners.

Six months later, on 3 July 2026, the Defence Acquisition Council approved procurement of MPATGM systems for the Indian Army and specifically stated that the weapon would increase the infantry's capability against adversary mechanised forces. This makes the simplistic narrative of "Javelin versus MPATGM" difficult to sustain. The programmes are advancing in parallel.

6.1 Comparative Role

Dimension	Javelin	Indigenous MPATGM
Status	Initial foreign acquisition finalised	Indigenous system moving towards Army induction
Guidance	Fire and forget	Fire and forget

Attack profile	Top attack and direct engagement capability	Top attack demonstrated
Industrial model	Proposed Indian final assembly and component production with continued U.S. inputs	Indigenous DRDO design with BDL and BEL production partnership
Immediate advantage	Mature operational system and established international production base	Greater sovereign control and domestic supply-chain potential
Likely strategic role	Bridge capability, benchmark, additional production stream	Long-term indigenous mass requirement

The precise specifications and final fielding arrangements may differ. The important point is the direction. India appears to be creating redundancy.

In an extended conflict, dependence on a single missile design or single production chain can become a serious vulnerability. Multiple systems create logistical complexity, but they also create resilience. If one programme suffers production delays, component shortages or technical problems, another system remains available. The challenge will be ensuring that redundancy does not become uncontrolled inventory fragmentation.

---

7. From Spike to Javelin

India already possesses experience with imported modern man-portable anti-tank systems. The Army procured Israel's Spike LR under urgent operational requirements beginning in 2019. The Ministry of Defence described Spike as a fourth-generation man-portable system offering fire-and-forget, fire-observe-and-update, day and night engagement and top-attack capability.

Additional Spike missiles were subsequently obtained during heightened tensions with China. Javelin therefore enters an inventory that already contains multiple generations and families of anti-tank systems.

This raises an obvious question. Why introduce another foreign missile? The answer is likely broader than missile performance alone. First, Javelin provides a second proven foreign supply chain. Second, it creates access to the newest U.S. launcher and surveillance architecture. Third, it strengthens India-U.S. defence-industrial integration. Fourth, the proposed Tata arrangement potentially gives India a production role rather than restricting the relationship to finished-system imports.

This suggests a procurement philosophy in which New Delhi is willing to accept some inventory diversity when the acquisition also produces industrial, diplomatic or technological advantages.

---

8. The Tata Agreement Is Potentially More Important Than the First Missile Order

On 30 August, Tata Advanced Systems and the Javelin Joint Venture announced an MOU to pursue production of the Javelin All Up Round in India. Tata has been selected as the prime Indian partner for prospective in-country co-production. The proposal includes establishing a final assembly and integration facility and developing component-production capability in India.

This could eventually make the small initial missile acquisition far more significant than its dollar value suggests. However, the agreement must be assessed accurately. It is an MOU and industrial pathway, not yet evidence that India has acquired full sovereign manufacturing capability. Lockheed Martin's own statement makes clear that under the

proposed production arrangement, sub-assembly kits produced in Alabama and guidance electronic units manufactured in Arizona would be shipped to India for final assembly and integration.

This means the early production model would remain dependent on critical American inputs. That distinction matters because the term "co-production" is often loosely interpreted as complete technology transfer. It is not. The present arrangement should instead be regarded as a potential first stage of industrial localisation. The real test will be whether local content increases over time and whether Indian companies eventually participate in higher-value components including seekers, guidance electronics, warheads, propulsion or other critical sub-systems.

---

9. Why the United States Also Wants Production in India

The arrangement is not a one-sided concession to New Delhi. The global Javelin production base is under pressure from sustained international demand. The joint venture states that more than 55,000 missiles and 12,000 reusable launch units have already been produced.

The U.S. companies explicitly describe Indian co-production as a means of strengthening the international Javelin supply chain and increasing production volume. This creates alignment between American and Indian interests. Washington obtains another manufacturing node and potentially greater production capacity. India receives faster access to missiles, industrial experience and reduced dependence on complete imported rounds. Tata gains entry into a major international missile supply chain. If production eventually serves third-country customers, India's role could extend beyond domestic procurement into the global Javelin ecosystem. That would make the industrial dimension considerably more valuable than assembling a few hundred missiles for the Indian Army.

---

10. Operation Sindoor and the Wider Firepower Reset

It would be analytically careless to claim that Operation Sindoor directly produced the Javelin acquisition unless official evidence establishes that causal connection. The procurement timeline does, however, sit squarely within the post-Sindoor modernisation cycle.

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that emergency procurement powers were expanded after Operation Sindoor. The Army subsequently pursued weapons, precision ammunition, drone and counter-drone systems, electronic warfare equipment and surveillance capabilities. Fifty-eight capital schemes were planned under Emergency Procurement VI, while substantial field-formation expenditure went towards drones, counter-drone systems and strike capability.

This indicates a broader institutional lesson. Future conflicts are unlikely to allow years for correcting shortages once combat begins. Units require distributed precision weapons, deep ammunition reserves and systems that can be replaced or manufactured rapidly. Javelin fits this environment because the missile provides a mature capability immediately while the proposed industrial arrangement creates the possibility of expanding inventory later. That logic is consistent with India's post-Sindoor emphasis on readiness plus production resilience.

---

11. Anti-Tank Warfare Is No Longer Just About ATGMs

Another reason the Javelin purchase should not be analysed in isolation is that India's wider ground-warfare procurement is increasingly multi-layered. On the same 3 July 2026 date that MPATGM procurement received approval, the Defence Acquisition Council also approved an Active Protection System for tanks, jet-based kamikaze drones and

additional counter-UAV and air-defence systems. On 14 August, the Ministry of Defence signed contracts worth approximately ?1,577 crore for loitering munition systems for Army artillery regiments. India has also contracted indigenous tracked Nag systems and substantial quantities of INVAR anti-tank missiles for T-90 tanks. The resulting architecture can be understood in layers.

Battlefield Layer	Emerging Capability
Dismounted infantry	Javelin, MPATGM, existing Spike and legacy ATGMs
Mechanised anti-armour	NAMIS / Nag
Tank-launched precision engagement	INVAR
Beyond-line-of-sight attack	Loitering munitions and kamikaze drones
Reconnaissance	UAVs, thermal sights, LWCLU and other surveillance systems
Protection	Tank active protection systems and counter-UAS capabilities

This represents a much larger transformation than replacing one ATGM with another. The objective is to create multiple ways of detecting, fixing and destroying enemy armour. A tank formation may now have to contend with conventional anti-tank missiles, loitering munitions, precision artillery and unmanned reconnaissance long before it reaches direct-fire range. Conversely, India's own tanks increasingly require active protection and counter-drone support. Anti-armour warfare is therefore merging with the wider sensor-to-shooter battle.

---

12. The Infantry Is Becoming a Precision-Fire Node

The greatest tactical significance of Javelin may ultimately lie at the infantry level. Traditional infantry anti-tank weapons were largely defensive. Their role was to prevent enemy armour from overrunning infantry positions.

Modern ATGMs have a wider function. A fire-and-forget weapon combined with advanced thermal surveillance gives relatively small infantry teams an independent precision-strike capability against vehicles and fortified positions. This pushes precision engagement farther down the command hierarchy. It also complicates enemy planning. An adversary cannot assume that only specialised anti-tank formations possess the ability to destroy valuable armoured vehicles. The threat becomes more dispersed.

This does not eliminate tanks. The Ukraine war has repeatedly demonstrated that armour remains useful when properly integrated with infantry, engineering support, electronic warfare, drones and artillery. What has changed is the survivability environment in which armour operates. India's acquisitions appear to recognise this reality.

The future tank battle is increasingly a contest between armour protection, reconnaissance, electronic warfare, unmanned systems and distributed precision fires rather than a simple exchange between tank guns.

---

13. The Risks of Too Many Missile Families

There is nevertheless a danger in India's approach. Operating Spike, Javelin, MPATGM, Nag, INVAR and older missile families creates multiple requirements for training, maintenance, spares, storage, simulators and ammunition management. Different launchers cannot automatically use different missile families. The result can be increased logistical burden and difficulties in mass stockpiling. India therefore needs to distinguish between productive redundancy

and inefficient fragmentation.

Javelin makes strategic sense if it serves one or more clearly defined purposes such as rapidly filling an operational gap, creating a second production stream, supporting selected units or providing a technology and industrial benchmark. It becomes less attractive if it evolves into another small fleet maintained indefinitely without sufficient ammunition depth. The real measure of success will not therefore be whether India possesses Javelin. It will be whether the Army develops adequate missile stocks and clearly assigns the system within its force structure.

---

14. Co-Production Does Not Automatically Mean Strategic Autonomy

The Tata agreement will inevitably be presented as a major Make in India development. That description is partly justified. Indian assembly and component manufacture would create skills, manufacturing capacity and greater control over supply.

But strategic autonomy should be assessed by identifying the critical components that remain externally controlled. The current proposal specifically anticipates continued U.S. production of certain sub-assemblies and guidance electronics for shipment to India. If those components cannot be manufactured domestically, India remains exposed to export approvals and American supply-chain conditions. This does not make the agreement undesirable. Most modern defence production is internationally distributed.

It does mean that indigenous MPATGM production remains strategically important even if Javelin assembly becomes substantial. The two programmes provide different kinds of resilience. Javelin offers access to a mature global system. MPATGM offers the potential for greater national control. India benefits most if it retains both advantages.

---

15. CNAWS Assessment Matrix

Assessment	Probability	Confidence
Javelin will initially equip a limited number of selected Army formations	High	Moderate to High
Javelin is intended to replace the indigenous MPATGM programme	Low	High
India will place follow-on Javelin orders if initial fielding is successful	High	Moderate
Tata will establish Javelin final assembly and integration in India	High	Moderate to High
India will receive complete sovereign control over all Javelin technologies in the near term	Low	High
MPATGM will remain India's primary long-term indigenous man-portable ATGM programme	High	Moderate to High
Javelin production in India could eventually support exports or the global supply chain	Moderate to High	Moderate
Javelin acquisition alone will materially alter the India-Pakistan conventional balance	Low	High
The wider post-Sindoor precision-fire modernisation will materially improve Army lethality	High	High

India will continue operating multiple ATGM families rather than standardising immediately on one system	High	High

16. Outlook

India's Javelin acquisition is modest in immediate scale but potentially substantial in consequence. The missile provides a mature capability that the Army can field without waiting for a new development cycle. Its latest launcher provides surveillance capability beyond the missile-firing role. The system offers another supply chain alongside Spike and indigenous programmes. More importantly, the Tata-Javelin Joint Venture agreement creates the possibility that what begins as a small foreign military sale could evolve into a much larger manufacturing relationship.

This does not represent a retreat from Aatmanirbharta. The simultaneous progress of MPATGM suggests a more pragmatic model of self-reliance. India is increasingly willing to import a capability when operationally useful, insist upon domestic manufacturing where commercially feasible and continue developing an indigenous alternative where sovereign control is strategically important. That is a more mature approach than treating import substitution as an end in itself.

The greater transformation, however, lies beyond Javelin. India's Army is simultaneously investing in infantry ATGMs, Nag missile carriers, tank-launched missiles, loitering munitions, kamikaze drones, counter-UAS systems, surveillance and active protection for armour. These programmes point towards a battlefield in which every echelon becomes both a sensor and a precision shooter.

> *India is not buying 100 Javelins because 100 missiles will transform the balance against Pakistan or China. It is buying access to a mature capability, a modern launcher, an additional supply chain and potentially an international production ecosystem. At the same time, it is pushing its own MPATGM towards induction. The strategic logic is therefore not Javelin instead of MPATGM. It is Javelin plus MPATGM, backed by Nag, INVAR, loitering munitions, drones and increasingly sophisticated battlefield surveillance. That distinction is fundamental. The post-Sindoor lesson emerging across Indian procurement is that combat power cannot depend upon a small number of exquisite platforms or a single supply chain. Precision weapons need to be numerous, distributed and replaceable. If the current programmes mature as planned, the Indian infantryman will increasingly cease to be merely the soldier protecting armour from enemy infantry. He will become one of the principal threats to enemy armour himself.*