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First Indian MALE Drone Passes More Tests

Rustom-II, first Indian home-made Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) combat-reconnaissance drone successfully completed its maiden flight on March 21.

The Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) has an endurance of 24 hours and can conduct surveillance and reconnaissance missions for the country's armed forces.

The UAV can also be used as an unmanned armed combat vehicle on the lines of the US's Predator drone.

The test flight took place from Aeronautical Test Range (ATR), Chelakere, 250 km from Bangalore, which is a newly developed flight test range for the testing of UAVs and manned aircraft.

The flight accomplished the main objectives of proving the flying platform, such as take-off, bank, level flight and landing among others, a statement by the defence ministry said.

According to defenseworld.net, Rustom-II has been designed and developed by Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), the Bangalore-based lab of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian government Agency.

The UAV weighing two tons was put into air by a DRDO team and was remotely operated by the pilots from the armed forces. The test was conducted in operational configuration which means it is ready for batch production for the armed forces.

It is also the first R&D prototype, which has undergone certification and qualification for the first flight from the Center for Military Airworthiness & Certification (CEMILAC) and Directorate General of Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA).

India currently imports Israeli-made Heron drones and potentially has planned procurement of General Atomics drones for its armed forces' UAV requirements.

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