

Indian Army's mega Rs. 40,000cr modern weapon procurement plan finalized

Indian Army has finalized a Rs. 40,000cr infantry modernization plan to procure new weapons to replace its aging, obsolete ones.

Defense Ministry also approved the plan, under which Army would acquire 7 lakh rifles, 44,000 light machine guns, and 44,600 carbines.

Considering the security threats to India along the Pakistan and China borders, Army has been pressing for the procurement of various weapons.

Light Machine Guns Army to initially procure 10,000 LMGs

The Centre directed the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) to accelerate its work on different small arms, especially the light machine guns (LMGs).

Defense Ministry would also issue a new RFI (request for information) for procuring the LMGs, months after canceling a tender for 7.62mm caliber guns as there was only one vendor left after a series of field trials.

Army finalizes specifications for new 7.62mm assault rifle

The specifications for the new 7.62mm assault rifle have been finalized by Army. An official said: "The General Service Quality Requirements for the new assault rifle has been finalized. The procurement plan will soon be placed before the DAC (Defence Acquisition Council) for approval."

Rifles: Indian Army requires nearly 7 lakh rifles

Earlier in June, an assault rifle made by the state-run Ishapore Rifle Factory was rejected by the Indian Army after the guns failed during the firing tests.

Army has been witnessing a series of delays in procuring assault rifles owing to various reasons including the Army's failure to finalize the specifications.

It needs around 7-lakh 7.62x51mm assault guns for replacing INSAS rifles.

Carbines, LMGs Army ensures single vendor problem doesn't recur

Indian Army initiated the process for procuring nearly 44,600 carbines in June, about eight months after retracting a tender as a single vendor was left after field trials.

To ensure that the single-vendor situation doesn't arise again, Army has tweaked various specifications for the LMGs and battle carbines. Around six arms manufacturers, including some international firms, have responded to the government's RFI.

Defense Secretary calls a meeting

An official stated the combined cost of assault rifles, carbines, and LMGs would be in excess of Rs. 40,000cr. Also, he added the Defense Secretary is holding a meeting with all stakeholders to discuss on the DRDO missing several deadlines in finalizing the LMG.

Infantry Modernization Infantry modernization plan, Army's major initiative

A senior army official said the infantry modernization program would "significantly bolster the overall capability of the foot soldiers."

It was discussed at the recent Army Commanders conference; it was felt Army must be "in tune" with the evolving security threats facing India.

Saying that Army's deficiencies would be addressed, Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman added its modernization is a priority for the government.



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Indian Army finalises mega procurement plan to replace ageing weapons

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman conveyed to the Army during the conference that modernisation of the force was a priority for the government and all its "deficiencies" will be addressed to strengthen its combat capability.

The Army has finalised one of its biggest procurement plans for infantry modernisation under which a large number of light machine guns, battle carbines and assault rifles are being purchased at a cost of nearly Rs 40,000 crore to replace its ageing and obsolete weapons. The broad process to acquire around 7 lakh rifles, 44,000 light machine guns (LMGs) and nearly 44,600 carbines has been finalised and the defence ministry is on the same page with the Army in moving ahead with the procurement, official sources told PTI.

The world's second largest standing Army has been pressing for fast-tracking the procurement of various weapons systems considering the evolving security threats including along India's borders with Pakistan and China. Apart from kick-starting the procurement process, the government has also sent a message to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to expedite its work on various small arms, particularly on an LMG.

The sources said a fresh RFI (request for information) to procure the LMGs will be issued in the next few days, months after the defence ministry scrapped the tender for the 7.62 calibre guns as there was only one vendor left after a series of field trials. The plan is to initially procure around 10,000 LMGs. The Army has also finalised the specifications for a new 7.62 mm assault rifle and the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the defence ministry's highest decision making body on procurement, is expected to give the go-ahead for the much-needed procurement soon.

"The General Service Quality Requirements (GSQR) for the new assault rifle has been finalised. The procurement plan will soon be placed before the DAC for approval," said a senior official, who is part of the acquisition process. In June, the Army had rejected an assault rifle built by the state-run Rifle Factory, Ishapore, after the guns miserably failed the firing tests. The procurement of assault rifles has witnessed significant delays due to a variety of reasons including the Army's failure to finalise the specifications for it. The Army needs around 7 lakh 7.62×51 mm assault guns to replace its INSAS rifles.

The Army had issued RFI for the rifles in September last year and around 20 firms responded to it. An RFI is a process whose purpose is to collect information about capabilities of various vendors. In June, the Army had kick-started the initial process to procure around 44,600 carbines, nearly eight months after a tender for it was retracted, also due to single-vendor situation. Around half a dozen firms including a few global arms manufacturers have responded to the RFI.

Army sources said various specifications for the LMGs and battle carbines were tweaked to ensure that the problem of single vendor does not recur. The combined cost of the LMGs, assault rifles and carbines will be in excess of Rs 40,000 crore, said an official.

On DRDO missing a number of deadlines in finalising the LMG, an official said the defence secretary has called a meeting this week of all stakeholders to discuss the project. "The infantry modernisation plan is a major initiative of the Army and it will significantly bolster the overall capability of the foot soldiers," said a

senior army official. The issue was extensively discussed at the recently-concluded Army Commanders conference which felt modernisation of the Army must be in tune with the evolving security threat facing the country.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman conveyed to the Army during the conference that modernisation of the force was a priority for the government and all its “deficiencies” will be addressed to strengthen its combat capability.