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Defence Ministry fast-tracks purchase of Light Machine Guns and sniper rifles for soldiers

The Defence Acquisition Council cleared a proposal to procure 7.4 lakh assault rifles for the three services. It also approved procurement of 5,719 Sniper Rifles for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force at an estimated cost of Rs 982 crore

By Sushant Singh

Responding to a long-pending demand for equipping soldiers deployed on the borders with modern personal weapons, Defence Ministry on Tuesday cleared the procurement of sniper rifles and Light Machine Guns (LMGs) for the armed forces on a fast-track basis. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by the defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman accorded approval to Capital Acquisition Proposals of approximately Rs 15,935 crore.

According to a statement issued by the defence ministry, essential quantity of LMGs will be procured for the armed forces through the Fast Track Procedure at an estimated cost of over Rs 1819 crore. This procurement will meet the operational requirement of the troops deployed on the borders, while the proposal for balance quantity of LMGs will be undertaken under the 'Buy and Make (Indian)' categorisation.

The DAC also approved procurement of 5,719 Sniper Rifles for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force at an estimated cost of Rs 982 crore. While these high precision weapons will be bought with 'Buy Global' categorisation, the ammunition for these will be initially procured and subsequently manufactured in India, the statement said.

Last month, the DAC had cleared procurement of 72,400 assault rifles and 93,895 carbines on fast-track basis for Rs 3,547 crore to enable the defence forces to meet their immediate requirement for the troops deployed on the borders. With this, the DAC has fast-tracked procurement of the three main personal weapons for the soldiers, i.e., Rifles, Carbines and LMGs.

The DAC Tuesday also accorded approval for procurement of 7.4 lakh Assault Rifles for the armed forces. These rifles, which are likely of a different specification from the assault rifles for the borders being bought globally, will be 'Made in India' under the categorisation of 'Buy and Make (Indian)', through both Ordnance Factory Board and Private Industry at an estimated cost of Rs 12,280 crore, the statement added.

To enhance the anti-submarine warfare capabilities of Indian Naval Ships, the DAC accorded approval for the procurement of Advanced Torpedo Decoy Systems (ATDS) for the Indian Navy. The 'Marech' system, which has been developed indigenously by DRDO and has successfully completed extensive trial evaluations, will be produced by Bharat Electronics Limited, Bengaluru at an estimated cost of Rs 850 crore.