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DAC clears Rs 16000 cr to procure weapons for troops

In wake of terror attacks in Jammu & Kashmir, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on Tuesday approved a major proposal for acquiring more than 7,00,000 assault rifles, 5,700 sniper rifles, and almost 17,000 light machine guns (LMG). The acquisitions include 7.4 lakh new assault rifles and 16,500 light machine guns.

As reported by The Times of India in August a year ago, the defence ministry had "retracted" the tender or RFP (request for proposal) for the 7.62 mm calibre LMGs on the grounds that it had become a "single-vendor situation" with only Israeli Weapon Industries (IWI) left in the fray.

Chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the DAC approved acquisition of Light Machine Guns for the three services through the Fast Track Procedure at an estimated cost of over INR 1819 crore (US\$283 million).

The Ministry of Defence has given clearance to fast-track the purchase of 7,40,000 assault rifles that will cost Rs 12,280 crore.

The recent approval comes few days after the terror attack on the Sunjuwan Army camp and Karan Nagar in Jammu and Kashmir.

The sniper rifles will be bought under the "Buy Global" category, the ammunition for these weapons will be initially procured and subsequently manufactured in India.

In order to strengthen anti-submarine warfare capabilities of Indian Naval Ships, the DAC has accorded approval for the procurement of Advanced Torpedo Decoy Systems (ATDS) for the Navy as well.

The "Mareech" system, developed indigenously by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has successfully completed extensive trial evaluations. The systems will be procured by Bharat Electronics Limited in Bengaluru for an estimated cost of Rs 850 crore, they added.

The attacks were carried out by Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, both based in Pakistan.

The approval to the proposals come amid increasing hostilities by Pakistan along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir as well as China's aggressive posturing in several sectors along the almost 4,000-km-long Sino-India border.

The 72-day long face-off between the Indian Army and China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Doklam Plateau in western Bhutan from June 18 to August 28 brought to focus the protracted boundary dispute between the two nations.

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