Military to get 7.4 lakh rifles

Last shots:The INSAS rifles will be replaced by the new weapons.AKHILESH KUMAR

The Defence Acquisition Council on Tuesday gave approval for a series of proposals to shore up the Army's infantry firepower and other deals, together estimated at Rs. 15,935 crore.

"The DAC accorded approval for procurement of 7.4 lakh assault rifles for the three Services. These rifles will be 'Made in India' under the categorisation of 'Buy and Make (Indian)', through both the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and private industry at an estimated cost of Rs. 12,280 crore," the Ministry said in a statement.

Fast-track procedure

The other proposals approved include procurement of 17,000 light machine guns for the three Services through the fast-track procedure at over Rs. 1,819 crore and 5,719 sniper rifles for the Army and the Air Force for about Rs. 982 crore. While the high-precision rifles will be bought in the 'Buy Global' category, the ammunition will be initially procured and subsequently manufactured in India, the Ministry said.

The assault rifles will be of 7.62mm calibre and the carbines of 5.56mm calibre. The Army has been trying to replace the indigenous INSAS rifles.

The approval is the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN), the first step of the Defence Procurement Procedure. Despite desperate attempts by the Army, all these proposals had been repeatedly cancelled in the past.

Torpedo systems

To enhance the anti-submarine warfare capabilities of Naval Ships, the DAC approved the procurement of the "Mareech" advanced torpedo decoy systems.

The system has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and has successfully completed extensive trial evaluations. The systems will be produced by Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bengaluru, at an estimated cost of Rs. 850 crore.

Last month, the DAC cleared a separate proposal for 72,400 assault rifles and 93,895 close quarter battle (CQB) Carbines for Rs. 3,547 crore on a fast-track basis.

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