

Defence buys worth ₹7.8K cr get govt nod

AJAI SHUKLA

New Delhi, 24 August

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Thursday gave its go-ahead to capital acquisition proposals worth ₹7,800 crore.

In a meeting under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the MoD's apex body for clearing capital purchases, accorded the acceptance of necessity (AoN), one of the first steps of the procurement process, which constitutes an acceptance that the military needs the equipment being considered.

Once the DAC accords AoN for the equipment, the MoD can go ahead with tendering. Buying the equipment under the buy (Indian-Indian Designed, Developed and Manufactured) category, which means that the equipment is entirely designed and made in India, ensures quicker clearance by the MoD's acquisition wing.

The DAC also granted AoN for procurement and installation of an electronic warfare suite for the IAF's fleet of Mi-17 V5 Helicopters. The EW Suite is to be procured from Bharat Electronics (BEL) and is intended to enhance the survivability of the Russian-origin Mi-17 V5 fleet by the addition of Indian-origin electronics.

The DAC granted AoN for procurement of ground-based autonomous systems for the Army's mechanised infantry and armoured regiments. The GBAS are unmanned vehicles that autonomously carry out operations, such as casualty evacuation, surveillance, and delivery of logistics like ammunition, fuel, and spares. Since they carry out these battlefield functions without exposing troops to risk, further casualties are avoided.

The DAC also gave the go-ahead for procuring 7.62x51 mm Light Machine Guns (LMGs) and Bridge Laying Tanks. More LMGs will enhance the infantry's fighting capabilities. BLTs will enable faster movement of mechanised forces over canals and rivers.

AoN was also accorded to buy ruggedised laptops and tablets for the Indian Army under Project Shakti. All these procurements are to be made from Indigenous vendors only. The Navy's operational capability was also sought to be enhanced through the acquisition of weaponry for the MH-60R helicopters that operate from its large warships.