



# Concern Over Imports of Small Arms

## Why in News

Recently, the domestic small arms manufacturers have expressed their concern over continuing imports of small arms by the Government of India.

## Key Points

### ▪ No Big Orders for Domestic Manufactures:

- In the last few years, several Indian companies have invested in the small arms segment. The government also opened up the ammunition sector to the private sector, given the large requirement of small arms.
  - The Government of India has opened up the **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** up to 74% and on a case to case basis it is even 100%.
- The Indian companies are capable of making small arms with over 50% indigenous content and can also match the price and timelines.
- However, in dearth of any major order, the **Indian companies** are now looking for smaller orders from police and **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)**.
- Further, Indian **companies** are also **not considered for deals through Fast Track Procurement (FTP)**, which is limited to foreign vendors currently.

### ▪ Small Arms Import:

- Recently, the Indian Army has ordered 72,400 **SIG-716 assault rifles** from Sig Sauer of the U.S.A for the second time.
  - The Army has been attempting to replace the indigenous **Indian National Small Arms System (INSAS) rifles** with a modern rifle.
- Earlier, in February 2019, the Defence Ministry procured 72,400 SIG-716 assault rifles from Sig Sauer of the U.S.A through Fast Track Procurement (FTP), most of which were for the Army.
- The remaining demand of over 7 lakh rifles was to be met through the licensed manufacture of **Russian AK-203 rifles** in India through a joint venture with the **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)**. However, the final deal has been stuck over the issue of pricing.

### ▪ Demand of Domestic Manufactures:

- They are asking to give domestic companies the same level playing field as foreign companies to showcase their products and support **Make in India**.

## Way Forward

- By supporting its domestic manufactures, India can become the centre of excellence in the small arms sector. It will also reduce the import dependence of arms and ammunition.
- Promoting domestic manufacturing of small arms, is in line with the government's **Atma Nirbhar (self reliance) Bharat** push.
- Domestic manufacturing of arms will also create jobs for Indians.

[Source: TH](#)

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