



AK-203 Rifles

Why in News?

The Indo-Russian joint venture “**Indo-Russian Rifles Private Ltd (IRRPL)**” will be manufacturing over 6.1 lakh **AK-203 assault rifles** costing over ₹5,000 crore in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh.

- Training of Indian workers of the factory will begin shortly and the manufacturing process will reach **100% indigenisation in three years.**
- The AK-203 assault rifles will replace the India-made INSAS assault rifles and the older AK-47.

What do we know about the Contract?

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A Defence Upgrade

Korwa Rifle Factory in Amethi being upgraded to manufacture latest version of the Kalashnikov rifles

After multiple hurdles like payment issues over western sanctions and a complicated technology transfer agreement, the JV is back on track and equipment to make the rifles will be sent in two stages, officials said

Kalashnikov has delivered a batch of 70,000 AK-203 assault rifles made in Russia as part of the larger order

₹5,124-crore deal was signed between India and Russia last December

- **Indo-Russian Rifles Private Ltd (IRRPL)** was set up jointly between erstwhile **Ordnance Factory Board OFB** [now Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) and **Munitions India Limited (MIL)**] of India and **Rosoboronexport (RoE)** and concern **Kalashnikov** of Russia.
- The Rs 5,124 crore deal was signed between India and Russia in December 2021.
 - It is the **biggest defence deal between the two nations** in recent years. The deal has a clause for complete technology transfer. The rifles will also be exported to friendly foreign nations.
- Kalashnikov has already delivered a batch of **70,000 rifles made in Russia as part of the larger AK-203 assault rifles order.**

How has Indo-Russia Defence and Security Relations been?

- India-Russia military-technical cooperation has evolved **from a buyer-seller framework** to one

involving **joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems.**

- Both countries regularly conduct the Tri-Services exercise '**INDRA**'.
- **The joint programmes between India and Russia include:**
 - **BrahMos cruise missile programme**
 - 5th generation fighter jet programme
 - **Sukhoi Su-30MKI programme**
 - Ilyushin/HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft
 - **KA-226T twin-engine utility helicopters**
- **The military hardware purchased/leased by India from Russia includes:**
 - **S-400 Triumph**
 - Kamov Ka-226 200 to be made in India under the **Make in India** initiative
 - **T-90S Bhishma**
 - **INS Vikramaditya** aircraft carrier programme
- **Russia also plays a very important role in assisting the Indian Navy with its submarine programmes:**
 - Indian Navy's first submarine, '**Foxtrot Class**' came from Russia.
 - India is **dependent on Russia** for its **nuclear submarine programme.**
 - INS Vikramaditya, the sole aircraft carrier operated by India, is also Russian in origin.
 - Nine of the fourteen conventional submarines operated by India are Russian.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. **(2020)**

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