

Shock & Awe!

Enhanced Firepower for the Army



in 1999, the Regiment of Artillery had obtained the Chief of the Army Staff's approval to standardise the calibre of its guns at 155 mm so as to be able to engage targets deep as inside enemy territory and to reduce the logistics trail through commonality of ammunition. The Army plans to acquire a total of 2,820 guns of all types to replace obsolescent types to equip the new regiments that will form part of the newly raised XVII Mountain Strike Corps.

Although the Government of India had contracted for licence manufacture of the Bofors 155 mm/39-calibre FH-77B Bofors howitzer in the mid-1980s, these were never produced locally as the Bofors “scam” precluded further procurement or production and eventually brought down a government.

New acquisitions have slowly begun to now move forward with the government

On 8 April 2019, the Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) handed over the first four indigenously manufactured *Dhanush* 155mm/45 calibre guns to the army. Earlier, at a function held at the field firing ranges of the School of Artillery in Deolali, on 9 November 2018, two new weapons systems and a gun towing vehicle had been formally inducted into operational service in the Regiment of Artillery. These included the 155 mm/39 calibre M777 A2 Ultra-Light Howitzer of US-origin and the K-9 Vajra self-propelled 155 mm/52 calibre gun from South Korea.

Ever since the procurement of 400 Bofors 155 mm/39 calibre FH77B howitzers in the mid-1980s from Sweden, these two guns were the first modern weapon systems to be inducted into Indian artillery and mark the end of two decades of stagnation in the army's modernisation plans. Indian Army artillery is presently largely equipped with obsolescent weapons and equipment including the 105 mm Indian Field Gun, the 122 mm howitzer, the 130 mm Catapult self-propelled gun and 120 mm heavy mortars.

As per the Indian Army's Field Artillery Rationalisation Plan (FARP) formulated



K-9 Vajra, self-propelled artillery gun, displayed at the formal induction at Deolali (Photo: PTI)