

Made in India Armoured Recovery Vehicles to be procured for 'Arjun' tanks

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By Huma Siddiqui

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has given approval for the procurement of Armoured Recovery Vehicles (ARVs) for the Indian Army's Main Battle Tank (MBT) 'Arjun'.

These recovery vehicles are designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and would be manufactured by state-owned Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) for the Indian Army. These ARVs ensure efficient and speedy repair and recovery operations during combat.

According to the information available on the DRDO website Armoured Recovery Vehicle (ARV) was designed adapting the basic Vijayanta chassis to replace Sherman and Centurion ARVs. It has the Lifting capacity is of more than 8 ton and pulling capacity is more than 20 ton.

The Army uses ARVs for recovery and repair of broken-down T-72 tanks and BMP-1 and -2 infantry combat vehicles.

Currently, BEML-built ARVs which are being used by the Indian Army are based on Russian-made T-72 tank hulls, armed with a 12.7mm machine gun and equipped with a crane able to lift up to 15 tons.

The WZT-3M an ARV has been produced by Polish company Bumar and BEML and is actually an upgraded variant of the WZT-3 ARV. These are operated by both the Indian and Polish armies. The WZT-3M of the Indian Army is also referred to as ARV-3.

These vehicles are expected to recover the damaged main battle tanks (MBTs), tracked armoured vehicles and heavy vehicles from the battlefield. And reportedly are fitted with equipment which can help in carrying out minor repairs in the field or can be used in earth moving projects.

After a \$ 32 m agreement was inked between Bumar of Poland and BEML in 1999 for the production of these vehicles, 44 WZT-3M were delivered by Bumar in knocked down condition and were assembled at the state owned BEML facility in 2001 before being handed over to the Indian Army.

This was followed by two follow on contracts in 2002 for \$ 80 m for 80 WZT-3 M vehicles, in 2004 for 228. Indian Army had purchased 352 WZT-3 in three previous contracts from 1999 to 2005.

However, according to media reports, an order of \$ 275 m for 204 ARV-3/WZT-3M vehicles was scrapped in 2012 between Bumar and BEML.

And now Indian Army, pushing for indigenisation, will buy the DRDO developed ARV and built by BEML.

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