

Another shot at indigenous carbine

The DRDO-Ordnance Factory Board combine has designed a new close quarter Battle (CQB) carbine firing 5.56 x 45 mm NATO ammunition, for the Indian Army. The as yet unnamed new weapon designed by the Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE) and the Small Arms Factory Kanpur borrows from the INSAS IC design and has modifications like a machined receiver over the INSAS;s stamped and riveted body, a single picatinny rail to take an assortment of weapons sights and accessories.

Its designer say the weapon compiles with th Army's GSQRs and will be presented to them in six months.

The Army has been in the market for a new carbine (a compact weapon with a barrel shorter than an assault rifle) for over a decade to replace its 1960s-vintage 9 mm Sterling sub-machine guns. The INSAS carbine, the third variant in a family of light machine gun, assault rifle variant, failed to pass trials a decade ago. In 2008 the Army split the massive order - ₹3,200 crore global RFP for an imported CQB carbine and a ₹1,200 crore order for a Indian designed and developed 'protective carbine'.

The Army has struggled to shortlist contenders after year of trials. In 2018, the imported carbine purchase was scrapped after a resultant single vendor where only one gun maker qualified.

UAE-based small arms maker Caracal emerged the lowest bidder in a separate contest for a fast track procurement of 94,000 carbines.