

Army scouts for night vision devices for LMGs

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Even as the Army prepares to replace its INSAS standard issue rifle with a contemporary weapon, it has woken up to the requirement of advanced night vision devices for the rifle's light machine gun (LMG) variant that has been in service for close to two decades.

Advanced night-vision device (ANVD) is an opto-electronic device that allows high resolution images of the area in the user's field of view to be produced in conditions of very low light or total darkness.

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INSAS LMG without an ANVD is highly inaccurate. The incorporation of ANVD will enable a soldier to acquire targets during night for all types of operations and thereby improving his combat efficiency," a request for information (RFI) floated by the army this month states. "Also the ANVD will enable to identify and detect a target in adverse weather conditions, which is a limitation in absence of ANVD," the RFI adds.

The Army's requirement is that the device should be able to detect a human at a distance of at least 500 m and a vehicle at 1,200 m and should enable the user to identify them at a distance of 350 m. It should also have the feature to record and store images as well as videos.

The INSAS, an acronym for the DRDO designed Indian Small Arms System, comprises a rifle and an LMG, both having the same 5.56 mm calibre. The LMG

is a light support weapon that features a longer and heavier barrel along with a bipod. The LMG also has a longer range of 700 m as compared to 400 m for the rifle. While the LMG has a 30-round box magazine, it can also use the rifle's 20-round magazine.

The Army wants to replace the INSAS with a 7.62 mm weapon that has longer ranger and higher kill probability. After a long drawn process, the Russian AK-103 assault rifle was selected. Some units deployed in forward areas and counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir have also started getting the new SIG 716 rifle.