

Amethi-Made AK-203 Rifle to Bolster Indian Army's Firepower



The Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) factory in Korwa, Amethi, is rapidly advancing its production of the AK-203 assault rifle, a weapon poised to become the standard frontline rifle for the Indian Army. With a formidable firing rate of 700 rounds per minute and an effective range of 800 meters, this modern iteration of the iconic Kalashnikov series is a cornerstone of India's "Make in India" defense initiative.

The AK-203, nicknamed 'Sher' in India, is replacing the older INSAS rifles, which have served the Indian armed forces for decades but faced limitations in modern combat scenarios. The ₹5,200 crore deal signed with Russia in July 2021 mandates the production of over 600,000 AK-203 rifles. So far, approximately 48,000 rifles have been delivered, with another 7,000 expected in the coming weeks and an additional 15,000 by December of this year.

A significant achievement for the IRRPL, a joint venture with 50.5% Indian and 49.5% Russian shareholding, is the rapid indigenization of the rifle's components. Currently, 50% of the rifle's parts are domestically sourced, and the company aims to achieve 100% indigenization by the end of 2025. This commitment to local manufacturing not only boosts India's self-reliance in defense but also creates a robust ecosystem of domestic vendors. Major General SK Sharma, CEO and MD of IRRPL, stated, "If you ask a soldier, then his most reliable friend is an assault rifle. AK-203 will be the most reliable thing in the future." He added that "every material now has an alternate source in India," emphasizing the meticulous quality control systems being developed at the facility.

The Amethi plant, spanning 8.5 acres and currently employing over 260 staff, including Russian experts, plans to increase its workforce to 537, with 90% being local hires. Production is slated to significantly ramp up from 2026, reaching 12,000 rifles per month, which translates to one rifle every 100 seconds. This accelerated production schedule means the entire order of over 600,000 rifles is projected to be delivered by December 2030, nearly 22 months ahead of the original October 2032 deadline.

Beyond fulfilling domestic requirements, the IRRPL is also eyeing export opportunities to friendly nations. This forward-looking approach positions the Amethi-made AK-203 as not just a critical asset for India's defense but also a potential export success, showcasing India's growing capabilities in advanced small arms manufacturing.