‘Sher’ – India’s First Fully Indigenous AK-203 Rifle to be Delivered by December 2025

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Overview

- The much-awaited **first fully indigenous AK-203 assault rifle**, christened **‘Sher’ (Lion)**, will be delivered to the Indian Army by **December 31, 2025**.
- Production is being handled by **Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL)**, a joint venture between:
    - **India:** Advanced Weapons & Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) & Munitions India Limited (MIL)
    - **Russia:** Rosoboronexport (RoE) & Concern Kalashnikov (CK) *(Indian stake: 50.5%; Russian stake: 49.5%)*
- **India** is the **first country** to produce the **AK-200 series** rifles indigenously.

Contract Details

- **Total Rifles Ordered:** 6,01,427
- **Contract Value:** ₹5,200 crore
- **Contract Signed:** December 2021
- **Scheduled Completion:** December 2032
- **Revised Completion:** Mid-2030 (22 months ahead of schedule)

Production & Delivery Updates

- **48,000 rifles** delivered so far (50% indigenous content).
- **Next Deliveries:**
    - **7,000 rifles** in the next 2–3 weeks.
    - **15,000 rifles** by December 2025.
- **First 100% indigenous batch** of **‘Sher’ rifles**:

    - Delivery Date: **December 31, 2025**

- **Upcoming 70,000 rifles** (with 70% indigenous content) to be delivered within five months.
- **Target Production (from next year):**
    - **1.5 lakh rifles annually**, of which:
        - **1.2 lakh rifles** for the Army.
        - **30,000 rifles** for paramilitary forces, state police, and exports.

Why AK-203 ‘Sher’?

- **Replacing:** INSAS rifles (in service for over 30 years).
- **Advantages over INSAS and AK-47:**
    - Higher firepower and durability.
    - Lighter and more compact.
    - Enhanced battlefield adaptability.

AK-203 ‘Sher’: Key Specifications

Feature	Details
Rate of Fire	700 rounds per minute
Effective Range	800 metres
Calibre	7.62×39 mm
Magazine Capacity	30 rounds
Weight (without magazine)	3.8 kg (AK-47: 4.3 kg)
Length (without stock)	705 mm (INSAS: 960 mm)
Features	Telescopic buttstock, improved recoil control, modern optics compatibility

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Deployment Areas

- Will serve as the **standard weapon for Indian Army’s infantry**, particularly in:
    - **Northern & Western Borders**
    - **Line of Control (LoC)**

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- **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**

Export Interest

- Several countries in **Southeast Asia** and **Africa** have expressed interest in purchasing AK-203 rifles from India.
- **18 Indian states, union territories**, and **paramilitary forces** have also placed requisition requests.

Strategic Significance

- A major milestone in the **Make in India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat** initiatives.
- Strengthens India’s position as a **defence manufacturing hub**.
- Reduces dependency on imports, with significant export potential.

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