

# Finally, Indian Army gets bullet-proof helmets

wait ends; now intends purchase 50,000 jackets

**HI: For the first 5 years, the Indian Army received 7,500 new helmets to protect its soldiers.**

The first batch has arrived at the ordnance depots, a batch of 30,000 helmets is expected by 2017 end, more than one lakh helmets are handed over to the

army by mid-2019.

The army had placed a Rs 170-crore order for 1,58,279 helmets to Kanpur-based firm MKU in order to replace the standard issue Model 1974 infantry combat helmets.

Of the 1.58 lakh new helmets, more than 50,000 would be in commander configuration with in-built communica-

tion, set up to make them compatible with three types of radio sets being used by the soldiers, army sources told *DH*.

Within weeks of receiving these helmets, the army ordnance depots issued nearly 2,500 of them to the troops leaving for a UN peacekeeping mission duty.

### Extensive testing

A more extensive testing with 6,000 randomly picked helmets is being planned at the Terminal Ballistic Research

Laboratory once these protective head gears are received.

Apart from ballistic protection from the rounds, the helmets come with nearly 40% lower Behind Armour Blast Trauma, which was a compelling factor for the upgrade.

The army opted for these helmets based on their strength and coverage, fit with memory foam padding that rules out the need for constant adjustments (dangerous in an active combat scenario) and

the ability to take on accessories.

"These would be given to the soldiers on counter-terrorism duties as well as to those deployed along the Line of Control or near the Line of Actual Control," said an officer.

In the 11th plan period (2007-2011), the government approved the purchase of 3,28,214 ballistic helmets for the Indian armed forces.

This includes 13,981 helmets for the navy. However, the first order was placed for around

1.58 lakh helmets.

The soldiers on counter-insurgency and border guarding duties are short of good quality protective gears like bullet-proof jackets and helmets, which attracted criticism from Parliament several times.

After failing to purchase 1.86 lakh bullet-proof jackets through the normal route in the past seven years, the army is now purchasing 50,000 jackets through an emergency route.

**DH News Service**