

Thales, MKU to co-develop weapons for Indian Army

Optronic devices, rifles will be made at UP facilities

OUR BUREAU
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Thales, a €15.8-billion French company, and Kanpur-based defence equipment manufacturer MKU Ltd will together develop and produce optronic devices and F90 close quarter battle (CQB) rifles.

Both products, to be manufactured at MKU's facilities in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, will be offered to the Indian Army and homeland security forces under the 'Make in India' initiative.

Emmanuel De Roquefeuil, Vice-President and Country Director, India, told newsmen that the products co-developed by the alliance will en-

hance night fighting capabilities of the Indian Army and homeland security forces.

The alliance envisages manufacturing of optronics equipment, including weapon sights, night vision goggles, hand-held thermal imagers and thermal infrared sensor engine for soldier systems, and other image intensification and thermal imaging systems for soldiers and platforms.

New plant

For weapons, MKU will set up an assembly and manufacturing plant for the carbine version of F90 assault rifle, combat-proven and already in service with the Australian Defence Forces. Light, balanced and accurate, the F90CQB developed with MKU will be well suited to Indian conditions and requirements, says a joint press release. Roquefeuil was

and test facilities for Electro-Optics in India.

Revenue growth

The Indian company, which is supplying night vision devices to Special Forces, CAPFs and State Police Forces, is executing a Defence Ministry contract for 158,279 ballistic helmets for the Army and Navy, the release said.

Roquefeuil said the company's revenue in India was around €300 million in 2017, and growing above the industry average in different sectors.

Manufacturing hub

The company has been in India since 1953, and employs around 600 providing technologies and expertise in the Defence, Transport and Aerospace markets.

"Our aim is to help the In-

dian industry to transform India into a global design and manufacturing hub. India is one of the three top priority countries for Thales. We are developing local partnerships and co-developing products to address Indian market and export from India," he said.

Other ventures

In India, Thales has a joint venture with BEL for civilian and select ground-based military radars.

It has been providing Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd avionics equipment for platforms that the Indian company is designing and has partnered with Samtel for military avionics and airborne sensor systems.

The French company has also been working with I&T Technology Services and Reliance Defence Ltd, he said.



Emmanuel De Roquefeuil, Vice-President and Country Director, India, Thales India Pvt Ltd

provides services for the aerospace, defence, transportation and security markets, while MKU has manufacturing

non-committal on time frame of the new plant.

Thales designs and builds electrical systems and