

DEFEXPO 2018

MKU inks two MoUs with Thales

HUMA SIDDIQUI
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MKU, A LEADING defence company in India with a footprint in over 100 countries has inked two MoUs with the French company Thales for strategic co-operation in the development and production of optronic devices and F90 close quarter battle (CQB) rifles for soldiers on Wednesday.

Talking to *FE*, Neeraj Gupta, MD of MKU said, "We are also offering MKU-ABBS AMPS technology (Advanced Active Blast Protection) to effectively protect against under-belly mine threats for the civilian, police, and unprotected paramilitary vehicles may have some level of protection from ballistic threats."

"To counter the threat from Vehicle Global Acceleration (VGA) MKU-ABBS technology employs patented VGAM (Vehicle Global Acceleration Mitigation) system. This system works using the patented LRM (Linear Rocket Motor)," he added.

The optronic devices will be co-developed by Thales and MKU and both the optronic devices and F90 rifles will be



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

According to Neeraj Gupta, MD of MKU, "This partnership will not only focus on meeting the requirements of our forces in India, but will also look at exporting the products to other parts of the world."

Alex Cresswell, senior executive vice-president for land & air systems at Thales said, "This co-development partnership reaffirms our commitment to India and is the result of our ambition to support soldiers on operations."

The strategic co-operation for optronic devices between Thales and MKU is committed to enhancing the night fighting capabilities of the Indian Army and homeland security

forces. It envisages manufacturing of optronic equipment including weapon sights, night vision goggles, handheld thermal imagers and thermal infrared sensor engine for soldiers, and other image intensification and thermal imaging systems for soldiers and platforms respectively.

Both companies have also planned to cooperate so that MKU could set-up an assembly and manufacturing plant in India for the carbine version of the F90 assault rifle, combat-proven and already in service with Australian Defence Forces.

"Light, balanced and accurate, the F90CQB (Close Quarter Battle) developed with MKU will be well suited to Indian conditions and requirements. It has state-of-the-art manufacturing and test facilities for electro-optics in India that complies to JSS 55555 & MIL 810G standards," a company official told *FE*.

The company, which is already supplying night vision devices to special forces, CAPFs and state police forces in India, is participating in various tenders from the tri-services under MoD and CAPFs under MHA.