

Interview | MKU

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— Director Domestic Sales, MKU Pvt Ltd, Vaibhav Gupta

How do you see the ballistic market grow globally and in India?

The global market for ballistic protection gear has been growing, especially in the Asia Pacific and Middle-east Africa regions. This is mainly due to a rise in asymmetric warfare and increasing unrest in the region. The focus on modernisation of the security forces has given a fillip to the Indian market. We feel this trend will continue in the coming years. In fact, it is now a well-known fact that India is amongst the largest markets for defence equipment.

Have you tied up with some foreign companies for 'Make in India'? Do you think this will give a fillip to the Indian defence industry?

'Make in India' has been MKU's mantra for long. We have always believed in acquiring the latest manufacturing techniques and endeavoured to bring the latest technology into the country. We entered into a joint venture with EIS Electronics GmbH and set up a state-of-the-art manufacturing unit in India to make electrical wiring harnesses for aerospace and defence applications. This unit has been manufacturing electrical looms since 2013 for global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). The company has successfully forayed into the manufacture of loom assemblies for legacy systems of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

We are also setting up a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility for electro optical devices in India. At the DefExpo we will showcase an extensive range of electro optical devices for the first time.

The 'Make in India' initiative of the Prime Minister is indeed a step in the right direction. It has brought the attention of global OEMs on India and they are now keen to come to India.

Please give details of your armouring programmes for the forces.

At MKU we are focused on developing 'light weight armour solutions' for



providing armour solutions for various types of helicopters including Mi 17, Mi 8, UH 1D, NH 90 among others. In fact, we have provided solutions for over 250 helicopters so far.

Tell us about your foray into the homeland security market.

We provide body armour for the homeland security market. It has been our endeavour to constantly innovate and provide solutions keeping in mind the exacting demands of the modern forces. Through continuous innovation in manufacturing techniques and use of modern materials, we have been able to not only reduce the weight of body armour considerably, we have also been able to make it more ergonomic.

Which are the new technologies you have patented in the last few years?

We were the first company in India and one of the very few outside the US to get NIJ 06 certification for its body armour. We own the patent for the 'Quick Release Mechanism' that forms an integral part of our 'Instavest', a quick release bullet-proof jacket. We have now introduced 'MUKUT', the top of the line helmet which incorporates the 'RHT technology' for reduced trauma and features 'MACS' a modular system for integration of various equipment on the helmets. Through our own 'Gen 6' technology we have been able to produce armour panels that are 40 per cent lighter than other standard panels.

What does MKU have to offer for the BMS programme?

Network-centric Integrated Combat Soldier System (NICS) is MKU's answer to the needs of the modern day soldier. The NICS system offers protection with minimum weight burden and simultaneously keeps the soldier connected with his team at all times in the combat theatre, offering higher degree of Situational Awareness with Improved Vision and Survivability quotient. ||

various land, sea and air platforms. Our team of engineers in India and Germany has introduced Modular Schutz Technik (MOST), which is a modular armour solution primarily for aircraft. It enables retro-fitting of armour on board platforms without necessitating structural changes.

Our engineers have come up with 'Generation 6' technology through which it has become possible to reduce the weight of armour panels by almost 40 per cent compared to other standard solutions. Till date, we have provided solutions for over 2,000 platforms globally.

There are a number of vehicle programmes in the offing in India. Do you have any plans to support these?

Yes, there are some very big ticket vehicle programmes like the FICV, LAMV among others which are in the offing. We have already developed and successfully tested a number of solutions to meet with the ballistic requirements of the programmes. A special focus area has been the development of light weight armour solutions for various applications including helicopters and smaller armoured vehicles. At MKU we have been