

mku[®]

MAKING **INDIA** PROUD



more than
25 years of protecting
people and platforms



Trusted by more
than 230 forces
over 100 countries

Flying High

MKU's strength lies in its strict emphasis on quality

ESTABLISHED IN 1985, MKU HAS pioneered the advent of light weight armoring solutions and has provided protection to over 1.5 million soldiers and over 1500 platforms (including Land vehicles, aircraft and naval vessels). The company has developed over a 1000-plus solutions for 230 armed forces in more than 100 countries. In an interview to Rehana Siddiqui of Asian Defence & Diplomacy, Neeraj Gupta, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer at MKU, talks about his company's strength and future plans.

ADD: What are some of the key strengths of MKU?

Gupta: MKU's infrastructure spans across two units in India and one in Germany. Together, these units have a capacity to produce over 200,000 helmets, 150,000 ballistic jackets and 300,000 armour inserts for personnel. We can manufacture 72,000 sqm of armour panels annually for platforms. Our company is a registered NATO supplier and has certified quality management systems conforming to ISO 9001-2008 and AS-9100-2009. Its armor panels are tested to conform to MIL 810 G standards.

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Due to its exposure in the global markets, MKU has acquired a keen understanding of the ground scenarios, environmental conditions and threat scenarios faced by soldiers and law enforcement personnel. This, coupled with its in-house development centers, its access to the latest technology, its in-house ballistic testing facility and its wide ranging domain expertise puts it in a unique situation to develop and offer, custom solutions that are technologically superior and match the specific requirements of its customers. We offer various ballistic packages including soft and hard armour that is NIJ 0101.06 certified by National Institute of Justice, US. This kind of certification is issued only after stringent testing to ensure that the ballistic performance of the jacket is maintained over a period of time even after rugged use.

ADD: What kind of opportunities are there for MSMEs in the defence sector?

Gupta: There can be no denying the fact that MSMEs can play an important role in the defence sector. They can not only complement the large industries by providing them a host of supplementary products but can also use their resources to provide them critical technological components. We have the experience of the auto industry in India and how from being the ancillary to the auto manufacturers, the auto component manufacturers have today carved out a place for themselves in the global market and this industry has become a major revenue earner for India.

ADD: How much weightage do you give to R&D to hold on to your technology edge?

Gupta: Our R&D spend is almost 4%-5% of our turnover. We have gone ahead and started a Technology Development Centre in Kanpur recently to focus more completely on product and technology development.

ADD: How do you plan to grow your international footprint?

Gupta: At MKU exports play an important role in our overall business plans. We feel to be sustainable in this sector we must have a business model which places importance on exports. Over the years we have gone out into the world and through participation in international events, meetings and other ventures we have been able to establish an international presence. This has also been supported by the fact that we have been able to provide technologically acceptable products to our clients over the years. We intend to continue to do so and tap the hitherto untapped and newer markets to expand our reach globally.

ADD: What kind of products your company specialises in?

Gupta: MKU offers expert solutions for protection and surveillance. It offers Light Weight Body Armour, Ballistic Helmets, Ballistic Shields, De-Mining Suits, Bomb Blankets for army and law enforcement personnel.

The company offers Light Weight precision cut composite panels & kits for armouring of land, air and sea platforms. It offers complete project management including design, prototyping, manufacturing and integration of the armour onto the platforms.

We have also developed innovative solutions and product lines. Instavest from MKU is one example. The Quick Release Jacket features an innovative design that allows it to be divested from the body with a single fluid action. Unlike some similar offerings, not only can the vest be divested quickly and easily, it is as simple to put it back on within seconds. This feature is in growing demand globally and is required in extreme situations faced by the soldiers.

The Boltfree technology employed by MKU in manufacturing its range of Ballistic Helmets is unique as the absence of bolts inside on the helmet eliminates the risk of

injuries due to secondary fragmentation and offers uniform protection across the helmet shell.

ADD: What is your strategy towards securing a larger share of the Indian defense market?

Gupta: In the last couple of years there has been a paradigm shift in the security focus in India. More attention is being paid to the threat from asymmetric warfare. It has been realized that the security needs to be beefed up against internal threats and threat from terrorists. This has been reflected in a considerable increase in the internal security budget of the country.

We are uniquely positioned to take advantage of this strategic shift in requirement and have over the years invested in technology and state-of-the-art equipment to provide best in class equipment and protection solutions. MKU has been investing in R&D efforts towards developing lighter and safer solutions for personnel and platform protection. With the latest technological and R&D facilities in India and Germany, a state-of-the-art ballistic lab and over 1000 proven solutions, MKU remains ahead of the technological curve both in relation to quality excellence as well as providing price point advantage.

ADD: Can you talk about the success of the company in the international markets?

Gupta: MKU Pvt. Ltd., Kanpur based leading manufacturer of ballistic protection solutions has been awarded an order worth US\$25 million by the Republic of Ecuador. This is the largest order for us so far. We have been working with countries in the Latin America region including Brazil, Peru, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, and Paraguay. Infact since last seven years the company has been the sole suppliers of body armour to Brazil. The company also has the contract to armour M-17 helicopters for the Mexican Navy and Police. We are also present in several African countries. □