

India's first private missile production facility unveiled

India's first private sector missile sub-systems manufacturing facility, a joint venture between the \$2.5 billion Kalyani Group and Israel's Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd., was inaugurated near Hyderabad on Thursday.

To begin with, the Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS) plant will make anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) Spike and the production is expected to begin in a few weeks, Kalyani Group chairman Baba N. Kalyani said. Besides supplying to the Indian Army, the plan is to export to South East Asian countries, he added.

Advanced equipment

Formed in line with the 'Make in India' initiative of the Centre and the policy to encourage private sector participation in defence production, the 51:49 joint venture will develop a wide range of advanced capabilities.

These include command control and guidance, electro-optics, remote weapon systems, precision guided munitions and system engineering for system integration. The plant would employ more than 300 engineers and provide indirect employment to 1,000 people.

Addressing the media ahead of the inauguration, Mr. Kalyani said 60-70 crore had been invested in the plant.

Going forward, once orders start flowing, "we will invest more... also looking to [make] other products, he said, adding that Spice glider bombs used by the Air Force would be the next.

On the plant's ATGM capacity, Rafael Advanced Defence Systems president and CEO Maj. Gen. (retired) Yoav Har-Even said: "We are speaking in thousands of the air-to-surface missiles."

The localisation content is 90% and most of the vendors are in and around Hyderabad, Mr. Kalyani said and thanked the Telangana Government for "pulling out all stops" that led to the plant being set up in 10 months. The JV opted for Hyderabad in view of the defence eco-system it played host to and Telangana reigning on topping of the Ease of Doing Business rankings.

Telangana Industries and IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao, said that more than 30,000 researchers and scientists and 1,000 MSME units in and around the city were working in the areas of defence systems. "Hyderabad and Telangana have all the trappings to become the number one destination for defence investment and defence electronics in the country," he said.

KRAS, which aims to be a one-stop solution provider to locally re-design, develop, re-engineer and manufacture various land and airborne products and systems in India, has plans for expansion. The phase-II will be undertaken at another industrial location in Hyderabad, the company said.

Earlier, Mr. Rao inaugurated the 24,000 sq.ft. facility in the presence of Israeli Ambassador Daniel Carmon.

The service is available in Bengaluru, Kolkata and Chennai, operating 500 bicycles

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