



Clip: 1 of 1

Deepti Electronics bullish on growth of military drones

In talks with Defence Ministry, UAV makers to bag orders for supplying tech solutions

NAYANIMA BASU

New Delhi, April 30

JK Organisation's defence business Deepti Electronics and Electro Optics Pvt Ltd (DELOPT) is in talks with the Ministry of Defence to bag an order under which it will be supplying complete technical solutions to drone makers that will be used by the Indian Army.

"As such the product would not be ordered directly by MoD, but by UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) or drone manufacturers supplying to the MoD. We are in discussion with both MoD and the manufactur-

ers and hope to get orders shortly," Rajesh Kakkar, Chief Executive of Global Strategic Technologies Ltd, which drives JK Group's initiative in the aerospace, defence and homeland security space, told *BusinessLine* in an interview.

DELOPT, which had recently inked an agreement with Canadian drone-maker MicroPilot, had been making electro-optics, day and night vision cameras, thermal imager, automated target tracker and other key products that are mounted on drones. But, now the company will be offering overall

solution for UAV platforms.

Kakkar said the company has also proposed to the government the advantages of using drones in key strategic areas that might lessen the job of the country's Border Security Force (BSF).

"There are several surveillance applications where drones can be very effectively utilised. Border, coastline, deep sea, internal Maoist affected areas, difficult to access hills and valleys and an observation post in the sky are some of the applications. With appropriate electro-optic payloads, they can do many things that humans cannot," he added.

The company is also bullish on some of the programmes to

build indigenous drones and UAVs jointly by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).

"For one, the DRDO and HAL projects are typically for very large and complex platforms and most Indian OEMs are currently working on micro and mini UAVs. Secondly, the large projects again require several technology products, which DRDO and HAL would source from the small private sector players who have high-end innovative products. MicroPilot autopilots, our own day and night cameras, stabilisation systems, automatic target trackers are examples of

products that would be required by the large platforms too," Kakkar said.

According to certain estimates, the Indian UAV market, both civilian as well as military, is worth nearly ₹2,000 crore and is expected to grow at least three-fold in the next five years. However, players manufacturing and operating drones continue to face immense challenges due to lack of a proper policy.

"The lack of a policy prevents potential users from using an important tool that is used the world over. Naturally, this is a big dampener in the explosive growth that could and should be seen in India," Kakkar, who is also Director of DELOPT, said.