

Punj Lloyd ties up with Israeli co to manufacture assault rifles in India

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Malanpur (Gwalior), May 4:

Punj Lloyd has announced its collaboration with Israel Weapon Industries (IWI) to manufacture small weapons here under a complete technology transfer arrangement.

"This is the first opportunity for the country to get its own 'Made in India' small arms. The need of the hour is to replace the country's defence weapons with sophisticated and high precision products," said Atul Punj, Chairman, Punj Lloyd, while inaugurating the plant here.

The plant will manufacture small weapons like the Tavor assault rifle with bullpup configuration. This is already in use by special forces in the country.

Other deadly small arms such as the Galil sniper rifle and the Negev light machine gun will also be made here under the 'Make In India' campaign.

"Israel's Ministry of Defence fully supports this cooperation and will continue to support the transfer of technology and information also for the betterment of improved advanced tools. Israel and India consider their defence industry cooperation as a monumental step forward," said Michel Ben-Baruch, Head of SIBAT, Israel's Ministry of Defence.

IWI is a member of the SK Group and all their weapons have been battle proven around the world. These include the TAVOR assault rifles, three calibre X95, NEGEV light machine guns, UZI SMG and JERICHO pistols.

The plant will manufacture these weapons and export them to IWI, which will then sell it to other countries approved by both the governments of India and Israel.

The Ministry of Defence is yet to place an order for these small weapons for the Indian Army although the paramilitary forces use some small arms like the Tavor.

The Tavor was used during the surgical strikes against Pakistan in September last year.

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(This article was published on May 4, 2017)