

# Defence Ministry to rope in industry to leverage Artificial Intelligence

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Chennai, August 17

The Defence Ministry will soon come up with a detailed roadmap on working closely with the industry on leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) — latest technology that emphasises on creation of intelligent machines that work and react like humans — in Armed Forces, said Ajay Kumar, Secretary, Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence.

A task force, headed by Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran to study use and application of AI in military, recently gave its recommendations, which has been converted into a Draft Executive Order. Consultation is underway with different wings of the Defence Ministry on this, he said at a CII conference on Aerospace & Defence Manufacturing Technologies on the Theme: Fostering a Competitive, Innovative and Robust Industry.

### Big driver

"AI is a big driver in all our platforms. We have already asked Defence PSUs to come up with suggestions as to where they can start leveraging in AI. Developing AI capabilities is absolutely essential part of leading the next generation innovation



**Tech talk** Ajay Kumar (left), Secretary, Department of Defence Production, and Jayant D Patil, Whole-time Director (Defence Business) and Member of the Board, L&T, at a CII conference in Chennai on Friday **BIJOY GHOSH**

thrust," he said. It is not possible to have one team approach to develop AI applications. There should be greater industry and public-private-partnership in terms of developing technology, he added.

Innovation in Defence is absolutely the hallmark where this industry is going to be. "We must leverage power of technology, capabilities of IT industry and integrate both with the Defence's requirements," he said.

On leveraging the strengths of start-ups, Kumar said the Ministry has already started the process of working closely with start-ups to leverage their strength in Defence and aerospace sectors. Eleven challenges have been given to

them, and for each challenge there is a grant of ₹1.5 crore available for developing prototypes.

On indigenisation in the Defence sector, Kumar said nearly ₹60,000 crore worth of spares, components and sub-assemblies are imported, and there is a huge opportunity to make them in India.

To support the local industry, the Ministry will notify any part or component that is required by Defence PSU and Armed Forces. Indian industries capable of producing it under Public Procurement Order will be given preference. The Ministry, in the last two weeks, notified 77 such items, and another 30 are to be notified soon," he said.

Rajinder Singh Bhatia, President and CEO, Defence & Aerospace, Kalyani Group, said success of manufacturing and 'Make in India' will happen with million of new start-ups to come up, and not by just a few large companies. While India is among the top five countries having start ups they are mostly in sectors like electronics, IT, IoT while Defence and aerospace start-ups are not there.

### Create ecosystem

In Israel, outside the top universities every house and flat is a technology/start-up centre bringing new technology. India too has talent but the ecosystem is missing here. While the technologies in Israel is translated in financial value quickly while this is not happening in India. "We need to create such an ecosystem in India. If we show the opportunities for start ups in Defence and Aerospace, they will come to this sector," he said.

According to Jayant D Patil, Whole-Time Director (Defence Business) and Member of the Board, Larsen & Toubro, said, "we talk far too much of our failures than of our success stories. We need to celebrate success. Amazing success stories in Defence is not talked about."