



Trade-Technology E-Zine 31

(Centre for International Trade in Technology)

Pennar Ind eyes expansion in Africa, Russia & West Asia

.Pennar Industries plans its pre-engineered buildings business to expand in Africa, Russia and West Asia by increasing capacity from 30,000 to 50,000 tonnes. The revenue targeted is Rs 180 crore at an EBITDA margin of 15%. The Rs 5,000-crore pre-engineered buildings business in India is growing at a rate of 20% annually. For engineered products, Pennar also plans to increase capacity utilisation at its new rotary compressor housing manufacturing line at Isnapur near Hyderabad from the current level of seven lakh units annually. The company is looking at increasing revenues by nearly 20% to Rs 540 crore. In the heavy-engineered products segment, the objective is to optimise production, and Pennar expects to earn Rs 280 crore this year, up 33% from last fiscal. In the infrastructure business, there are plans to enhance product tonnage for electrostatic precipitator electrodes through 90% capacity utilisation. In the process, growth is targeted at 15 % to Rs 180 crore.

(The Hindu Business Line, 07 August 2010)

New mobile technology can cut biosurveillance cost by 50%

A new mobile-based technology that generates real time data and aids much faster detection of disease outbreak promises to reduce the cost of biosurveillance in the country by almost half. This technology, pilot-tested in a block of Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu, is in the process of being scaled up. It is being jointly monitored by Sri Lanka-based technology think tank LIRNEasia, Rural Technology and Business Incubator (RTBI) of IIT Madras and National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bangalore.

Harnessed on a larger scale, this technology could prove immensely useful in mapping the spread and peaks of outbreaks such as swine flu and chikungunya in the country. While the present paper-based biosurveillance system costs around \$26,000 per district monthly, the proposed system would cost around \$13,250, estimates Nuwan Waidyanatha of LIRNEasia. As of now, Vodafone is in charge of supplying customised phones that would otherwise cost around Rs 4,000. The proposed technology entails loading a unique software onto the mobile phones. Relevant information is fed and sent to a central database. While the technology is up and running in a province of Sri Lanka, another is in the process of adopting it. LIRNEasia plans to take it to Pakistan, Nepal, Phillipines, Thailand and Indonesia in the near future.

(The Financial Express, 06 August 2010)

Desi CEO, tech privacy must for defence JVs

Foreign players which enter into JV agreement with Indian firms in the defence sector would not be allowed to share their technical know-how or software — which they impart to Indian JV company — with even their other overseas subsidiaries. Apart from this, such JVs would mandatorily need to have an Indian CEO and CFO. The Ministry of Defence has imposed these two pre-conditions for clearing any FDI proposal in the defence sector where 26% foreign investment is allowed.

The board's decision will now act as a precedent for all future FDI applications in defence or defence-related services. Although, departments like Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion and Department of Economic Affairs had supported the proposal as the FDI brought in is within the current cap of 26%, the Defence Ministry opposed it saying clearing a defence proposal without such conditions would endanger national security.

In a discussion paper put out on May 17, the DIPP has said, "We have to permit anything above 50%, if not 100%". However, the defence establishment has been opposing any hike beyond the current permissible 26%. But it is understood to be agreeable to allowing FDI up to 49% on case-to-case basis.

Even the industry chambers are not united on increasing the FDI limits in the defence sector. For instance, while CII and Assocham have supported the move to raise FDI ceiling to 49%, Ficci has cautioned against it. Amit Mitra, secretary-general, Ficci, has said, "The 26% FDI cap in the defence sector has already attracted top overseas defence original equipment manufacturers like BAE, EADS, Sikorsky and Lockheed Martin, to hugely invest in the country's defence sector. Therefore, any increase in FDI cap will require careful thinking and analysis."...

(The Financial Express, 05 August 2010)

Innovation leads to technological development: Kalam

"A nation has to evolve as a knowledge centre through innovation and creativity," said the former President, Mr A.P.J Abdul Kalam, at an event to mark the completion of 25 years of the networking solutions company MRO-TEK.

"Innovation leads to technological development. One must innovate to differentiate, integrate society and bridge divide between people. Creativity is in seeing the same things as everyone else and inventing something different. Creativity involves reapplying existing ideas, accepting change and being flexible in outlook," said Mr Kalam, addressing the gathering of MRO-TEK employees, families and friends, as Chief Guest.

MRO-TEK embarked on its technology journey with line drivers and later added products such as modems, multiplexers, switches and routers and soon reached over two million miles of connectivity through installations for mobile carriers, banks, airports and defence. Today, it has crossed installations of one lakh media converters that convert data from copper to fibre. The company's R&D set-up is recognised by the Department of Science and Technology. Recently, it developed Daisy 105, a broadband product that has been granted patent.

(The Hindu Business Line, 31 July 2010)

Ashok Leyland acquires 26% in UK's Optare

Ashok Leyland would acquire a 26% stake in Optare plc, a UK-headquartered bus manufacturer, for \$7.5 million (Rs 28 crore). The company would get three kinds of benefits. *First*, it will participate in the growth of the European bus market through Optare. *Second*, it will have access to the products and technology of Optare, which could be (where necessary) modified and brought into India. *Third*, Optare and Ashok Leyland will jointly develop products and hold the intellectual property together.

(The Hindu Business Line, 30 July 2010)