

# Indian Army signs contract with private sector aimed at 'Atmanirbhar Defence'

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In the first project to be finalized under the industry-funded Make in India scheme of the defence ministry, an Odisha-based company has signed a contract to supply expendable aerial targets to the Army and Air Force, with officials acknowledging it as a critical landmark that will pave the way for more such opportunities.

## **Key Highlights**

- The contract to supply 125 of the Maneuverable Expendable Aerial Targets (MEAT) and associated equipment, under the Make in India II category – which is meant for research and development projects funded by the industry with an indigenous content of over 50% – was signed this week. This category was introduced as a major step towards engaging the industry in 2016.
- While the value of the contract at ₹96 crore is low when compared to typical defence contracts, the competition saw the Odisha company pitching its product against defence giant Larsen and Toubro.

- The Shikra MEAT system being manufactured by the company is a localized version of the Banshee Jet 40 system that has earlier been imported by the armed forces.
- The company has till now supplied over 600 aerial targets from its Odisha factory in partnership with a UK firm. The Shikra is an aerial target designed to be used over land and sea for training of crew on air defence weapon systems.
- The expendable drone can be maneuvered at subsonic speeds to simulate an incoming target for air defence weapons.

**SOURCE:** *Economic Times*