On Tuesday, Solar Industries India Ltd (hereafter Solar), one of India's fastest growing companies in defence manufacturing, announced a strategic tie-up with Eurenco, the European leader in high-energy materials for explosives and propellant technologies.

Announcing the partnership at the EUROSATORY 2018 defence exhibition near Paris, the two firms said they would bid jointly for a forthcoming multi-billion dollar Indian tender to manufacture artillery propellants – called the bi-modular charge system (BMCS).

"We have built a strong relationship with Eurenco and are working on a collaborative approach to set up infrastructure facilities under the 'Make in India' programme of the Government of India to fulfill the needs of the Indian Army," said Solar's chief executive, Manish Nuwal.

The Nagpur-headquartered Solar, India's largest manufacturer and exporter of explosives and initiating systems, is highly regarded by the defence ministry. In January, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman handed it technology to manufacture solid propellant boosters for the Indo-Russian BrahMos cruise missile — a favour normally bestowed only on defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs).

Solar's ambitious growth plans in the defence sector rest on the military's increasing requirement of ammunition and propellants. Besides needing to make up a large shortfall in war reserve ammunition stocks, the military requires warhead explosives and propellants for indigenous weaponry like the Pinaka rocket launcher, the Akash, Nag, Astra, BrahMos and LR-SAM missiles, indigenous artillery guns like the Dhanush and the Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS), and a range of new artillery gun systems entering service, such as the M777 ultra-light Howitzer.

India currently imports 35 solid propellant boosters annually for the BrahMos cruise missile. In addition, the IAF will be inducting large numbers of BrahMos as an air-launched cruise mssile (ALCM), mounted on the Sukhoi-30MKI fighter. Solar would benefit directly from these orders.

In July 2016, Eurencoand Solar signed a preliminary agreement to "evaluate various cooperation options". On Tuesday, that was translated into a "strategic partnership" for supplying "propellants, bombs, ammunition filling and modular charges technologies under the 'Make in India' policy for the private sector", according to a Solar press release.

"This partnership agreement is at the heart of our strategy in India which is today one of the key markets that we aim for as part of our global export policy in Asia", said Eurenco chief Dominique Guillet.

Solar said on Tuesday it is "willing to build dedicated infrastructure facilities with the technical assistance of Eurenco on its explosives and propellant facilities in Nagpur, India".

Besides Nagpur, Solar manufactures at 24 locations in India and six locations abroad – in South Africa, Turkey, Zambia, Nigeria, Australia and Ghana – for a significant portfolio of American and European customers.

Since it was established in 1995, Solar has built facilities to produce sophisticated, military-

grade explosives such as HMX, RDX and TNT.Solar also builds composite propellants, rockets, warheads, mines, tank ammunition, bombs and electronic fuses.

Besides serving defence requirements, Solar also manufactures explosives for the mining and infrastructure sectors, serving Coal India Limited,Singareni Collieries, Vedanta, Reliance, Jindal and other companies.