

# Selex, BEL To Supply Radios to Indian Army

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Italy's Finmeccanica and India's Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) are to sign a deal this week to produce Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA)-standard secure radio systems for the Indian Army, Indian Defence Ministry officials said.

Finmeccanica subsidiary Selex Communications will transfer technology to BEL for production of the radios in India, with around 100 systems to be built in the next three years under the contract, rising to a total of "several hundred" systems over successive tranches to reach a total value of 200 million euros (\$263 million), the officials said.

The Indian sale follows the recent, months-delayed confirmation of an Italian government order. The Italian Interior Ministry signed a 260 million euro contract on

Dec. 12 to buy TETRA-standard radios for Italy's police and security forces, the first installment of an expected 3 billion euro program.

Finmeccanica Chief Executive Pierfrancesco Guarguaglini, who this month accompanied then-Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and a group of Italian industrialists on a tour of India, has said that Finmeccanica's chances of selling TETRA abroad hinged on first winning business in its domestic market.

TETRA is a digital trunked mobile radio standard conceived by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute for use by military, security and emergency services.

The standard is designed to allow radio terminals built by one manufacturer to function with infrastructure built by another. TETRA can broadcast encrypted voice and data messages, allow group communications

and function in the event of network congestion.

The system also has commercial uses. Selex has supplied TETRA to the Ferrari Grand Prix racing team to allow radio communications between drivers and pit teams that cannot be intercepted by rival racing teams.

Finmeccanica also signed a memorandum of understanding this month with Indian state-owned engineering firm Bharat Heavy Electrical Ltd. (BHEL) in Mumbai for the development of radar systems.

For more than a decade, BHEL has produced naval gun turrets for the Indian Navy and Coast Guard under license from Oto Melara, another Finmeccanica subsidiary.

The two firms are also exploring the possibility of licensed production of larger-caliber gun mounts for warships. ■

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