

Defence ProAc interacted with Mr. Ashok Atluri, Chairman, Zen Technologies Ltd: Excerpts—

Home (<http://www.defproac.com>) / Regular Features (<http://www.defproac.com/?cat=9>) / Interaction (<http://www.defproac.com/?cat=11>) / Defence ProAc interacted with Mr. Ashok Atluri, Chairman, Zen Technologies Ltd: Excerpts—



Mr. Atluri has been the managing Director of Zen Technologies Ltd. since 1994 and is a recipient of the ‘Small Scale Entrepreneur of the Year’ award. Zen Technologies is a shining example of what SME can do with emphasis on indigenous design, development and manufacture of state-of-the-art simulators, which can compete with world-class products. Incorporated in the year 1993, the Company has remained totally focused in the business of design, development and manufacture of virtual and live training simulators for Defence Forces, Para Military forces (PMF), Special Forces and State Police Forces. Com-

pany’s R&D Unit has been recognized & accredited by Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India. Zen has primarily focused on the requirement of simulators for the Land Forces and other security Agencies. In last 21 years, company has developed more than 30 products.

DPA: Zen has impressive list of world class products and will be participating in DEFEXPO 16, showcasing the Unit Combat Training Centre (UCTC). Could you please tell us if any other products are going to be displayed?

Ashok Atluri (AA): Zen Technologies has over the years emerged as a strong indigenous player in the field of training and simulation solutions for Defence. During the Def Expo we will be launching the Combat Training Center - a flexible & customized one-stop training solution for Armed Forces,

Central Armed Police Forces, Special Forces and State Police Forces. The facility will comprise of Virtual, Live and Constructive Simulators which fully address individual and collective training needs of combat units. Training equipment at the Centre will vary according to the needs of the end-user.

DPA: Could you please elaborate on the capabilities of Combat Training Centre and how it is going to be beneficial to combat troops?

AA: The decades of hard work creating cutting-edge training solutions has culminated in a stunning insight - that Zen can provide complete training solutions in the form of Combat Training Centre which will fulfill all the individual as well as collective training needs of a force. Forces need two data points - current stage of preparedness and the desired stage of preparedness. Zen CTC objectively assesses the readiness of the troops, a great improvement over subjective assessments done currently. It also helps troops to rapidly develop their skills to reach an advanced stage of preparedness and that also at one location.

The CTC can be customised and configured for specific needs of other combat units as well. For instance, a CTC for an Armoured Regiment would comprise Tank Basic and Crew Gunnery Simulators, Tank & B-Vehicle Driving Simulators and Armour Combat Training Simulator (ACTS) for two-sided force-on-force tactical exercises. Besides these simulators, training systems such as small arms firing simulator, target systems and portable Containerised Tubular Shooting Range for live firing with personal weapons will also be required, as all Combat Arms need to be proficient in handling personal weapons. The Mechanised Infantry UCTC will have commonality of simulators with the Infantry unit and will in addition train on ICV Gunnery, ICV Driving and ACTS along with tank units. Similarly, Artillery will be provided with the Forward Observer Simulator to train Fire Controllers in their duties. Small arms training systems and B-Vehicle Driving Simulator, will also form part of the Artillery UCTC inventory.

Such a facility, available within the unit premises, will permit round-the-clock training which will not be affected by operational, logistical and administrative constraints such as limited availability of training areas/firing ranges/ ammunition/ restriction on mileage of vehicles or use of FOL or vagaries of weather. The CTC is not only designed to train sub-units and units in conventional warfare but also for asymmetric warfare-Counter Insurgency (CI) and Counter Terrorism (CT). Add-ons such as Shoot House/Indoor Live Firing CQB Range are critical to train troops in Room Intervention drills. Zen provides a holistic and flexible solution for varied training needs.

DPA: Zen lays emphasis on indigenous design, development and manufacture of state-of-the-art simulators through their own R&D efforts.

AA: Some key factors, which have helped us in our indigenization endeavour are-

- Our focus on 1. Building only import-substitute products or, better, first time in the world solutions by looking at what would help our customers prepare well. 2. High technology complex products involving electronics, mechanical engineering, and software.

- The relentless focus of our R&D team to solve real problems and continuous investment in developing innovative technologies and products.
- Close relationship with the customers that give us insight into the real issues they face.

DPA: It was entirely your effort to have worked towards the new category “Buy (Indian - IDDM)” in the Buy category which is likely to be included in the upcoming DPP-16. Could you please throw some light on the Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured (IDDM).

AA: With revised DPP companies like us who designs and develops products will be given topmost priority in defence procurement and this, in turn, will ensure higher reinvestment in R&D.

DPA: How much of your technology is home grown and how much of it has been acquired via foreign collaborations?

AA: Almost all of our technology is home-grown and developed by us over the time period and experience. In initial years, whenever we needed a sub-system, the cost of it from the vendors was so high, that we would find it cheaper to build it internally. Over a period of more than two decades Zen has been solving disparate training needs of the forces.

With the battle scenarios making a paradigm shift from conventional to non conventional battlefields, with short and decisive combats in place new training scenarios needed to be visualised. The futuristic combat systems becoming more complex, it had become time and cost consuming for defence forces to conduct complex missions considering all the intricacies above. Also, there was a need to save on logistics cost.

We realized that all our training equipment and simulators can be packaged into a system that will be much greater than the sum of the parts. We also analysed that there are no other means of training that provide the Army with the ability to efficiently disseminate lessons learned through training or from the battlefield in a collective environment.

With a strong backbone of 30 + standalone training systems available with us, we conceived of CTC as a way of integrating the simulators together that would meet defence forces’ over all training objectives of operational readiness. Also the CTC is flexible enough to integrate training equipment and simulators of foreign vendors. For example, we may not have simulators for some foreign country’s equipment, we are willing to partner with other foreign vendors to give a solution that our customer finds compelling. Most of the product that we build is in-house, except, of course, the operating system and the computer hardware.

DPA: Indian Defence Forces have realized the need of shifting the focus from live training to simulation training in a big way. How do you visualize the simulation market in the coming decade?

AA: The use of simulators as a training and operational readiness tool in the Indian military has risen considerably since the 2000’s. Today, simulator use in the Indian armed forces has expanded far beyond traditional aggregate/constructive simulation for war-gaming purposes to virtual solutions tailored to providing individual and collective driving, flight, gunnery and sensor training.

We expect the market to grow significantly as simulation is the cleanest, greenest, surest and fastest way for any troops to train. And with cost of simulation coming down rapidly we think simulation will also become affordable for countries other than India. At a macro-level, simulation offers a number of advantages that address an ever-increasing global threat level and new economic constraints that are pressuring top-line defence spending. The cost savings from the use of simulation is considerable. The cost of fuel, detrimental environmental impacts, and significant wear and tear on weapon systems all point to the greater use of simulation and synthetic training. Equally important as a market driver, however, is that the current state of simulation is so highly realistic that it has become an integral tool for training and mission rehearsal.. The Indian Defence forces are increasingly recognizing the benefit simulation can provide to enhance their operational training while reducing costs, and they are now acquiring high fidelity simulators for all their major platform acquisitions.

DPA: Zen is the OEM in the field of simulators and has captured the Indian market well. Do you have any plans for export and take your business to other countries especially CTC?

AA: We want to get a break in Indian market in 2016. Next year we plan to be able to install the CTC in at least two foreign countries



March 25, 2016



Admin ([Http://www.defproac.com/?author=1](http://www.defproac.com/?author=1))



Permalink ([Http://www.defproac.com/?p=3393](http://www.defproac.com/?p=3393))
