

# NTTFIL-Kostal aims high with a new JV

Indo-German joint venture for automotive electrical products aims to upgrade design and technology processes and become a global supplier, says **P Tharyan**.



Column-mounted switches.

## FACTFILE NTTFIL

**NTTFIL has** two production units – one in Peenya, Bangalore and another at Vellore in Tamil Nadu. Both have independent sophisticated tool-room and components divisions for making plastic moulded and sheet metal components. The Bangalore unit has a separate CNC division and product engineering division for developing products supported by state-of-art in-house CAD/CAM/CAE facilities. NTTFIL also has developed dedicated ancillary units where all the assembly line know-how, equipment, tooling and technical supervision and control are held by NTTFIL.

**T**he Bangalore-headquartered NTTF Industries Ltd (NTTFIL), a fully-owned company of Nettur Technical Training Foundation (NTTF), has tied up with the Kostal Group of Germany to set up a joint venture for manufacture of automotive electrical devices. A Rs 100 crore investment, phased over three years, is planned for the new plant in Vellore in Tamil Nadu which is slated to begin supply to the Indian automotive market by mid-2008.

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**N Reguraj, managing director of NTTFIL India (left) along with Ludger Laufenberg, managing director of Kostal Group.**

## Partners in progress

NTTF is renowned for its high-quality tooling, dies, jigs fixtures, moulds, stamped and moulded components, and industrial components, as well as electrical switches and controls for automotive OEMs. NTTF also has a JV company with Aisin Seiki Ltd of Japan for supply of a variety of products including door latches, window regulators, hinge assembly, doorframe, etc to Toyota's Indian operations. NTTF is also a leader in technical education, vocational training, company-wide

skill improvement training, and personality development programmes and has conducted several training programmes for the Tata Group, Nokia, OEN, Keltron, Maruti Suzuki and Toyota Kirloskar Motors.

The Kostal Group at present has a consolidated turnover of Euro 1.3 billion (Rs 7,560.35 crore) and has operations in 26 locations, situated in 14 countries. "We will ramp up investments in the new plant to Rs 100 crore in land, building, machinery and equipment in phases over a period of three years.

This can be even larger depending on the market and environmental factors," says K S Ramaprasad, director (technical), NTTF Industries Ltd. He adds that the new JV will target indigenous Indian automotive OEMs, transplant companies of global OEMs and their JVs, as well as exports.

NTTFIL, which has a turnover of Rs 40 crore, is one of the leading Indian manufacturers of automotive electrical products and industrial components with a commercial tool room and caters to Indian automotive OEMs as well as other engineering industries. It meets the highest requirement of quality levels to achieve successful localisation of critical imports.

According to Ramaprasad, most of the domestic automotive OEMs and ancillaries are its customers, either at Tier 1 or Tier 2 levels. The company is certified for Quality Management Systems like ISO TS 16949, ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OSHAS 18001.

"The JV company will work to upgrade the existing design and technology to global standards and become a global supplier with inputs from the JV partner. It will endeavour to establish capability, locally at the JV company, to design, manufacture and supply automotive electrical switches and controls, to support the new European automotive OEM companies which are starting manufacturing



Panel-mounted switches.

activity in India, and also support NTTF's current customers with world-class technology," he adds.

Ramaprasad claims that with this new JV, the Kostal Group will introduce people-friendly automotive products for the first time in Asia. These features include column-mounted switches, power window switches, steering position sensors instrument, panel-mounted switches, pinch protection devices, and power window regulators.

"Generally, if anyone keeps his or her hand between the glass and the window while the electronic car window switch is in operation, it is possible for the glass to crush the person's hand. But with self-sensor devices like the pinch protection device and power window regulator the glass will stop, in turn avoiding the glass pinch.

### The JV will design, manufacture and supply electrical switches and controls to European OEMs in India and to NTTF's existing clientele.

Kostal is also bringing integrated multiple applications in the steering with column-mounted switches, steering position sensors instrument, and panel-mounted switches which will enable control of the movement of seats and the lights in a car," he remarks.

Meanwhile, Ludger Laufenberg, managing director of the Kostal Group, says that the group has already supplied 10 million units of pinch protection devices, and power window regulators globally. "It will be a great pleasure for us to work with a company like NTTF, which is supplying high quality products to

customers in India and abroad," he said.

Considering that demand for auto electrical components like switches and steering controls is only going to grow both in

India and abroad, the new joint venture is well timed. For NTTFIL, it constitutes yet another move to nurture global ambition. ■

## FACTFILE Kostal Group

**KOSTAL** has been delivering steering column switches to the automobile industry for over 50 years. From the first simple mechanical switches to operate the direction indicators and windscreen wipers, these devices have developed into complex mechatronic modules. In Europe, Kostal is the market leader with over 30 percent of the business in this product sector.

The product range extends from combined steering column switches for compact cars, through to high-end steering column modules for premium class vehicles. Simple switch combinations operate in the high-power range and excel in their use of proven switching concepts. A high level of automation ensures low production costs.

### Mechatronic integration

In addition to standard components such as direction indicator switches, windscreen wiper switches and rotary couplers, the latest complex steering column modules also contain electronics to monitor functions such as the steering angle, as well as information on the controls mounted around the steering wheel. These electronics also include cruise control switches and gear selector systems.

### Rotary couplers

Rotary couplers transfer electrical signals for the steering wheel airbag and also issue signals via LIN for control functions located on the steering wheel. Electrically-powered steering wheel heating can be fitted as an option, as well as a vibration motor to warn the driver if the vehicle begins to stray from the driving lane.

Steering with position sensors instrument.

