



## Guest Column

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# Bundelkhand: The rising hub of defence manufacturing

With concerted efforts, Bundelkhand will emerge as a cornerstone of India's defence prowess and economic resilience

**B**undelkhand, a region in Uttar Pradesh historically known for its bravery and rich cultural heritage, is transforming remarkably. Once labelled a backward area, Bundelkhand is now on the brink of becoming a key player in India's defence manufacturing sector. This change is driven by the Indian government's push for self-reliance through initiatives such as 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat,' positioning Bundelkhand perfectly for this industrial revolution.

Bundelkhand's strategic location is one of its greatest assets. Located in the heart of India, it offers significant logistical benefits for defence manufacturing. Bundelkhand has been synonymous with droughts, water scarcity, and migration for too long. However, this image is rapidly changing. With initiatives like the Defence Corridor, Bundelkhand Expressway, the formation of the Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority, solar energy projects, and the Bulk Drugs and Pharmaceutical Park in Lalitpur, the region is on a path of revitalisation. The proximity to signifi-

cant defence establishments and industrial corridors ensures efficient supply chain management and rapid deployment of resources. The development of the Defence Industrial Corridor in Uttar Pradesh, which includes Bundelkhand, solidifies its status as a crucial player in the defence manufacturing sector.

Bundelkhand boasts a rich reservoir of human capital. With numerous technical institutions and engineering colleges, the region produces a steady stream of skilled graduates ready to contribute to the defence sector. These institutions have the potential to collaborate with defence manufacturers to provide specialised training programs, ensuring that the workforce is well-equipped to handle advanced manufacturing processes and technologies.

The Uttar Pradesh government has been notably proactive in creating a conducive environment for defence manufacturing. The state offers numerous incentives, including tax exemptions, land subsidies, and financial support for research and development. The Defence Manufacturing Policy of Uttar Pradesh aims to at-

tract investment and enhance local manufacturing capabilities, making Bundelkhand a preferred destination for defence companies. In Jhansi, land has been acquired for industrial use, and essential infrastructure is in place. The Jhansi node of the Defence Corridor in Garautha is developing rapidly, with significant investments and job creation on the horizon. For instance, Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and other companies have been allocated land, indicating a robust industrial future for the region.

Innovation is at the heart of modern defence manufacturing, and Bundelkhand is poised to become a hub for research and development. Collaboration with international defence companies can introduce cutting-edge technologies, fostering a culture of innovation. Establishing technology parks and incubators will further enhance Bundelkhand's capability to produce sophisticated defence equipment. The UP government's initiative to construct a Bulk Drug Park in Lalitpur, one of the region's most underdeveloped areas, is a step in the right direction. With major institutions such as the Council of

Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as knowledge partners, the park will promote research and technological advancement.

The rise of defence manufacturing units in Bundelkhand will profoundly impact the local economy. It will create numerous direct and indirect employment opportunities, boosting income levels and improving living standards. Ancillary industries, including supply chain logistics, raw material suppliers, and service providers, will also experience significant growth, fostering a robust industrial ecosystem.

Strengthening defence manufacturing in Bundelkhand aligns perfectly with the national objective of achieving self-reliance in defence production. Reducing dependency on foreign suppliers enhances national security, ensuring India is well-prepared to address any security challenges. Bundelkhand's contribution to this effort underscores its strategic importance and commitment to national defence.

As Bundelkhand grows as a defence manufacturing hub, it is crucial to ensure sustainable de-

velopment. Implementing environmentally friendly practices and technologies will minimise the ecological footprint. Development plans must incorporate green technologies, waste management systems, and sustainable resource utilisation to ensure that industrial growth does not come at the expense of the environment.

The state government is also promoting Bundelkhand as a hub for solar energy, with ten major solar projects expected to generate over 3,000 MW of electricity. This move supports sustainable development and positions Bundelkhand as a leader in renewable energy.

Today, Bundelkhand stands at the threshold of a transformative journey. Its potential to become a leading hub for defence manufacturing is immense, driven by strategic advantages, policy support and a skilled workforce. With concerted efforts, Bundelkhand will emerge as a cornerstone of India's defence prowess and economic resilience.

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