

H&K India's 'Make-in-India' Programme Completes 30 Years



Mr. Markan with Early Adopters of Thermex® Technology

Raj Kumar Markan founded H&K India on 16th May 1985, in collaboration with Hoestemberghe & Kluetsch GmbH, (H&K Germany), with the specific aim to introduce relevant and modern technologies to the Indian steel industry. Thus started a 30-year journey dotted with 'many firsts'.

India's first 'Stop-Start' Shear, first Crop Shear, and first Thermex® Quenching and Self-tempering system were introduced by H&K India at Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP) of SAIL, when it won the Global Tender for Merchant Mill Modernisation of the plant in 1989. H&K India became the first amongst all DSP global contractors to commission the plant as per schedule in March 1992.

The company also boasted notable achievements in the secondary rolling mill industry and quickly found success in manufacturing special equipment for rolling mills. It introduced the unique Grip and Trough Tilters at Kalyani Steels for rolling of Alloy Steel Bars. The Trough Tilter built by H&K India is only the third of its type in the whole world.

H&K India's single biggest 'Make-in-India' contribution has been the introduction of Thermex®. At a time when the standard Indian practice was to use low-strength Cold Twisted Deformed (CTD) bars that were less ductile and very unsuitable to seismic India, H&K India revolutionised the steel industry by introducing the concept of quenching and self-tempering (QST).

Thermex® QST bars met all requirements of civil construction – yield strength ranging from 500 MPa or more, toughness, **high elongation value and ductility – suitable for seismic India**, weld ability and excellent bend properties. The introduction of Thermex® QST bars ended the 30-year reign of the less-ductile, low-strength CTD bars in India.

Recalling the three-decade run of his company, H&K India Chairman, Mr. Markan, noted, "It all started at a chance meeting with Mr. Wolfgang Kluetsch at Hotel Oberoi, Mumbai, in 1982. Mr. Kluetsch was then the owner and Managing Director of H&K Germany.

On his way to Australia he stopped over in India as he was studying the Indian market for H&K Germany's specialised rolling mill machinery. We met many more times in Germany, and subsequently in 1985 H&K India was born with Mr. Kluetsch as its first Chairman."

Speaking from Germany, Mr. Kluetsch stated, "I am very proud that the seed planted by us in 1985 has today become a big tree which bears fruit. I extend my heartiest congratulations to the entire team of H&K India. Although I have retired some years ago, I do keep in touch with Mr. Markan and his daughter, Radhika Markan, on a regular basis and they keep me informed about the Company's activities and growth. They make me proud by keeping the flag of H&K flying so high. I offer my best wishes to them for the years ahead."

Inventor of Thermex® and Technical Consultant to H&K India, Mr. Franz TAMM also sent his congratulations from Germany.

"I am delighted to note the success H&K India and Thermex® have had in the Indian market. In every country it is very difficult to overcome old traditions, or to change the established procedures and methods. When Thermex® was introduced in India, it was so new, unique and revolutionary that it came to be resisted. But the H&K Indian team persisted and soon an awareness campaign was launched.

India is exposed to earthquakes because 60% of it falls under the high seismic hazard category. For high seismic zones, ductility of rebars was the key property and not the yield strength, and this was highlighted to the engineering fraternity. Today ductile Thermex® rebars are popular in India. Such success is testimony of H&K India's determination to its cause. I wish them many more successful years ahead."

Mr. Markan added, "This explains why H&K India has been able to successfully commission Thermex® Technology in the Indian Region - with over 200 orders Thermex® has proven its 'front runner' status in the world for thermo-processed or quenching & self-tempering technologies. Today, approximately 60% of rebars produced in India are Thermex® rebars."

"Our innovations in Thermex® continue unabated. At SAIL which was our first order, we had introduced Thermex® Version 1. At present, we are manufacturing Thermex® Version 3. More significantly, we have successfully developed and commissioned the country's first 'Made in India' 4-Strand Slit Quenching Pipe at Mahalaxmi TMT Pvt. Ltd, Wardha, Maharashtra. We have the capability to manufacture and commission 2-slit, 3-slit and 4-slit Thermex® quenching systems for varying sizes, speeds and temperatures."

For 4-Slit Quenching at Mahalaxmi Wardha, the H&K India team led by Mr. Markan undertook the entire engineering and manufacturing process in India, including equipment design, raw material procurement, machining, assembly, testing, and erection and commissioning in less than 4 months. It took less than 4 hours for successful commissioning of the Thermex® 4-strand slit quenching equipment at Mahalaxmi Wardha.