

Radiant Keralam

SFO Technologies wires the world

From relay plants in Kochi to radar wiring for the Rafale, SFO Technologies is stitching together the components of India's high-tech ambitions

Dr N Jehangir
Chairman and MD,
SFO Technologies
—A NeST Group Company



In a nondescript industrial corridor of Keralam, some of India's most ambitious technologies are quietly taking shape.

On the factory floors of SFO Technologies, the flagship of the NeST Group, engineers assemble high-reliability systems destined for lunar missions, wire radar components for Rafale fighter jets, and build the electronic backbone of servers powering the artificial-intelligence boom.

SFO Technologies has spent more than three decades operating where failure is not an option. Across aerospace and defence, space, healthcare, energy and industrial, transportation, semiconductors and communications, SFO has built more than a manufacturing business: it has earned a global reputation for precision. From relay plants in Keralam to mission-critical systems deployed in the skies and beyond, the company is stitching together the components of India's high-tech ambitions, one exacting connection at a time.

Founded in 1990, SFO carries the vision of NeST Group founding Chairman Dr Javad K Hassan and Chairman and MD Dr N Jehangir, who believed Indian enterprise could achieve world-class technology capability while strengthening national self-reliance. This belief has since grown into 22 factories, nearly 8,000 employees and a client base spanning over 60 countries. The company calls its model 'One Stop Solutions', a modest name for what it delivers: concept to certification, all under one roof, all under one signature of accountability, covering electronics engineering, embedded software, precision tooling, testing and lifecycle support.

Behind SFO sits the wider NeST ecosystem. NeST Digital supplies software and AI-led transformation, iCam Solution handles precision machining, Ray-Hans Precision Tools builds moulds and dies, and NeST



Nazneen Jehangir, CEO, NeST Digital

EduLink links academic institutions to industry talent pipelines. Together, they let SFO fuse electronics, optics, mechanical and software into integrated systems rather than isolated parts.

That integration now extends into artificial intelligence hardware. In August, SFO partnered with US-based Smart IOPS to manufacture AI-grade solid-state drives in Kochi, using proprietary TruRandom controller technology built for data centres and supercomputing. Dr Jehangir frames this as a foundation rather than a destination. "Our plans are to go beyond making storage devices," he says. SFO intends to move into full AI server integration, bringing storage, compute, connectivity, power and cooling into finished, ready-to-deploy systems, while also expanding fibre-optic connectivity for data centres and planning a dedicated semiconductor skills training centre.

Defence remains SFO's most sensitive and symbolic frontier. In December, the company secured a contract from Thales to build complex wired structures for the RBE2 AESA



Althaf Jehangir, CEO and Executive Director,
SFO Technologies



radar on the Dassault Rafale, placing SFO inside one of the world's most tightly guarded supply chains. The company already produces sonar power supplies, fibre-optic torpedo systems, high-power fibre lasers developed with Defence Research and Development Organisation's Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS), and the Primary Power Distribution System for the indigenous SARAS MKII aircraft. Althaf Jehangir, CEO and Executive Director, describes SFO's posture as twin-tracked, serving India's strategic programmes while supporting global primes including Boeing, Thales, Safran, Airbus and Collins. "These two tracks position SFO as both a Make in India company and a strategic global OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) partner," says Althaf Jehangir, "capable of scaling from individual components to fully integrated defence subsystems."

In space, that same discipline has supported Chandrayaan-3, Aditya-L1, NISAR and multiple ISRO launch programmes.

In healthcare, SFO applies its high-reliability manufacturing discipline to regulated medical technology. The ISO 13485-certified processes support the production of subsystems for MRI, X-ray, ultrasound, ECG, infant monitoring and advanced surgical platforms, including non-invasive image-guided surgical systems. This capability strengthens India's medical technology resilience while serving global healthcare customers that demand precision, compliance and consistent quality.

Using photonics, the science of light, to build high-power lasers, fibre optic sensors, signal boosters, and modules that turn light into electronic signals, SFO has developed the technology which supports defence systems, self-driving cars, secure military communications, and the data centres behind cloud services, streaming, and AI, and brings faster internet to homes and cities.

Dr Jehangir notes that supply-chain resilience has become non-negotiable in a volatile geopolitical climate. SFO has built relationships with distributors such as Avnet and Arrow, opened buying offices in the US, China and Singapore, and leaned on backward integration to cut import dependence. At its Kochi components park, the company already produces around one million relays each month, with a PCB (printed circuit board) plant planned for Theni, a site chosen partly for its proximity to wind energy resources.

The government has taken notice. In March, SFO and its subsidiary, NeST Advanced Technology Development Centre, secured approval under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme, opening the door to expanded production of relays, connectors, capital goods and optical transceivers. Dr Jehangir expects the workforce to

cross 10,000 within two years, with relay demand driven by the government's smart metering rollout and connectors finding buyers in automation, defence and energy.

Tamil Nadu has now entered the picture too by approving a greenfield facility in Theni.

Dr Jehangir is careful not to romanticise scale for its own sake, speaking instead of qualifying MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) and treating vendor development as capability-building, backed by academic ties with Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), Muthoot Institute of Technology and Science (MITS) and Federal Institute of Science and Technology (FISAT).

Underpinning all of it are certifications, rarely found together outside leading global OEMs: AS9100 for aviation-grade quality, NADCAP accreditation for specialised processes, ISO 13485 for medical device manufacturing, ISO 27001 for information security, and CMMI Level 5 for process maturity, alongside a stated commitment to net-zero emissions by 2050. Women make up more than 25 per cent of the workforce, and the company has logged zero labour hours lost to unrest in over three decades.

From relays to radar wiring, from lunar missions to AI servers, to highly sophisticated medical equipment, and laser technologies, SFO has quietly assembled the case that high-reliability, high-tech electronic solutions can be developed and built, tested and trusted from Indian soil. Keralam gave it a home. The world, increasingly, is giving it a mandate. ♦



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