Rockwell Automation looks to raise manufacturing footprint in India

Q&A The blend of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, 5G, and robotics is reshaping the conversation around industrial automation, as they are becoming not only more accessible but also easier to integrate into machines. **Dilip Sawhney**, managing director at Rockwell Automation, an industrial automation and digital transformation solutions provider, in an interaction with **Aashish Aryan** talks about how companies in India are using these technologies to better business outcomes. Edited excerpts:

How important is the Indian market for Rockwell Automation globally?

■ India is a high-interest market and the largest country for us outside the US. India's contribution to the success of the global organisation is quite significant. There is a lot of investment that is going to happen over here. We have now started focusing on expanding our manufacturing footprint in India. We already have a factory in Chennai, and we are currently building two new factories in the same industrial park. One of those two is nearly production-ready.

Will these new factories cater more to domestic demand or to exports as well?

■ For us, our manufacturing has always been part of a global integrated supply chain, regardless of the location of the factory. We do it with the expectation that it will be part of the worldwide supply chain. It is being built, designed, created and certified to supply to any Rockwell customer globally.

The first one is going to play a significant role in integrating India into the global semiconductor value chain. The equipment that we are going to produce here will be used to process tools and semiconductor

fabs. In the new unit being constructed in Chennai, we will also produce a large number of modular enclosures.

How does Rockwell ensure its differentiation from the competition in India?

■ In India and globally, we have teams that sit down with customers to understand their systems and the processes they run, and the spare parts required to keep them running. These teams then model it, so that the mean time to repair the parts is minimised. This is achieved through what we have in the warehouses and what we can keep onsite at the client location.

If a client tells us that 30 minutes is the only downtime they can tolerate, we should be able to handle that. They pay what they use, and we get them into a service program.

Does the advent of AI help in predictive maintenance in such circumstances?

■ No company wants to wait until a part breaks down to start repairs and maintenance. The way we are infusing AI into industrial assets is ubiquitous. AI keeps analysing the signals, self-trains on the data made available to it, and figures out what a regular pattern is and what an abnormality is. Based on these, it tells you which parts are likely to need repair or need attention to ensure the production continues.