Lok Sabha polls push up BEL turnover

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BENGALURU: Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited BEL), posted a turnover of Rs 11,789 crore for the year ending March 31, 2019, which was Rs 1,704 crore more than 2017-18, has the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections to thank too, for the 17% growth.

The PSU, which is among the two Electronic Voting Machine makers in India- Electronics Corporation of India Limited is the other- as it supplied 74% of EVMs and VVPATs used for the Lok Sabha polls this year. Four hundred of the 542 constituencies used systems it supplied.

"The EVM-VVPAT business contributed significantly. We earned a revenue of Rs 2,600 crore from supplying roughly 10 lakh VVPATs," BEL CMD Gowtama MV said.

While these orders were placed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in the previous financial year, BEL expects more orders from various states in the current year. But those are unlikely to exceed a value of more than a few hundred crores.

Gowtama claimed that not a single mismatch between EVMs and VVPATs that BEL supplied were reported, and said this was a major achievement.

Reiterating that Indian EVMs cannot be tampered with, Gowtama said: "The storm created by political parties before the elections died down after the results. In fact, democracy can only survive if you use EVMs. EVMs ensure that there is no rigging, and even if rigging happens, it is detectable. If you go back to the paper ballot, you will not be able to do anything."

Answering questions of fresh allegations about polling and counting mismatches, Gowtama said EVMs and VVPATs are preserved in a safe place for 45 days and that laws permit any candidate to approach a court within that time.

BEL, on the back of a good order book position also reported a profit after tax of Rs 1,927 crore, as against Rs 1,399 crore the previous year even as value of exports dipped to $21.6 million from $26 million.