



## SES 2026 Insider

*Exhibitor Perspectives!*

In Conversation With...

**Mr. Rajesh Kulkarni, MD & CEO, Keetronics (India)**



**Q. Keetronics has a 30-year legacy in advanced input devices. How is your expertise in functional printing and capacitive touch evolving to meet the "rugged" requirements of strategic defense applications?**

A. Our 30-year legacy isn't just about manufacturing switches; it's about engineering trust. In the defense sector, failure is simply not an option. We are continuously pushing the boundaries of functional printing by utilizing advanced conductive inks and substrates that can withstand severe thermal cycling, mechanical shock, and EMI/EMC interference. On the capacitive touch front, we're engineering specialized overlays and controllers that remain highly responsive even under heavy moisture or when operated with thick, military-grade gloves. We are directly addressing the strict MIL-STD requirements to ensure our interfaces are as resilient as the personnel using them.



**Q. As a past ELCINA award winner, how do you view the 15th Strategic Electronics Summit as a platform for fostering innovation in India's electronic component ecosystem?**

A. As a past ELCINA award recipient, I've seen firsthand how vital platforms like the Strategic Electronics Summit are. SES is far more than a networking event; it functions as a critical incubator for India's defense and aerospace supply chain. It brings together MSMEs, R&D institutions, and large defense contractors to foster collaborative innovation. For the electronic component ecosystem to truly thrive under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision, we need forums like SES to align our indigenous technological capabilities with the strategic, long-term needs of the nation.

**Q. With Keetronics serving global markets, what strategic shifts are you seeing in the demand for customized industrial interfaces within the defense and aerospace sectors?**

A. Globally, we are observing a massive shift from passive, standalone components to active, integrated Human-Machine Interfaces (HMIs). Defense and aerospace clients no longer just want a rugged keypad; they are demanding smart, space-saving modules that integrate backlighting, shielding, and local processing capabilities. The demand is heavily leaning towards extreme miniaturization and weight reduction—which is absolutely crucial for aerospace—without compromising the robust, fail-safe reliability required in the field.

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**Q. SES 2026 highlights a "Tech Zone" for emerging technologies. How is Keetronics integrating AI or embedded solutions into your home and industrial automation modules?**

A. The convergence of robust hardware and intelligent software is exactly where the industry is heading, and we are aggressively pursuing this at Keetronics. For our industrial modules, we are exploring embedded diagnostics that can interface with digital twins to enable predictive maintenance directly on the factory floor. In the home automation space, we are moving towards seamless, decentralized connectivity. We are embedding protocols like MQTT directly into our capacitive touch panels to enable hubfree integration with major smart home ecosystems. This reduces latency and simplifies the architecture for the end-user, all while maintaining our signature aesthetic.

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**Q. How does your experience with diverse industrial standards (IEC, BIS) translate into a competitive advantage when developing strategic electronics for high reliability environments?**

A. In high-reliability sectors, compliance is the baseline, but mastering those standards is a definitive competitive moat. Our deep-rooted experience with IEC and BIS standards means that quality and compliance are designed into our products from the very first CAD drawing, not just tested for at the end of the line. This 'compliance-first' engineering reduces time-to-market for our clients and drastically lowers field failure rates. When we compete globally, demonstrating proactive, rigorous adherence to these standards instantly elevates our credibility and sets us apart from low-cost, low-reliability alternatives.

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