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# India takes on Beeb assembly

*by Geoff Nairn*

A DEAL struck with the Indian Government could see BBC micros in 250,000 Indian schools by 1990. Moreover, the machines will be made in the Punjab by the state-owned company Semiconductor Complex Ltd.

Initially, model Bs will be assembled from Acorn kits, but full-scale manufacturing will follow. Even the 6502 processor chip, at the heart of every Beeb, will carry the 'Made in India' stamp: Semiconductor Complex will manufacture it under licence from the American Rockwell Corporation.

The only components which the Indians cannot supply are the custom-built ULA chips: they will continue to come from Acorn.

The commitment to have a BBC micro in 250,000 schools is part of the Indian Government's five year development plan and was influenced by the Queen's recent gift of 30 Beebs to Indian schools.

Acorn stands to do quite well out of the deal for, apart from producing the vital ULA chips, the company also gains a useful — and possibly cheaper — second source of 6502 chips.

A similar agreement has been reached in Mexico, where Harry Mazal — a large Mexican computer company—will produce BBC micros for the whole of South America.

The machine used will be the American version of the model B which has a different power supply and television picture standard. It will be further modified with a Spanish-language keyboard and operating system ROM. As with the Indian company, Harry Mazal will initially assemble the Beeb from a kit of parts, but a manufacturing facility will come later.

## **Plans for China**

Acorn's sights are now turned on China — a potentially huge market as a quarter of the world's population live there. Plans are afoot to produce the Beeb in Hong Kong exclusively for the Chinese market and in April of this year Acorn demonstrated the machine in Peking.

In both China and India, the consumer markets are comparatively small, but, as the Indian deal shows, the educational and industrial sectors are massive. And both countries are crying out for western technology.