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● BUILDING COMPETENCE

Skilling hub for railway works



ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE. M Robert Rajasekaran, head of L&T's Competency Development Centre in Kanchipuram, near Chennai, at a skilling session for professionals working on railway construction projects **BIJOY GHOSH**

TE Raja Simhan

In the railway construction sector there is a growing need for skilled supervisors, engineers and managers to promote innovation and excellence. Larsen & Toubro's Competency Development Centre (CDC) in Kanchipuram, near Chennai, upgrades the skills of professionals working on the company's railway construction projects.

The centre attempts to bridge the gap between classroom theory and the real-world challenges faced by professionals entering the railway construction sector, says M Robert Rajasekaran, the head of CDC, who has spent 32 years with the Indian Railways.

As you enter the centre you step into 'L&T City Station' — a replica of a real railway station with a platform shelter, a mainline, and a loop line with points of crossing — which is used as part of the training programme. The centre also has models of tracks used in the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, Chennai Metro, Hyderabad Metro, and Mumbai Metro to showcase ongoing innovations in railway construction.

INTEGRATED LEARNING

India's largest integrated training centre for railway construction, CDC was set up in 2012 and has so far trained over 7,600 professionals, says Rajasekaran.

It is the only such integrated training centre set up by a private company, he adds. Even Indian Railways has separate verticals and training centres for each department such as tracks, signalling, telecommunication and mechanical. All of these working models are available under one roof at the CDC, he says.

Apart from Indian trainees, the centre also attracts attendees from various countries. In India, L&T has been involved with major metro projects in Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Bhopal, Bengaluru, Kanpur, and Agra. Its overseas gigs are in Mauritius, Dhaka, Jakarta, Dubai, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Hong Kong, among other places.

The trainees include technicians and engineers of Indian Railways, Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation, and other government and private organisations.

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Rajasekaran says the training programme is a blend of hands-on practical sessions and engaging classroom learning.

The centre can accommodate 300 technicians and 180 middle-level managers and/or engineers annually, covering all facets of railway construction including permanent way works, overhead electrification, signalling and telecommunication, and platform and building construction.

The sessions include familiar-

ising with the complex operation of level-crossing gates; main and loop lines; overhead equipment structures; and level-crossing lounges.

The practical sessions at multiple workshops include the assembling and dismantling of overhead equipment.

Each and every material, including nuts and bolts, used in the construction of railway overhead equipment, tracks, and signalling and telecommunication equipment are on display at the centre, Rajasekaran says.

Harshita Purswani, Engineering Manager, Design (Railways), L&T Construction, who was trained at the CDC, says the centre helped her hone the practical skills needed in her day-to-day work.

"While the core learning happens on the job, at site, the CDC helps us build a solid foundation," she says.

Aditya Bahadur Pal, Senior Engineer, Project Control and Monitoring Cell, Metro Business Unit, L&T Construction, says the CDC goes beyond fundamental training to equip personnel to tackle a range of practical challenges encountered in metro construction, thereby "fast-tracking our ability to contribute more meaningfully to the projects".

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