

SKILLED & EXPERIENCED ENGINEERS IN DEMAND

Talent crunch forces builders to go abroad

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NEW DELHI

INDIAN construction companies would soon have multi-colour employee profiles. Faced with an acute shortage of experienced civil engineers in India, several construction majors, including L&T, Punj Lloyd, Simplex and Soma Enterprises, have started recruiting engineers from countries like the Philippines, Ukraine, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. At present, they are recruiting engineers with specialised qualifications and experience in certain areas from these countries. The new recruits are posted at both domestic and overseas projects.

Punj Lloyd CMD Atul Punj told ET that his company has already recruited 45 engineers, mainly from the Philippines and Indonesia. "We plan to recruit a bigger batch soon," he said.



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Companies such as L&T, Punj Lloyd, Simplex and Soma Enterprises recruiting engineers from countries like the Philippines, Ukraine, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand

Soma Enterprises and Simplex are also learnt to have recruited engineers in small numbers from these countries.

L&T is mainly hiring from the Middle East, mostly Indian engineers settled there. It now regularly gives out job ads in leading publications in the region such as the Khaleej Times. The Gulf recruits work both in its overseas projects as well as L&T projects in India.

The overseas hiring are expected to run into several hundreds by the year end. "The country doesn't produce enough civil engineers to meet the demand of the domestic construction industry, and many of us are surviving by poaching engineers from other companies. But there are not enough senior and experienced engineers to poach now," says Simplex Infrastructure director Amitabh Mundhra.

He plans to fill this gap by importing senior engineers from foreign countries. By the end of the year, up to 10% of senior engineers or project managers in Simplex are expected to be expats.

► More poaching on the cards: P 19

More poaching likely abroad



► From Page 1

INDUSTRY circles said more domestic construction companies were expected to poach foreign markets, especially the South-East Asian markets for engineers, with special skill sets.

Bagging complex projects, especially in the oil, pipeline and petrochemical sectors, and insistence of some of the nodal agencies such as the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to have engineers with a certain number of minimum experience as a condition for awarding some of its road projects are also cited as major reasons for Indian construction companies to look out for recruitment.

"The Indian construction industry has just began to move from manual way of construction to mechanisation. Similarly, project sizes have suddenly jumped 10 times. But there are not enough engineers with the experience to manage these kind of projects," says Soma Enterprises CMD Rajendra Prasad Maganti.

He lists talent crunch as his biggest challenge right now.