



Capt. Sharma, IMTC
head of training centre

Training of the essence

With shipping skills in such high demand, India's training institutes are playing an ever more vital role

Hong Kong-based Anglo Eastern Ship Management is growing at a rapid pace, and currently managing 440 ships, meaning the Anglo Eastern Maritime Training Centre (AEMTC) in Mumbai needs regularly to increase its intake to supply seafarers to its principals.

'Our officer capacity has been growing steadily, and all of them are for captive consumption,' says AEMTC principal Capt. Kersi N Deboo. 'Three batches of Diploma in Nautical Science have passed out; the fourth will be passing out in August.'

'Our 20-acre campus in Karjat (about 80km from Mumbai) has touched its first-phase full capacity of 400 students. We own another 33 acres of barren land behind the campus, which we will develop in the second phase.'

'At the moment, we have pre-sea training at Karjat for 700 deck cadets and 300 junior engineers. After a year or two, we would need to enhance our capacity.'

In Mumbai, AEMTC is

shortly to launch an electrical engineers' course, and needs more space. An additional plot of land recently became available, and the new building on it has been used to expand post-sea facilities. A laboratory and two classrooms have been set up, and the GMDSS has also been moved there.



Capt. Deboo, AEMTC principal

The Indian Maritime Training Centre (IMTC) of Norway-based Wilh Wilhelmsen – the world's leading global vehicle carrier with an operation covering 130 vessels – focuses on trying to raise the competence levels of serving officers.

'Students come for refresher or short courses to enhance their skills; we have very few courses for

ratings,' says Capt.

Yashoverman Sharma, head of training centre at IMTC, which functions with a tight 18-member staff.

'Our annual output is about 4,000 course certificates, which is more or less our capacity,' he adds, with about 60% of that total coming from outside Wilhelmsen.

The centre also contributes towards training of seafarers and shore staff in other manning centres outside Mumbai. Over the last two years, it has developed programs for training those who would be trainers at those centres.

'We have exported our courses to other manning centres and overseas, as well,' says Sharma. 'Quite a few of our courses run in the Philippines.'

Bernhard Schulte Ship Management (BSM) provides Indian crews for some 664 ships worldwide, says the company's md in India, B N Prasad. 'Many international players have come to India and tried to exploit the ship management field, but only a handful have been successful. All major shipping companies with operations in the Far East try to set up back offices in India. We are among the few

companies from Hong Kong who have been successful.'

BSM has an annual intake of 80-100 deck cadets and recently invested \$150,000 in hardware, bringing in the latest in simulators. 'The aspirants have to pass our internal tests before they are taken in,' says Prasad. 'We have tied up with VMI (Vishwakarma Maritime Institute) in Pune, which runs courses for two batches of 40 Indian cadets. We have given them an assurance that all the boys who pass will be absorbed by Bernhard Schulte.'

Prasad feels that the crewing field in India is becoming increasingly difficult, and that maritime training institutes are witnessing too large an inflow of junior cadets of dubious quality.



B N Prasad, BSM md

'The industry gets a bad name because so many of them don't get eventual placement,' he says. 'On the other hand, the Director-General of Shipping has not done enough to control the quality, and has lowered standards.'

'Today, it is youngsters with poor marks who don't get entry to any professional courses who are taking up seafaring as a profession. The academic standard of these boys is very poor, as is their attitude. Also, the willingness of foreign seafarers to come. ●