

# New Building Materials<sup>®</sup> & Construction World

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## Roads & Bridges

Use of XPS in Construction of Zojila Approach Road  
Constructing Bowstring Girder ROB on Purvanchal E-way  
Bogibee| Bridge – Foundation & Sub-Structure Construction

## Developments

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# APL Apollo: Breaking the Mould



APL Apollo has been leading the change in the Steel Tubes and Pipes manufacturing sector with its revolutionary products; it is now the largest producer of ERW steel pipes in India with an installed capacity of 2.55 million tons. **Sanjay Gupta, CMD, APL Apollo**, shares insights on factors driving the company and making it a frontrunner in the steel pipes and tubes industry.

**How has APL Apollo Tubes grown over the years and what milestones has it achieved?**

APL Apollo has maintained a dominant position in the branded structural steel tubes market and has a pan-India presence which it has expanded over three decades. The company has gone from strength to strength - from establishing its first manufacturing plant in Sikandarabad in 1986, it is now the largest producer of ERW steel pipes in India, with an installed capacity of 2.55 million tons.

In fact, APL Apollo has attained pole position in all the customer segments it caters to with its tubes and pipes that are seen as

tough, utilitarian, environment-friendly and scalable. As a frontrunner in the domestic industry, APL Apollo has built a solid 3-tier distribution and supply chain mechanism to ensure that its products and services can be easily accessed by customers. It enjoys a direct marketing presence across India with over 790 distributors and warehouse-cum-branches in over 20 cities.

**APL Apollo has broken the mould by manufacturing square and rectangular pipes. What promotional activities has the company undertaken to spread awareness amongst the end-users?**

When APL Apollo entered the market, instead of following the prevailing trend, it transformed the entire scenario, by introducing square and rectangular pipes

which have a better load bearing capacity, even for huge structures, and replacing the conventional steel products.

APL Apollo focuses on innovation to fulfil the shifting preferences of consumers and to provide high-quality products at competitive prices. We have launched a series of brand awareness and marketing campaigns to familiarise consumers with our exclusive products.

**APL has reduced its debt of Rs 7.8 billion in 2020 to 2 billion in 30 June 2021 and it aims to become a debt-free company by June/September 2022. What has been the driving force behind the company's high performance?**

Cost efficiency, our competitive edge, innovative offerings, adoption of latest technologies, and our capacity to unlock new markets, are the main drivers of APL Apollo's high performance.

APL Apollo has been a pioneer in researching, producing, and launching a range of futuristic products in the market. In fact, innovation is the key to APL Apollo's dynamic growth. Having surpassed its competitors, APL Apollo is now the single largest company, having captured a major market share in the structural steel tubes industry.





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Apollo Mechanical tubes are ideal for heavy-duty applications that require higher load bearing capacity, hardness, toughness and the ability to withstand maximum stress making them ideal for use in industrial instruments, machineries and lifting & handling equipment

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**What are your plans for capacity expansion and for growing your basket of value-added products?**

APL Apollo has high stakes in India's \$200 billion construction industry. Already, the company is engaged in developing high diameter, high thickness steel tubes. APL Apollo has been successfully replacing the five conventional structural products such as steel angle channels, wood, aluminium, concrete RCC, and long steel products, including metal plates, with its extraordinary products in this segment.

APL Apollo has also come up with a wide range of designer galvanized pipes, which are an upgrade of the conventional steel pipes by virtue of engraved designs on them. To meet the fast-growing demand in the interior design industry, APL Apollo has

launched 'Apollo Signature', an attractive collection of designer pipes with special embossing for modern, stylish structures.

Apollo Column is India's largest range of square hollow steel sections (HSS); these have emerged as the preferred choice in every type of construction, especially in the Pre-Engineered Buildings segment, where it has become an essential feature due to its high weight bearing capacity and enhanced speed of construction.

In the future, APL Apollo may explore various segments, however, its focus will remain on the structural steel segment, where it foresees abundant growth in the next 10 years.

**As quality comes with a price, how do you balance quality with affordability?**

At APL Apollo, our aim is to meet the shifting preferences of consumers and provide them high-quality products at competitive prices. Our focus is on innovations - be it the integration of the latest technology or through optimum utilisation of resources. The company never hesitates in investing in R&D to create new products, adapt new applications, strengthen manufacturing processes, develop new markets, and thereby increase its market share.

APL Apollo has achieved the Recognized Export House status and is also ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004 and OHSAS 18001:2007 certified. Our products are BIS marked and certified by reputed international agencies like SGS (France), CE (Europe) etc.

**APL's product portfolio includes specialized industries like equipment manufacturing, material handling etc; what quality control processes do you have to ensure that the products don't belie end-users' expectations?**

In order to ensure that our end product is both durable and safe for use, we carry out an ABC analysis, which comprises of a graphical comparison of production parameters with standard norms. We carry out comprehensive quality checks at all stages - from raw material procurement to the end product and ISI-marked delivery. Our rigorous quality checks include tests to measure hardness, flattening, tensile and drift tests, among others.

Moreover, we have an online non-destructive testing system (eddy current testing) to check tube defects like cracks, pinholes, open welds, voids, inclusions, concentrated porosity, weld defects, mechanical damages, opened-up skin laminations, deep pitting, and parent material defects. We have strengthened our quality management system further by outsourcing different kinds of checks from NABL and other approved labs.

**What is the company's roadmap for sustainable growth in the construction sector, including products to keep roads safe?**

APL Apollo has launched revolutionary products with a futuristic vision of bringing in strong yet elegant solutions to make roads safer and to enhance landscapes. The company is a major provider of tubes for road delineators used in dangerous curves, tunnels, bridges, and parking lots, etc.





APL Apollo's aesthetically advanced and highly durable H-section Oval for road safety and fencing provides better visibility on turns. The company also offers parking barriers and a range of fencing solutions. Our focus has always been to bring-in the most advanced and research-led products for engineers and architects to help them ace the art of construction.

**How are business models transforming with Industry 4.0? What are your views on adoption of technologies like AI, IoT and Cloud in the manufacturing industry?**

APL Apollo, like most of the frontrunners in the industry, is already in the process of adapting to significant changes to embrace Industry 4.0 transformation. We understand that adoption of technologies such as AI, IoT and Cloud in the manufacturing industry will unleash the next digital revolution that will help India meet its sustainable development goals.

**Please tell us about your dealer/distributor network.**

APL Apollo has a pan-India presence with 10 manufacturing facilities: 4 near Delhi-NCR, 3 in Bangalore, and one each in Raipur, Murbad and near Mumbai. We have a typical B2C franchisee model wherein we sell our goods to around 800 distributors, who in turn sell to 50,000 retailers, who further sell to 200,000 fabricators.

Products finally reach the end-customers, who could be a house owner, a real estate developer, a contractor, or an engineer. Many of our distributors are exclusive for APL Apollo while others are multi-brand.

**How strong is APL Apollo's export business?**

We are the largest producer of Electric Resistance Welded (ERW) steel pipes and tubes in India and are exporting to over 20 countries globally. We are the fastest growing pre-galvanized steel tubes and pipes manufacturer and exporter in India.

The company has received the Export House status and has been awarded patents for six product designs: Handrail,

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Road safety has always been an issue of concern for Government of India with the growth in numbers of road accidents and injuries. Apollo H-section oval are specially designed to address both, the safety and design elements which simultaneously provides cost-reduction in the project as these can be recycled and re-used mitigating the impact on environment

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Narrow Section, Window L Section, Window T, Window Z and Elliptical Tube.

**What is your view of the current infrastructure construction industry in India and its growth potential?**

Despite the daunting situation created by the pandemic, the business scenario has improved considerably on the back of the government's highly impactful strategies to stimulate growth in the infrastructure construction sector. It's quite encouraging that the Indian government has already planned to spend USD 1.4 trillion during 2019 – 2023 on infra development projects, which include roads, bridges, and townships. The fact is that infra development is crucial for growing the country's economy.

**To build 100 smart cities, metro projects in over 50 cities, and to provide housing to all; do you think India has the expertise, the workforce, technology, and the machinery to make these projects a reality?**

Infra and real estate construction is undoubtedly among the topmost priorities of the country in view of the government's ambitious schemes of 100 smart cities, metro projects, and, above all, its Housing for All goal.

India does have the required expertise and a strong workforce of more than 44 million in the construction sector. In fact, India has witnessed considerable progress in construction technology and solutions for infrastructure development.

The construction industry in India is undergoing revolutionary changes in terms of building technology, state-of-the-art machinery, and advanced building materials. Artificial intelligence has also transformed the industry with better planning and by helping in designing smart/tech-enabled cities. Especially, the real estate and infra sectors, which are fast adopting technology across the supply chain and for enabling more efficient and transparent operations, so much so that digital technology is being increasingly utilized for speedy delivery of projects. ●