

# Loco maker Wabtec looks to make Bihar unit key pillar of global chain

**DHRUVAKSH SAHA**

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Close to 6,500 jobs in Bihar and other states, directly or indirectly, rely on a factory in Marhowrah — the ₹2,000 crore diesel locomotive factory, where Wabtec Corporation is building 1,000 locomotives for the Indian Railways.

With over 700 locomotives already manufactured and an order pipeline till 2028, the company is drawing up plans to make the facility a mainstay in the Indian market and a key pillar in its global supply chain, both for high-level assembly and locomotive exports.

“As we come towards the

end of the project, its future looks bright. We continue to believe that Indian Railways will need diesel locomotives. They have already declared they need it for emergency and disaster-related purposes. We have the best diesel locomotives in the fleet in terms of performance and fuel consumption,” said Sujatha Narayan, senior vice-president and Wabtec India region leader, in an interview with *Business Standard*.

Last month, the company also saw the first export of its locomotive to Guinea, signalling long-term viability for the project as it becomes an export centre.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagging off the export locomotive, the ministry of railways, which is a 24 per cent equity partner in the Marhowrah project, is working on its strategy on how to support continuing the factory beyond 2028, she added.

## **FIRM BETS ON MARHOWRAH TO BUILD ON LOCAL MARKET**

“We have two factories in the US, and there are facilities in Brazil and Kazakhstan. India is also now in the picture, but at the same time, it is our clear expectation that we will have a local market and business as well... you can't have a plant just exporting products,” said Narayan.

The firm is using 400 suppliers across Bihar and surrounding areas — with nearly 60 per cent being micro small and medium enterprises.

The company is looking at Africa and Australia to export locomotives from India. For local business, Wabtec believes that geopolitical uncertainty has a role to play.

“Given the geopolitical situation globally, there will be uncertainty in terms of fuel cost, power, etc. Diesel locos play a major role in national security in these times,” said Sandeep Selot, managing director vice-president, South Asia & Asean, Freight Business at Wabtec.