

Steel buildings are here to stay

Trend set to catch up in commercial segments too, says leading PEBS firm

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A leading player in pre-engineered building systems space is upbeat over growth in demand for steel buildings, including from the residential segment.

Pre-engineered, steel structures that have become a preferred option for factory sheds for some 20 years now, is fast catching up in the commercial building segment too.

The trend is also set to touch the residential building segment, said B.V. Ramakrishnan, head-operations of PEBS Pennar.

Reinforcing the confidence are advantages a custom-designed steel structures, which serve as a shell of the building, offer by way of relatively faster development, occupation and monetisation of the property.

On the design and space utilisation front, there are



A worker making a steel structure at PEBS Pennar plant near Sadasivpet, about 75 km from the city. ■ N. RAVI KUMAR

benefits too. "If you go with a steel building, you can have end-to-end columns... and [no] intermediate columns [are there]," he said in an interaction at PEBS Pennar plant near Sadasivpet, about 75 km from Hyderabad.

A part of the ₹2,000-crore Pennar group, the company has undertaken several hundred projects, including

its first steel building structure for a residential project in Hyderabad.

While the foundation is in concrete, the super structure is made of steel. For interiors, the project developers have a plethora of choices for materials. The cost of the structures varies depending on the design. Another feature of steel

buildings is that they can be relocated, he said.

The PEBS Pennar plant that began commercial production in 2010 has a capacity of 1.20 lakh tonnes. The company, which in 2017-18 had revenues of a little over ₹600 crore, is into a range of products and solutions in the areas of pre-engineered buildings, custom-designed steel structures and engineering services. It is targeting revenue growth in excess of 20% this fiscal.

Going forward, it intends to focus on high rise buildings and solar structures. "We are slowly moving from PEB to structural, high rise buildings. In the last three months, enquiries have started," he said. Multi-level car parking is a segment where it sees considerable growth.

Besides solar module mounting structures and their erection, the company

has diversified into telecom tower structures, said K.M. Sunil, vice-president, Pennar Group. The PEBS and Pennar Industries, through a joint venture, would also consider acquisition of a firm or setting up a plant in the U.S. for building products and PEB, he added.

Engineering work

The PEBS Pennar is also keen on taking up more engineering service with the U.S. firm NCI Inc, with which it has a technical knowhow licensing agreement.

The list of projects executed by the firm are a warehouse for Amazon, structural portions of Kannur International Airport, 18 Hyderabad Metro Rail stations and 450 market yards (sheds) for the Telangana government. About three years ago, it also made nearly 10,000 government school buildings in Assam.