

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S WELCOME SPEECH AT 63rd ANNUAL DAY**A Very Good Afternoon**

Respected Member (Infrastructure)/ Rly Bd; Director General (HR)/ Rly Bd; General Manager/South Central Rly, Director General/NAIR, Additional Member (Signal); Principal Ex.Dir (T&MPP) /Rly Bd, Other dignitaries present on-line including PCSTEs of Zonal Rlys; PHODs, DRMs and Other Officers of South Central Rly and other Rlys, PSUs, Office bearers and Members of Women's Welfare Organisation, Representatives of Organised Unions; Representatives of Press & Media, Dear Trainees & Awardees, On behalf of entire Faculty and Staff of IRISSET, I extend a warm welcome to all guests and dignitaries present on-line on the 63rd Annual Day Celebrations. Annual Day celebration to commemorate the setting up of this institute is a grand event which is eagerly awaited by everyone. However, this year, it is not feasible to conduct this event with the usual fan-fare because of the pandemic & for the first time the event is being conducted on the 'On-line platform'.

At the outset, I pay my humble tribute to the visionary Founder and first Principal of the Institute late Shri S. A. Srinivasan. I also express the gratitude to all ex. Principals/Directors & Faculty Members of the Institute who have made valuable contribution in shaping up this Institute.

IRISET is a unique Centralized Training Institute in several ways. IRISET is the only CTI on Indian Rlys which handles comprehensive technical training needs of S&T Officers as well as Supervisors at all stages of their career right from entry into service. In terms of the workload, IRISET handles the training workload which is more than the combined workload of the other three technical CTIs namely, IRICEN, IRIEEN and IRIMEE put together with the lowest unit training cost per employee among all the CTIs.

This year's Annual day story has to focus on how IRISET coped up with the pandemic and how it reinvented itself during the lockdown. During the last week of March this year, IRISET like all other training institutes was closed down for physical classes. As the training of officers and staff engaged in handling safety related S&T systems has to be continued, new solutions to impart training in alternative form of learning had to be adopted. I am happy to inform that the Institute restored training for IRSSE Probationers who were undergoing Phase-II training at IRISET through on-line classes within a short span of one Week. IRISET Faculty showed exemplary adaptability to pick up and master the new mode of teaching.

Encouraged by response to the online training, a comprehensive review of all courses for officers & Supervisors was conducted to identify the content that could be taken up on-line. And blended structure of training with judicious mix of on-line and on-campus sessions was finalized for all courses.

History was created on 4thJuly'2020 when the first e-Refresher Certificate was given to Ms. Sangeeta Justine, JE/Sig/S.Rly by the then Member (S&T) on successful completion of first ever e-Refresher course conducted by IRISSET based on the blended structure approved by Bd. Close to 1600 Supervisors have attended e-Refresher course so far this year as compared to the normal annual figure of 1000-1100. Buoyed by the success of e-Refresher Courses, IRISSET took up another challenging task of conducting Integration courses for Group-B Officers. Group-B Officers in S&T deptt are drawn from different streams i.e. Sig, Tele, Drg Office & Workshop. Newly promoted Gr-B Officers are required to undergo Integration course at IRISSET to gain holistic understanding of all streams of S&T working. Traditionally, IRISSET has been training 30-40 Group-B Officers annually in these Integration courses. However, the concept of Half-day on-line Integration courses found widespread acceptance and 237 officers have attended the online Integration courses so far thereby clearing almost the entire backlog which got accumulated over the years.

Indian Railways had recruited large number of Apprentices who were waiting for initial training at IRISSET as they didn't have any Laptops/ Desktops for starting their online training. Zonal Rlys were requested to create group multi-media facilities while maintaining social distancing along with a nominated Mentor. And thereafter the online initial training of these apprentices was undertaken. I am glad to inform that a total of 995 App. have been given online training through these group facilities.

In addition to the mandatory courses, IRISSET has a major responsibility of preparing Indian Rly for the new technologies which are being introduced for improving safety as well as to generate additional line capacity. 34 equipment courses were conducted on modern S&T Systems during the period which attracted huge participation. In addition, IRISSET conducted 45 Webinars on various issues/technologies and experts from Industry, Zonal Rlys, RDSO and Academicians addressed these sessions. These Webinars became highly popular and were hugely successful in spreading awareness about the new technology systems. These Webinars were attended by close to 4000 participants. Several Project studies were undertaken by the SAG Officers during their Spl. Courses on implementation strategies and challenges in adoption of new technology systems on the Railways.

In addition, IRISSET made following other major achievements:

1. IRISSET carried out hand-holding of the Zonal STTCs in conducting online classes by creating blended structure for the courses conducted by them for Technicians & Helpers as well as by creating a common platform where they could be shared their online content with other STTCs to bring synergy.
2. A Workshop was conducted for CRSs & Dy.CRSs on issues related to Introduction of ETCS Level-II systems.
3. A new beginning was made by conducting a special course on RAMS for Kochi Rail Metro Ltd.

4. IRISSET faculty played a key role in revision of Signal and Tele Manuals.
5. Direct monetary savings in TA alone close to 6 Cr. was achieved so far.
6. In an unique effort, IRISSET conducted an on-line “Hindi Kavi Sammelan” which was concurrently viewed by more than 7500 viewers.
7. Women’s Welfare Organisation generously contributed to the welfare of needy during the lockdown. IRISSET family also raised funds for Covid Insurance of outsourced staff working on the campus.

The pandemic has thrown up the opportunity for the Institute to reach out to the trainees in a new customer friendly way. Migration to blended mode of training has opened up several new possibilities. In last 7 months, the participation of trainees has increased by over 60% and training-man days have gone up by 28%.

IRISSET has been handling a workload of about 60-70,000 training man-days annually. Keeping in mind the requirement of the Mandatory courses as well as the vision enshrined in the Skill Development plan of IR, this annual capacity is required to be enhanced to 1,30,000. Blended structure for the courses once approved by Board will help a great deal in bridging the skill gap on IR. Advanced online training tools with enhanced multi-media content as well as virtual reality inputs are required to be supplemented for improved online experience. This institute is more than 60 years old and the present infrastructure needs to be given a thorough facelift and made fully e-compatible to bring it at par with the other modern training institutes. It is hoped that Institute’s proposal in this regard would find Board’s favour.

On the technical infra front, new technology systems of ATP i.e. TCAS and ETCS-II are required to be installed at the Institute. SCR and RailTel have been approached for help in this matter. Also, the obsolete Outdoor Mechanical Signal Yards and lever frames are required to be replaced with Electrical yards with an overlay of CTC & TMS Systems. This work can be taken up once clearance to the proposal sent to Board is received.

This is the first Annual Day after posting of a DG. Bd's decision reflects the priority assigned to skill up-gradation on IR to match its modernization and expansion plans. I am sure that necessary framework for administrative and financial empowerment of the DGs which is under consideration at Board for some time now would be put in place soon for effective functioning of the DGs.

On this auspicious day, IRISSET re-dedicates itself to its mission objective of continuously improving its efforts in providing training for Railway Officers and Supervisors and to earnestly work for bridging the skill gap to make IR Atam-Nirbhar in S&T Systems at this crucial juncture when IR is at door-step of a major technological leap and the organization is looking at S&T engineers for solutions to improve safety and line capacity.

Once again, I extend a hearty welcome to all of you.

JAI HIND