

O. Vishveswaraiah

Vice-President, SPML Infra Limited

Over a 32 year long career, O. Vishveswaraiah has gained diverse experience in water supply and infrastructure development. He has handled a number of large projects for water supply, urban water supply management, water treatment and sewage treatment, and lift irrigation. He has also been involved in industrial and commercial buildings, roads and bridges (ROBs and RUBs), hydropower and cross-country pipeline projects.



Vishveswaraiah joined SPML Infra Limited (formerly known as Subhash Projects & Marketing Limited) as an engineer and worked in various capacities across India, mainly in the water and road sectors. He is currently vice-president, projects, with the company. His role is to envision sustainable solutions for early project completion and ensure provision of potable water to consumers. His vision is to see India grow into a developed country, with citizen access to basic facilities such as potable water, sewerage infrastructure, power and transportation. He would also like to see assets being created and maintained for the next generation using the most advanced technologies at lower costs.

According to Vishveswaraiah, the inability to recognise the value of water is the main cause for its waste and misuse. Low operating efficiency, a high rate of non-revenue water (NRW) and low energy efficiency linked to ageing infrastructure together with inefficient practices, limited investments and low tariffs make it difficult for water utilities to recover costs and improve service sustainability. Water loss is among the top issues faced by utilities globally. It is estimated that 3.4 trillion litres of treated drinking water leak from aged and outdated supply networks in India each year. Average household leaks can account for nearly 45,500 litres of water being wasted every year and 10 per cent of homes have leaks that lead to 146,000 litres or more of wastage a year.

Vishveswaraiah's most memorable assignment goes back to the time when he was project manager for a waste treatment plant (WTP) in Nuranang district of Arunachal Pradesh. Despite inhospitable conditions in the area, he and his team successfully constructed and commissioned the 7 million litre per day WTP to provide potable water to the tribal consumers. Another signature assignment for him was reducing NRW in central Bengaluru from 53 per cent to 20.4 per cent, under adverse working conditions along with his dedicated team.

Vishveswaraiah is a civil engineer from Bangalore University with a master's in structural engineering, also from Bangalore University. ▀

Shivanand Nimbargi

MD and CEO, Ayana Renewable Power

Shivanand Nimbargi, a power veteran with over three decades of experience, has had an interesting and eventful professional journey. He worked for Babcock & Wilcox, ABB ABL, GEC Alstom and Alstom (all the previous entities were a part of Alstom), etc., across different departments including erection, commissioning, sales, procurement, quality, project management and business management. He has also served on the board of NTPC Alstom Services Limited. In 2011, Nimbargi moved away from conventional energy to set up a renewable energy company, Green Infra, for IDFC Private Equity Company. About five years later, he shifted gears and joined L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited as MD and CEO. In 2018, UK development finance institution CDC Infrastructure invited Nimbargi to head Ayana Renewable Power, its renewable energy venture in India. Today, Nimbargi's top priorities for Ayana are to increase its portfolio to 10 GW by 2025 and augment round-the-clock capacity.

Taking a top-level view of the sector, Nimbargi says, "The sector is going through a challenging time. With the current global geopolitical situation, supply chains have been impacted. This is in addition to the challenges we faced in the pandemic. We also have issues around the outstanding payments from discoms, which continue to rise. We are waiting for the Electricity Act amendment to go through without much dilution so that the current financial burden on discoms on account of subsidies, free power, etc. gets isolated from their balance sheets, to be rather covered in state budgets. This will help discoms manage cash and pay their dues and bring them to the normal cycle of 30-45 days. Further, the provisions for a cross-subsidy balance fund and a mandatory payment security mechanism will act as catalysts for improving the sectoral environment."

Nimbargi has some recommendations for addressing the sector's challenges and decarbonising the economy. "We need to develop the transmission network, streamline rules for land acquisition in different states, make the approval-granting process time-bound and efficient," he says.

As for the person behind the professional, Nimbargi belongs to Karnataka but has lived, studied and worked across India. He is an engineer married to an engineer. He studied mechanical engineering at the PDA College of Engineering, Gulbarga, Karnataka, and has done Advanced Management Program from INSEAD. His wife chose to be a stay-at-home mom and raise their children. Down-time for Nimbargi is about spending time on the golf greens. ▀

