

# Dry walls, the next tech

Saint-Gobain Gyproc is in touch with architects and builders to familiarise them with the product.

Dry walls are the next major technological development in Indian construction industry as they offer benefits of speed, cost savings and utility, says Mr John Nelson, Global Marketing Manager, Saint-Gobain Gyproc, UK.

Dry walls are prefabricated structures, primarily involving use of metal frames and gypsum-based sheets to put up interior walls in buildings.

## POPULAR ABROAD

These are a norm in most countries but yet to make a mark in India, and that is set to change as the company gears up to convince builders to use its drywalls, Mr Nelson says.

Saint-Gobain Gyproc is in touch

with architects and builders to familiarise them with the product. Of course, the entry of multinational players in industry, particularly hospitality, IT and manufacturing sectors, into India, has helped the company get a base of potential customers who are familiar with the brand and the product. That is what Saint-Gobain Gyproc will exploit in growing the market for dry walls, says Mr Nelson.

First it will tap the commercial segment, prove itself in the market and move into homes, he says.

Gyproc is not a new name in India, earlier it was India Gypsum, an associate company of British Plasterboards. Following the acquisition of British Plasterboards globally by the €44-billion Saint-Gobain group in 2006, India Gypsum became Saint-Gobain Gyproc.

In India, gypsum boards are used in false ceilings and panelling and the market is estimated at about 25 million sq.m. Saint-Gobain Gyproc is the mar-

ket leader with sales of about 20 million sq.m. It has an established production capacity of about 40 million sq.m from four production facilities in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai.

This is not just about selling sheets to substitute existing material but Gyproc is also offering total solutions and systems for building.

Look at any of the construction sites in India and the first point that hits you is the amount of water everywhere, says Mr Nelson. But a dry wall is faster to construct and takes up little time — time is money, he says.

## LIGHTER, SMOOTHER, CRACK-FREE

A leading hotel, and one international airport has used Saint-Gobain's dry wall, says Mr N.E. Subramanian, General Manager Marketing, Saint-Gobain Gyproc. Spelling out the advantage of dry wall over brick and mortar, he says, a dry wall would be 8-10 times lighter than an equivalent brick wall, three-

five times faster to construct, offer better aesthetics as it is smoother crack-free as the boards are machine-made and can be tailored to specific needs to offer better insulation, moisture protection, fire safety with one-hour to four-hour rating, better insulation and acoustics.

With buildings growing taller, cost and space constraints growing, lightweight structures that also save on space are faster to build offer obvious advantages, says Mr Subramanian.

Mr Nelson is optimistic on growth opportunities, look at the US with 10 per cent of the global population, plaster boards consumption is about 10 per cent of the global market at about 300 million sq.m annually. India counts for nearly a fifth of the world population. It is also training contractors on the proper techniques to install drywalls — it is not rocket science there is a proper way of doing it for best value, he says.

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