

CAREERS IN LAND TRANSPORT

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Paving
the way
for smoother journeys

This engineering maintenance manager works tirelessly behind the scenes to keep Singapore moving

BY RACHAEL GOH

Mr Shaik Muhammad Loqman B. Ab Rashid is somewhat of a professional problem-solver. As an engineering maintenance manager (EMM) in SMRT Trains' Permanent Way Engineering Trains Branch division, the 32-year-old leads different teams of engineers in maintaining, upgrading and correcting faults on train tracks and machines.

These machines include Engineering Trains and Specialised Track Maintenance vehicles, which are akin to heavy machineries used in the construction industry. They supplement and boost the division's maintenance of train tracks to ensure commuters have a smooth and safe journey daily.

As part of the job, Mr Loqman oversees a fleet of Rail Grinding Vehicles that correct wear-and-tear occurring from heavy track usage and leads testing works to improve the efficiency of train operations. He also leads in-house modifications to improve operations and maintenance regimes.

"As an EMM, I face challenges that can occur at any time of day or night. In the day, we ensure the upkeep of our maintenance machines. At night, we use the machines to conduct inspections on the tracks," says Mr Loqman.

"These operations have an enormous impact on the nation. Every day, SMRT trains carry more than two million passengers across a distance that is roughly equivalent to two times the equatorial circumference of Earth."

Laying the tracks for a lasting career

Mr Loqman's career at SMRT Trains began in January 2011 when he joined as an assistant



Mr Shaik Muhammad Loqman B. Ab Rashid is passionate about improving train systems for commuters in Singapore. PHOTO: LIN ZHAOWEI

engineer. A substantial portion of this job was centred on the maintenance and operations of tracks and machines. He was later promoted to a senior assistant engineer, a role which trained him to lead a team in the analyses and correction of track failures.

These experiences gave him valuable hands-on exposure and built his proficiency in the complex functions of the rail network.

"The many complexities that we face at work require us to be experts in various fields of study. This is why the technical knowledge and skills that we gain in the early years are crucial. They are a stepping stone to a thriving career in this sector," says the father-of-one.

Lifelong learning

Besides learning on the job, Mr Loqman also attends training programmes to continuously develop skills that are relevant to the dynamic sector.

He attended a training scheme under the SMRT Train Engineer Professionalisation (STEP) Framework, which combines

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MR SHAIK MUHAMMAD LOQMAN B. AB RASHID
engineering maintenance manager
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SMRT Trains

structured training in system engineering with leadership development and management skills. He has also undergone electrical installation courses to deepen his understanding of railway operations and pique his interest in the design of engineering systems.

These training courses have kept Mr Loqman prepared for unexpected challenges that arise in his line of work. For example, he has participated in real-life train rescue operations that require tight coordination, a cool head and technical expertise with little room for error.

Despite the demands of his job, he remains passionate about improving train systems to ensure safe and seamless journeys for commuters.

"The work here impacts millions of commuters daily and that alone brings me job satisfaction. If you have a public-serving mind-set, and have a passion for engineering and innovation, then this career path could be an opportunity for you," he says.



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