



India's electrical safety gap

Experts say cost-cutting, poor compliance and a shortage of skilled professionals continue to undermine electrical safety despite better awareness and improved technologies

Despite growing awareness about electrical safety and advances in technology, India continues to face significant challenges in preventing electrical accidents and fires, with experts pointing to cost-driven procurement practices, inadequate skills, and weak compliance as major concerns.

Speaking at a panel discussion on "Electrical Safety: Competence, Compliance and Caution," organized by mojo4industry in partnership with Polycab India Limited, industry leaders and safety experts stressed the need for a holistic approach to electrical safety across infrastructure, industrial and commercial projects.

Milindkumar Deshmukh, former Director and Fire Advisor to the Government of Maharashtra and President of the National Association of Fire Officers, highlighted the severity of the issue, citing recent statistics.

"You would be surprised that about 5,888 people died in India in 2024 according to NCRB data. A significant percentage of these deaths are related to fire incidents, many of which have electrical origins," Deshmukh said.

He noted that while awareness about electrical safety may have improved, accident data does not indicate a corresponding decline in incidents.

"Sometimes I say it is the blame on electricity because we do not have proper fire investigation mechanisms. If electricity itself were so unsafe, the country's industrial and economic progress would not have happened. The real challenge is identifying the root cause through proper investigation and forensic analysis," he added.

Improvement in awareness

According to Shashi Amin, Director (Non-Board Member) & CEO – B2B Channel & Corporate Communication, Polycab India Limited, consumer awareness has improved significantly over the past decade, especially in the selection of electrical products.

"Earlier, it was left entirely to electricians to decide which wires would be used. Today, consumers are asking about brands and specifications. They are becoming much more conscious about quality and safety," Amin said. Sheetal Bhilkar, Founder & CEO, Urja Building Services Consultants Pvt. Ltd. (UBSC), echoed the sentiment.

"We have definitely seen improvement. Earlier, many elec-



Milindkumar Deshmukh



Sheetal Bhilkar



Shashi Amin

tricians were not even aware of the type of wires they were using. Today, awareness about products such as FRLS wires has increased substantially. However, there is still a long way to go," she said.

L1 procurement culture under scrutiny

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the industry's dependence on awarding contracts based on the lowest bidder, commonly known as the L1 model.

"Attention to safety exists in data centres and major projects, but what is hurting the industry is that we are still finalizing orders on an L1 basis," Amin said. "Are we really evaluating the quality of brands? Are we inspecting materials properly? Often, critical installation work is left to contractors and electricians without sufficient oversight."

Sheetal said the problem begins at the design stage itself. "L1 starts from the design consultants. The qualifications and competence of consultants are not always evaluated. Then it continues during contractor selection and material procurement. At every stage, the lowest-cost approach creates problems," she said.

Deshmukh was even more direct in his criticism. "This L1 culture is a real cancer in India," he said. "Organizations conduct extensive technical evaluations, but eventually reverse auctions and target prices force vendors to cut costs. You cannot expect gold-standard quality and safety if you are only willing to pay for silver."

Risk factors

Drawing from years of fire investigations, Deshmukh identified several recurring causes behind electrical fires.

"We frequently observe poor electrical installations, undersized

cabling, incorrect selection of protective devices, loose terminal connections, improper cable joints and the use of substandard accessories," he said. "Many call it optimization, but in reality it is minimization."

Sheetal said audits often reveal deviations from approved designs, especially when it comes to cable sizing. "We carefully calculate current-carrying capacity and voltage drop before specifying cable sizes. Yet when we conduct audits, we often find contractors using smaller cables to save money," she said.

In one recent project, she said, even the client had instructed the contractor to change specifications without consulting the design team. "When developers themselves compromise on quality and safety, it becomes very difficult to maintain standards," she added.

Challenges

Amin emphasized that India already has strong standards in place, but compliance remains a concern. "India has mandated that wherever Indian Standards exist, products should comply with those standards. The question is whether we are actually adhering to them," he said.

Comparing India with developed markets, Amin pointed to a lack of trust between manufacturers and customers. "In many international markets, there is no concept of product inspection because customers trust manufacturers to consistently deliver compliant products. In India, there is still a trust deficit. Building that trust is critical."

Deshmukh argued that enforcement mechanisms also need strengthening. "The regulator lacks competency in some cases, and integrity is another challenge. We also face a shortage of skilled manpower, particularly in Tier-2

and Tier-3 cities," he said.

"There was a time when ITIs produced competent electricians. Today, many of these institutions are struggling. The question is: where will we get the skilled workforce needed to ensure safe installations?"

Safer alternatives

The discussion also highlighted advances in cable and wiring technologies designed to improve fire safety.

Amin noted that the industry has moved beyond conventional wiring systems to offer safer alternatives such as flame-retardant, low-smoke, fire-survival, zero-halogen and lead-free cables. "The National Building Code clearly recommends zero-halogen insulated wires for high-rise buildings because they do not release toxic gases during a fire," he said. "In the event of a fire, there is no chlorine and significantly lower toxic emissions. The technology is available, but adoption remains limited."

He added that while manufacturers continue to innovate, customers and project developers must be willing to embrace safer technologies.

Competence, compliance, caution

Concluding the discussion, the panel agreed that regulations and technology alone cannot eliminate electrical hazards.

Instead, improving safety will require a combination of skilled professionals, strict adherence to standards, responsible procurement practices and a stronger culture of safety.



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Schmersal expands operations in India

Schmersal Group announced the expansion of its operations in India with the inauguration of a new, state-of-the-art office facility spanning within 25,000 sq feet campus along with the opening of Product Experience Center (Marketing Gallery) in Wing A, Office no 603, AP4 Tech Park, Sr No 1344, Wagholi, Besides Grant Road, Pune-Nagar Road, Pune, 412207.

Schmersal also launched six new "Make in India" products, further expanding its portfolio of machine safety systems and solutions. These new products strengthen the company's offerings in safety, automation, and industrial efficiency while meeting its customers' evolving requirements across a wide range of applications.

This strategic expansion underscores Schmersal's ongoing commitment to innovation, engineering excellence, and delivering cutting-edge safety software and solutions to global markets with digital solution as an added value to customers. The new facility significantly enhances the company's operational capacity, enabling it to support growing customer demand and accelerate the development and deployment of next-generation technologies.

Strengthening global capabilities

The newly inaugurated office space has been designed to foster collaboration, innovation, and agility. The expansion will further strengthen Schmersal GCC's position as a high-impact hub for engineering, product development, and digital transformation initiatives within the global Schmersal Group network.

"This expansion marks an important milestone in our journey. We have decided to relocate to our own and bigger facility in Pune. It will explore to strengthen its global engineering, digital solution, innovation and automation capabilities in our current man- and machine safety solutions and service as an added value to align and upgrade to market and customer offerings," said Ramji Singh, Managing Director, Schmersal India. "The new facility not only reflects our growth ambitions but also reinforces our commitment to delivering world-class safety solutions. It provides an environment where innovation thrives and talent can achieve its full potential."

Along with the new office, Schmersal inaugurated its product experience center and also intro-



duced six new products from its Indian manufacturing operations.

In parallel with the facility expansion, the Schmersal Group also unveiled a new range of innovative products designed to meet the evolving needs of various industries. These products, developed and manufactured in India, focus on enhancing industrial safety, improving process efficiency, and enabling smarter automation across sectors including manufacturing, logistics, vertical transportation, automotive, warehousing, and infrastructure.

The newly launched portfolio features:

Safety Field Box Port Extender: Enhances system connectivity and scalability by enabling seamless integration of field components across complex industrial setups.
Magnetic Switch: A cost-efficient, European-standard-compliant solution offering reliable position monitoring with consistent performance and durability, especially suited for the elevator segment.

Fork Sensor: Infrared-based sensing solution designed for precise object detection in high-speed, high-accuracy industrial applications.

New Safety Limit Switch Series: Upgraded, robust, and versatile switches engineered to meet stringent safety requirements across diverse operating conditions, tailored for the Indian market.

Over-speed Governor Limit Switch: Designed to detect when systems such as elevators exceed safe operational speed, ensuring enhanced safety and immediate response.

Multi-level Parking Control System: Enables authorized users to control vehicle movement across levels using key-based

operation, supporting efficient and secure multiparking.

These solutions align with Schmersal's vision of turning workplaces into safer places.

The Product Experience Center showcases the Schmersal Group's comprehensive safety solutions and demonstrates machine safety compliance expertise provided by tec.nicum.

Visitors can experience:

- Safety solutions for people and machines
- Machine guarding, interlocking, and access control systems
- Comprehensive machine safety solutions based on six key pillars, complemented by software and engineering services
- The transformation of industrial machine applications into safer, smarter, and more digital solutions through Software as a Service (SaaS), in collaboration with tec.nicum and the Global Competence Center (GCC)

Driving Innovation

The expanded facility will also play a critical role in fostering talent development and supporting cross-functional collaboration. With enhanced infrastructure and increased capacity, the GCC aims to attract top engineering and technology talent while strengthening partnerships with global stakeholders.

The occasion also marks another significant milestone – 13 years of Schmersal's manufacturing operations in India, underscoring the company's long-standing commitment to the Indian market and its continued investment in local manufacturing and innovation.



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Philip Harting joins VDMA Main Board

The Association of German Machinery and Equipment Manufacturers has appointed Philip Harting to its Main Board. As Chairman of the Board and CEO of the HARTING Technology Group, Harting contributes his expertise in representing the industry's interests.

"Mechanical engineering is an important target market for our company," says Philip Harting. "For me, it is therefore only logical to represent mechanical and plant engineering in Germany and Europe and to campaign for the interests of the industry."

Harting is reinforcing the Main Board at a time of ongoing transformation for Germany as a business location. As recently as June, the VDMA had lowered its growth forecast for the German mechanical engineering industry to zero growth for 2026. At the same time, the association is optimistic about the future, as innovative machines and systems continue to be in demand internationally.

"Mechanical engineering in Germany is facing major challenges," as Harting puts it. "Protectionist geopolitics and supply chains that continue to be disrupted by wars and conflicts have a major influence on the industry's order situation and ability to deliver. The speed at which the traditional German industry has to change is enormous. I am pleased to be actively involved in shaping this change not only in the HARTING Technology Group, but also on the VDMA Main Board."

The VDMA is the largest interest group of the German and



Philip Harting

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European Machinery and Equipment Manufacturers and represents around 3,500 member companies. In the EU-27, mechanical engineering is the largest industrial employer, providing jobs for 3.1 million people. In 2025, the industry's machinery exports amounted to around 593 billion euros – more than a third of which came from Germany.



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First-of-its-kind loyalty community recognizes UMC owners with preferential benefits, expert access, and peer-driven growth

Phillips Machine Tools Asia, the region's premier distributor of Haas CNC machine tools announced the launch of the Haas UMC Masters Club — an exclusive membership community designed for customers who have invested in Haas 5-Axis Universal Machining Center (UMC) Series machines through Phillips Machine Tools Asia.

The Club was formally inaugurated by Gaurav Luthra, Technical Director of Auxein Medical — one of Asia's most prolific adopters of Haas UMC technology, with one of the highest numbers of UMC installations on the continent. In recognition of his deep expertise, his commitment to 5-axis precision manufacturing, and his standing within the community, Phillips Machine Tools Asia has appointed Gaurav Luthra as the Official Brand Ambassador of the Haas UMC Masters Club.

"Gaurav Luthra's journey with Haas UMC machines embodies everything the Masters Club stands for — relentless pursuit of precision, investment in capability, and a genuine desire to push the boundaries of what's possible in advanced manufacturing," said Rupesh Ranjan, Director - Sales for Phillips Machine Tools. "Having him inaugurate and champion this community sends

Phillips Machine Tools unveils Haas UMC Masters Club



a powerful signal to UMC owners across Asia: this Club is built by practitioners, for practitioners."

A Machine That Demands Its Own Community

The Haas UMC Series represents the pinnacle of simultaneous 5-axis machining — a class of machine trusted by aerospace, automotive, defense, and medical manufacturers worldwide for its rigidity, repeatability, and unmatched versatility. Owning one is a statement of intent. The UMC Masters Club is built to honor that intent and help members get more from their investment at every

stage of the machine's life.

"Our UMC customers are not casual buyers — they are forward-thinking manufacturers who have made a significant capital commitment," said Rupesh. "The UMC Masters Club is our commitment back to them: to ensure that every member has the tools, the knowledge, and the community to extract maximum value from their machine for years to come."

Three Pillars of Membership

The UMC Masters Club is structured around three principles: **Preferential Benefits** — Members unlock an exclusive suite

of commercial advantages designed to protect and extend their investment. From service and maintenance support to referral rewards and priority event access, the Club is built to reward loyalty with tangible returns.

Technical Learning & Expert Support — Manufacturing excellence is built on operator excellence. Members gain access to complimentary Haas Factory Outlet (HFO) training programs and expert OPTO (Optimization) consultations to sharpen their teams' capabilities, reduce cycle times, and unlock the full performance envelope of their machines.

Our UMC customers are not casual buyers — they are forward-thinking manufacturers who have made a significant capital commitment.

— Rupesh Ranjan, Director - Sales for Phillips Machine Tools

Lifecycle Value — A Haas UMC is a long-term asset. The UMC Masters Club is designed to accompany members through every phase of ownership — from commissioning through peak utilization — ensuring that the return on investment grows, not diminishes, with time.

Tiered Membership Recognition

The UMC Masters Club features a tiered structure — Gold, Silver, and Bronze — reflecting the depth of a member's engagement and investment with Phillips. Each tier carries its own distinct set of benefits, with members encouraged to contact Phillips Asia directly to learn what their membership unlocks. "We deliberately wanted this to be a conversation, not a brochure," Rupesh added. "The best way to understand what the

Club can do for your business is to speak with us directly."



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