

New academy to become 'gateway of rail industry'

FROM B1

(SIT) in Dover Drive, Mr Khaw said more than 15,000 workers may be needed.

About 10,000 are currently employed by the Land Transport Authority (LTA), as well as rail operators SMRT and SBS Transit, in the engineering, operations and maintenance fields.

To support the expansion of the rail network to 360km by 2030, as well as improve rail reliability, Singapore has to grow the pool of engi-

neering expertise, Mr Khaw said.

"This makes the rail industry a growth industry, whose employment prospects are almost guaranteed in the next decade," he added.

He said the role of rail engineers has become more complex over the years, and that SGRA will help train a new generation of rail engineers.

The academy will allow aspiring engineers and technicians to upgrade and reskill themselves to join the rail industry. It will also serve as a research and development centre for rail engineering.

SGRA chairman Cham Tao Soon said several initiatives are already under way. The academy is currently working with SkillsFuture Singapore and the two rail operators to develop a competency framework, he said.

The framework will allow SGRA to better identify training needs in the industry. It is also working on a rail research and technology road map that will allow it to develop solutions to enhance rail safety and reliability.

The academy has started developing a programme to help new and mid-career entrants to the industry enhance their technical skills and expose them to areas such as design and planning.

"In two to three years' time, the SGRA will become the gateway of

the railway industry," said Professor Cham.

To facilitate the academy's work, the LTA signed two agreements yesterday.

The first, with the Employment and Employability Institute, aims to attract, develop and retain the local rail industry workforce.

The second, with SIT and the International Council on Systems Engineering, aims to provide pre-employment training as well as continuing education and training programmes in systems engineering.

National University of Singapore transport researcher Lee Der Horng said it is timely for Singapore to acquire the expertise to offer training here.

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10,000

Number of people currently employed by the LTA, as well as rail operators SMRT and SBS Transit, in the engineering, operations and maintenance fields.

360km

Size that the rail network will be expanded to by 2030.

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