

AFCONS Insight

Volume No.3 | Issue 4 | October 2013



 SPECIAL STORY: **KRCL TUNNEL PROJECT, SANGALDAN**

5 | **PROFILE** | 6 | **ENGINEERS DAY** | 7 | **CSR**



FROM MD'S DESK



I am delighted to share with you that we have bagged two new projects. The jobs are in two new countries. One is Bangladesh which is a completely new territory for us, where, we will be working on the Dhaka-Chittagong railway corridor with IRCON. The other is Kuwait, where again the job location is new, but the work familiar – marine works for MAA Refinery, KNPC (Kuwait National Petroleum Corporation). We are also hopeful of bagging two-three more jobs overseas within next three months. Every project, especially overseas, brings with itself a bagful of challenges. Our speciality, however, has always been to finish overseas projects on or before time. We have done it quite regularly in the past and will continue to do so in future.

There is always a hidden tension fraught with anticipation that can devour while working overseas. Will we be able to finish the job on time? What if there's labour trouble? Will we be able to match the milestones? These questions can get to you if you let it linger too long in your mind. Eventualities happen no matter how much we plan. But the smartness on the job decides how quickly and tactfully we finish a project on time. We must, therefore, learn to think ahead, plan with an imagination, follow methodology but not become its slave and inspire everyone to take responsibility for whatever they do. Once we become accountable to ourselves, we will know how much we have done and how far we can get. We have worked with distinction in the Middle East - Oman, Dubai, Yemen, Qatar, Iraq, Jordon and Bahrain. We have worked and still working in tough conditions in Liberia. Casting my mind back to some of these projects, I am quite confident that Kuwait and Bangladesh will be successful ventures too. My heartiest congratulations to those who have worked hard to bag the projects, and, best wishes to those who have been assigned to finish them.

K Subrahmanian



- 1 ArcellorMittal** has issued an appreciation certificate and letter for successfully achieving two million Safe Man hours, in Liberia, on October 5, 2013.
- 2 Ministry of Works, Bahrain** has awarded an appreciation certificate for delivering the first milestone in Mina Salman Interchange Project, on July 9, 2013.



SPECIAL STORY


Pics: Bivabasu Kumar



LOVE IN THE HILLS

Sangaldan's prosperity is based on a relationship built on reciprocity and affection, writes **Bivabasu Kumar**

An arduous six-hour drive from Jammu through the tangle of rocky and winding mountain roads to Sangaldan can sap one's energy. But the breeze over the hills and the intermittent rain can make one's journey to AFCONS' Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) project site seem like a hide-and-see game.

AFCONS is almost finishing construction of five BG single-line railway tunnels on the Katra-Laole section of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project. The total length of the tunnels, including cut and cover, is approximately 8500m. The Sangaldan village (185 kilometers from Jammu), around which the tunnels are situated, is full of geological variations. The closeness between soft clay and foliated rock mass makes tunnelling in the area a daunting task.

And it's not just the tough terrain, but the erstwhile terrorist attacks that makes this project one of the most challenging jobs. While AFCONS has quietly advanced in its mission, it's the locals on the hills, who have started appreciating the company's positive impact on their lives over a period of eight years.

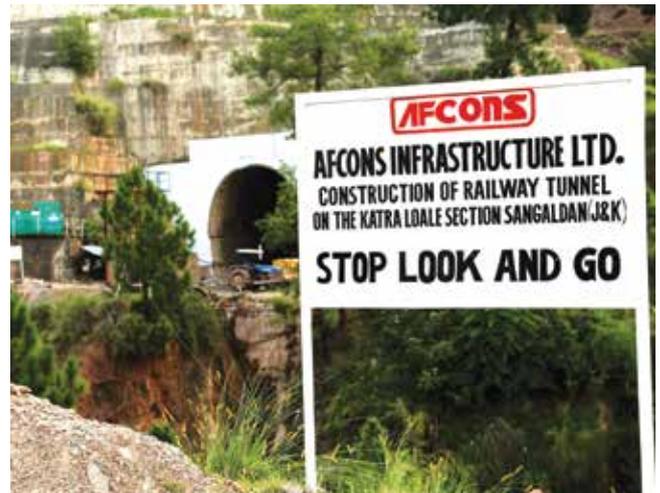
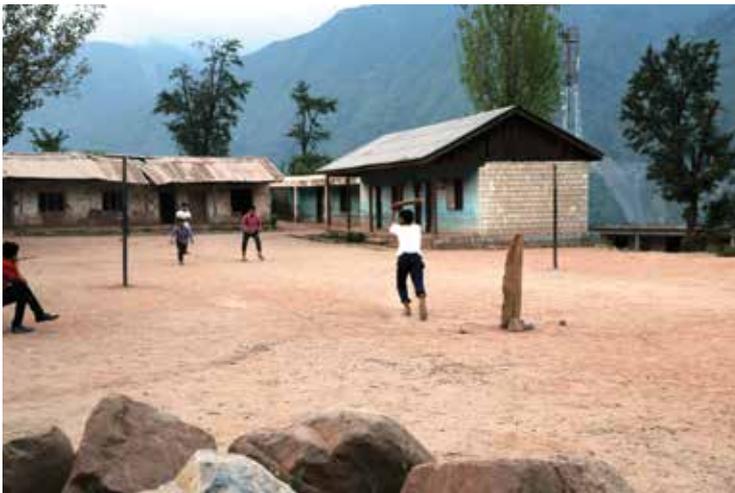
"AFCONS is providing us with many facilities. We now have plenty of water to drink, medical facility, transport in any kind of crisis... what else can we ask for?" says Mahtaba Begum, who owns a small tea shop near one of the tunnels (Tunnel 44) in Dalwa (two kilometers from Sangaldan).

Mahtaba has been living there

for decades with husband, Gulam Mohammad, eldest son, Manzur Ahmad, who is employed with Northern Railways, youngest son Altaf Hussain, who is working with AFCONS, and two daughters (both married). Originally farmers, Mahataba was rendered jobless after the Northern Railways acquired their land (against compensation). The family of six used to stay in a small hut. Though they had enough to fend off poverty, lack of activity and an accident made her husband mentally unstable. It's then when Mahtaba decided to start the tea shop which, today, gets healthy business from workers in the area.



A NEW LEASE OF LIFE: Mahtaba Begum and her tea shop at Dalwa village



KIDS PLAYING cricket at the Sangaldan Higher Secondary School ground; **(right)** A village near this tunnel site was washed out due to landslide

“Now, we have the tea shop and my sons are working. By God’s grace and thanks to the company, we have sufficient to live happily. We don’t have any regrets. We’ll pray that the company continues to work for locals with such passion,” Mahtaba adds.

Before AFCONS set base at Sangaldan, the nearest medical facility was the district hospital at Ramban, which is about 45 kilometres from the region. Today, AFCONS provides medical help to the locals from first aid to availing ambulance at any time of the day.

“Earlier, we had to walk for over two hours to reach Ramban. Now, in case of any emergency, we get ambulance or vehicular facility to reach the district hospital. The company restores road connectivity after heavy rains or during snowfall,” mentions Mahtaba.

Mohd Iqbal, who is medical assistant at the colony dispensary, is equally ebullient. “I was jobless after I completed my diploma in pharmacy. But after AFCONS came, they employed me and I have since then treated so many locals. It is more satisfying that as a local I am being able to help my own people,” he says.

There are around 300 to 400 families in the Sangaldan region. Till six years back only two buses connected the people of this region to Ramban. But after AFCONS came, the road connectivity improved with wider roads, repair work and maintenance.

“We now have private vehicles on this route. Earlier, there were only two

CHALLENGES & ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Transporting heavy machinery to site was a challenge as the old Dharamkund Bridge could only withstand payloads of 10 tonnes.
2. A magazine was constructed for storage of explosives and a diesel pump was installed at site.
3. Cabinet approval was obtained for quarry under forest land. It was the first time that the J&K government gave such permission considering the project’s national importance.
4. In some areas tunnelling was safely executed where the overburden/rock cover was less than 1D.
5. Due to Muree Thrust, the entire rock mass in the project area is deformed and thrust-affected.
6. The presence of nullahs and fresh water springs led to water ingress inside tunnels sometimes to the tune of 1500litres per minute.
7. AFCONS logged a record progress of 68m tunnelling in one month with permanent steel supporting system and cycle time of 18 hours in poor geology.
8. Thirty gantries were completed of 9m in one month which is a record.

buses from Ramban. The road connectivity has made life much easier for us,” says another local, Mohd Amin Bhat.

Bhat started as a simple villager. But, today, he has established himself as a reputed contractor in the region. “I started as partner to another contractor from Jammu for Tunnel 40-41. This transition from a simple villager to an established contractor from Sangaldan wouldn’t have been possible without AFCONS,” he says.

According to Bhat, there was no awareness within the locals about the outside world. The



By God’s grace and thanks to the company, we have sufficient to live happily. We don’t have any regrets.”

Mahtaba Begum, tea shop owner at Dalwa

majority of the population here are farmers, a small percentage have government jobs and the kids study in Government Middle Schools (upto class eight), Primary Schools (upto class five) or the Government Higher Secondary School at Sangaldan. Private academies have started coming up recently after the locals became more aware about the importance of education. “We now have free water, ambulance on phone call, medicine etc. AFCONS is now like a second home. Our interpersonal skills have improved after

interacting with the engineers and the seniors who come from other cities,” Bhat explains.

While the kids focus on studies, they are extremely passionate about cricket. Mushkoor Wani (18-years-old) is a Virat Kohli fan and wants to play in the Indian team some day.

“I like batting and we regularly play cricket in the school ground.

In 2009, the nearby Dharam village was devastated by heavy landslide. Though the government gave villagers land it was too rugged for habitation. AFCONS levelled the land and helped locals to set up their new abodes.

In various other ways, the company has touched upon the lives of the people. In the Tattapani area, the AFCONS team



A HOMELY FEELING: Most kids from the villages go to school but some help in farming from an early age too; (below) Villagers make use of the company ambulance whenever a medical need arises

AFCONS is now like a second home. Our interpersonal skills have improved after interacting with the engineers and seniors who come from other cities.”

Mohd Amin Bhat, Local contractor from Jammu

We are inspired by Parvez Rasool,” he says in between a cricket match at the Sangaldan Higher Secondary School ground. To facilitate kids’ sporting activities, the company has refurbished a playground in a nearby school.

The Sangaldan market was wiped out by heavy rain and subsequent landslide in 2006. AFCONS provided immediate shelter to the families. The company compensated the villagers for their losses.

helped with material for temple construction. At Sangaldan, the team assisted in infrastructure development for *Ramleela*. They also set up a footway to the *Mazar* (Dargah) for locals.

With better roads and development, the villages now draw more attention from private vehicle operators. While the locals have breathed a sigh of relief, AFCONS continues to work selflessly and with a silent prayer on its lips.



PROFILE |
PURUSHOTTAM PATEL



Never Say Die

When uncertainty and risk are high in a project with little going your way, the easiest solution is to say “I am done” & quit the project. But those who show determination to grind it out are actual men of courage.

Purushottam Patel, who is the project manager for the KRCL tunnelling project since 2006, has faced several challenges. The odds were not just confined to the difficult nature of the job, but the sheer risk to life at a time when militancy was at its peak in J&K. But he showed

the gumption to fight it out & motivated his men to persist. Many engineers left him, but the ones who stayed back were the actual go-getters.

Today the project is nearing completion. But the tenacity the team has shown over the years is an experience of a lifetime.

“I have a work experience of 30 years in hydro & underground sector. But the KRCL project is the most challenging job that I have handled so far. Remote nature of site, frequent road blocks, poor law and order, security threats

PERSONAL AGENDA

Birthday
23/09/1960

Place of Birth
Sagar (MP)

Favourite Music
Old Hindi songs

Favourite colour
Sky blue

Favourite food
North Indian veg food

Best moment in life
50th wedding anniversary of mom & dad

make this project one of its kind,” says Patel. He completed BE in civil engineering from Govt. Engineering College, Jabalpur. According to him, “trust” & “support” can move mountains. Likewise, it gave him the motivation to deal with several teething problems at site.

Speaking about Patel, VC & MD, Mr K Subrahmanian said: “Patel is a very good example of a project manager who has demonstrated persistence, good people-management skills and a never-say-die attitude in a difficult environment.”

ENGINEERS DAY CELEBRATION



EDC initiative started in the year 2009

Preparations for Engineers Day 2013 (Sept 15) began in the month of February in all projects. The first EDC committee formed by Mr R Giridhar (Director Technical) with committee members decided "Operational



Excellence" as the theme for this year's celebration. Presentation papers were submitted by various employees from site and head office, which were evaluated by Mr AN Jangle, Mr RG Vartak, Mr R Giridhar & Mr Manivannan. At head office, events like quiz competition, model making competition, paper presentations by winners were held. Group discussion was a new event introduced this year. On the Engineers Day, final rounds for quiz & group discussion were held. Also, there was an exhibition where Afconians displayed their talents in glass painting, sketches, drawings, handicrafts, poems etc.

EVENTS



COMMISSIONING OF CABLE CRANE AT CHENAB BRIDGE

A cable crane spanning 915m was commissioned at Chenab Bridge Project by Shri Subodh Jain, member engineering, at Railway Board, on Aug 31, in presence of Shri BD Garg, CAO/USBRL/ Northern Railway. The cable crane will help in erecting the spanned arch and pier. It is the world's largest cable crane and the whole set-up is a record in India.

MD'S ROLLING TROPHY



JULY 12, 2013: MD's rolling trophy for the "Best Annual HSE Performance" was presented to CMRL – 05 site during the second quarterly review meeting (QRM).

NEWS



AFCONS-IRCON JV bags Bangladesh Railway Project

AFCONS Infrastructure Limited, a Shapoorji Pallonji Group Company, in a joint venture with Indian Railways PSU, IRCON Limited, has signed a contract agreement with Bangladesh Railway for the work of a Railway Bridge with approach rail lines. The project, estimated to cost around ₹453 crore (BDT 567 crore), is expected to be completed in 30 months.

AFCONS bags ₹567cr marine job in Kuwait

AFCONS announces its entry into Kuwait with an offshore marine job for MAA Refinery, KNPC (Kuwait National Petroleum Corporation). AFCONS has bagged the ₹567crore job as subcontractor to M/S Daelim Industrial Co, Ltd, Seoul, Korea. The scope of work includes procurement & construction of 1.2 km approach trestle and a 355m x 37m loading platform and installation of material handling system, including ship loader, as part of the Sulphur Handling Facilities (revamp & new) project. The project will be completed in 28 months.

LIFE AT AFCONS



As always, AFCONS kept its cultural side up with Janmashtami, Ganesh & Vishwakarma pooja celebrations. The Republic Day was also celebrated at most sites.



Ganesh Pooja at Jammu



Vishwakarma Pooja at RVNL, Kolkata



Independence Day celebration in Liberia



Janmashtami celebration at KRCL

CSR



IT boost for St. Catherine's Home

The IT department has kept AFCONS' CSR mast flying by donating computers to St. Catherine's Home, an orphanage in Andheri, Mumbai. St Catherine's has proved to be a gateway to better life for destitutes and children who are abused at a tender age. AFCONS' contribution is a miniscule role in an overall development process of the kids who are groomed for a respectable future. We wish them all the best in life.



WHEELS OF CHANGE

AFCONS' social responsibility is spread across several realms. So, when the team in Bahrain, for the Mina Salman Interchange project, got a call from the Indian embassy about **Mr Somen Debnath** who is on a mission to spread HIV/AIDS awareness globally, our team quickly set up a meeting.

There are various mediums of spreading HIV/AIDS awareness. But Mr Debnath has chosen

a unique way to educate people about the dreaded disease - he is trotting the globe on a bicycle for his cause and doing seminars on Indian culture.

AFCONS and Shapoorji Pallonji together hailed Mr Debnath's daring effort and supported his mission with a small donation during the meeting.

Mr Debnath has appreciated the group initiative to support his efforts. We wish him all the best.

HR CORNER



First Time Manager Training Programme held at AFCONS House, in Mumbai, from Sept 30 - Oct 1

BEHAVIOUR-BASED SAFETY WORKSHOP

A session was arranged at HO on August 21 for the senior management. The objective was to help employees identify, assess & control foreseeable hazards that may result due to their unsafe actions/at risk behaviours. The training was conducted by Mr Ramesh Grover (Dir-Quality Growth Services).

PROBLEM SOLVING & DECISION MAKING WORKSHOP

A one-day workshop was organised for CMRL employees on August 21-22. It aimed at enabling participants to approach & solve problems objectively.

WHOLE WELLNESS MODEL PROGRAMME

The Whole Wellness Model training

was scheduled at HO for various departments from August to October. It focuses on employees' wellbeing across four dimensions of wellness (Physical, Emotional, Mental & Spiritual).

Topics covered:

1. Introduction to the four dimensions of Wellness
2. Formation of Mind
3. Wellness Assessment & Wellness Action plan

TAX PLANNING FOR ONSHORE, OFFSHORE TENDERS – OIL & GAS

A one-day session on Tax Planning for Onshore, Offshore Tenders – Oil & Gas was organised at HO on Sept 17. The session was conducted by Mr Rakesh Sharma – AGM (Taxation). The participants were given a brief

introduction about prevailing taxes & benefits available to the Oil & Gas sector under various statutes. They were also informed about current litigation/issues on applicability of VAT on offshore projects beyond 12 nautical miles.

FIRST TIME MANAGER TRAINING PROGRAMME

A First Time Manager Training Programme was organised at HO from Sept 30 to Oct 1. The two-day programme is designed for employees promoted to managerial position. It develops their knowledge & skills to manage individuals and teams. The training was conducted by Mr Nimesh Rathod. On the final day, an interactive session was conducted by Dy Managing Director, Mr S Paramasivan. He addressed the participants on the company's growth and goals.

TRAINEE INDUCTION 2013

The Trainee Induction Programme is designed for fresh campus recruits to enable them to understand various construction activities & terminologies. The objective is to provide participants awareness/orientation of various functions. A total of 80 Post Graduate/ Graduate/Diploma trainees were taken through this phase-one journey.



ENGINEERS DAY CELEBRATION: (From left to right, clockwise) Mr RG Vartak lights the lamp to start Engineers Day celebrations at AFCONS House; Engineers Day celebration at CMRL & DMRC sites; Jayaram Reddi & Prathamesh Patil, winners of the model-making competition at head office; Celebration at Bahrain, Rohtang & Liberia sites.



AN ISO 9001:2008 COMPANY

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