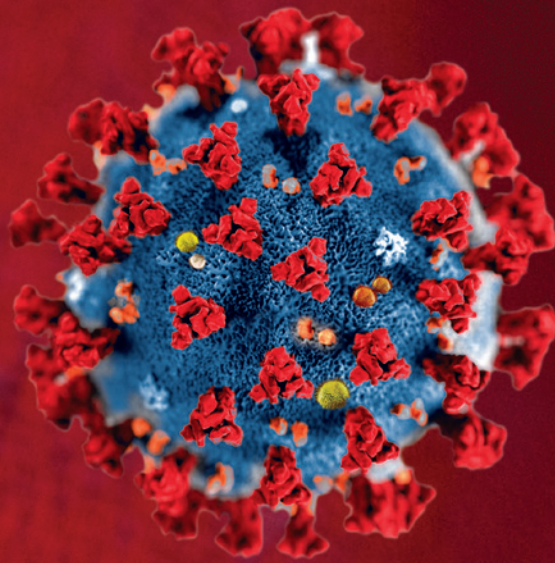


# INSIGHT

**AFCONS**

VOLUME 10 | ISSUE 2 | APRIL 2020

**Shapoorji Pallonji**  
Built to last...since 1865



## UNDERSIEGE

**Afconians fight Covid-19 as contagion unleashes global crisis & suffering** **PAGE 3-5**

**PG 8**



**Afcons  
honoured as  
Global Indian  
Company of  
the Year**

**Gopalpur port  
begins to assert  
its dominance  
in east India**

**PG 6**

**New  
projects in  
Gujarat  
& B'desh**

**PG 7**



## Stay strong, stay positive

Dear Afconians,

I had welcomed you at the beginning of the new year with a promise that exciting times are ahead. While as an organisation we made progress, we are extremely unfortunate to be faced with a striking new reality which is unprecedented in human history. The Covid-19 pandemic has ground much of the world economy to a standstill with unparalleled human suffering.

While governments have rushed out with financial packages to avoid an economic collapse, it is hard to estimate the damage that will result from the fast-spreading pandemic.

This is the start of a new financial year, and, I am sure that once this crisis is over we'll witness a collective effort from Afconians to swing us back into business as usual. We must regroup and recalibrate quickly to minimise the impact of the crisis on the new financial year.

I can understand that these are hard times. But these are also times that will test our character and leadership. Amid this unfortunate misery, stories of human courage and determination have once again highlighted the quintessential Afcons spirit. I am glad to share stories of Afconians from various project sites about their fight against Covid-19, and, how they have sheltered thousands of workers in safe environments. I would like to thank each one of them for their sacrifice, and, humanity under the trying circumstances.

We don't know how long this pandemic will last, and, if the resulting damage is reversible. But I do know that tough times don't last, tough people do.

My sincere thanks to all of you for staying indoors during the lockdown. I urge you to continue to stay alert and maintain social distancing and focus on personal hygiene.

Stay strong,  
stay positive.

**K Subramanian**



## making **headlines**

### Nagpur Metro Reach 3 inaugurated

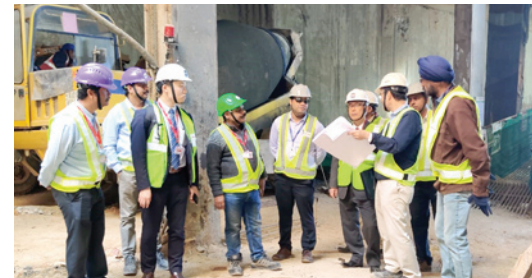
The 11-km stretch of Nagpur Metro between Lokmanya Nagar Metro Station and Sitabuldi Interchange was inaugurated on January 28, 2020. Commercial operations began after Maharashtra Chief Minister Mr Uddhav Thackeray and Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, Civil Aviation, Commerce and Industry Mr Hardeep Singh Puri flagged off the first train via video link. There are six stations on this section of Reach 3 along the East-West corridor of Phase-1 of the project, connecting the educational hub of the city with MIDC Hingna. Afcons completed this project in a record time of 28 months; The Sitabuldi Interchange was made operational for the East-West as well as North-South corridors in just 20 months.



### Busy January for Ahmedabad Metro

Mr Satoshi Suzuki, Ambassador of Japan to India visited the Ahmedabad Metro Rail project on January 23, 2020. He was welcomed by the site management team and given a tour of the project. Mr Suzuki was accompanied by Mr S Takagi, Secretary of Japan Embassy to India, and other officials from the Embassy.

Officials from Embassy of Japan to India, along with the delegates from International Cooperation Bureau, visited Ahmedabad Metro Rail project on January 27, 2020. Mr Sonoaki Kobayashi, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan, and his team paid a visit to the project site and reviewed the work.



### Exim Bank GM at Mauritania site

Ms Deepali Agrawal, General Manager, Exim Bank, visited the Mauritania project on January 31, 2020. She was accompanied by other top officials Mr Pushpesh Tyagi, Ms Tejal Chirag Trivedi and Mr Nirmal Narendra Ved. The visitors took a tour of the entire project along with the site team. They expressed their satisfaction about ongoing activities, the progress of work, and, praised the team for excellent work culture and safety standards.



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### EDITORIAL

Bhakti Prasad, Krishnakumari C,  
Bivabasu Kumar, Chandrika Sen



# AFCONS FIGHTS COVID-19

**Amid widespread human suffering, over 9,000 workers get food, shelter; Afconians extend support to police, people stranded on streets during lockdown**

**A**s news of rising Coronavirus (Covid-19) cases, and, the mounting death toll keeps sending shockwaves across the globe, India is living with a silent prayer on its lips. The pandemic has levelled a devastating blow to the world forcing governments to lock down their populations to contain the virus and minimise mortality. While India is grappling with the virus outbreak, the country is making a collective effort to break the pandemic chain. The next few weeks will tell if we have succeeded in our mission, but the spirit of the countrymen under the circumstances has been exemplary.

The government, celebrities, and, corporates have willingly opened their purses to donate in this hour of

crisis. But, most importantly, many corporates have shown exemplary support not only for their employees but also for workers at the bottom of the pyramid.

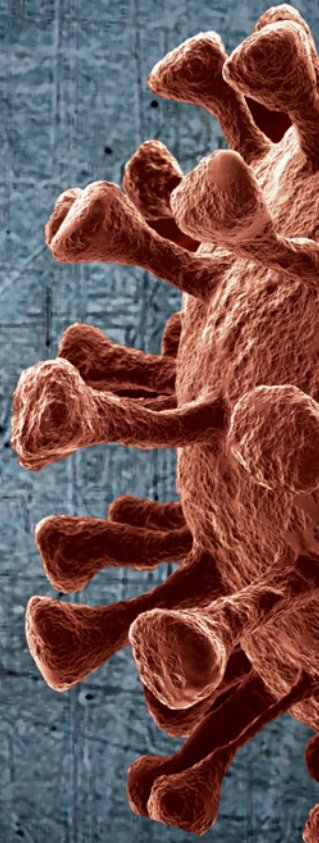
Even before the World Health Organisation (WHO) flagged Covid-19 as pandemic, Afcons responded proactively to ensure safety of its 9000-plus workmen at sites across India, Africa & the Middle East. The respective site teams under the guidance from headquarters and directives from clients made themselves battle-ready.

## **Awareness Programmes**

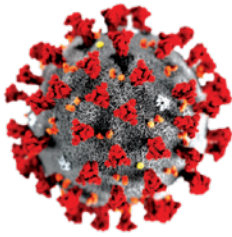
At first, field workers were educated about Covid-19 and how it spreads among humans. This was done by conducting several awareness programmes at sites about the illness,

possible means of its transmission, and, its symptoms. Classroom trainings were conducted at all sites to spread awareness about the virus. The workmen were educated about the importance of social distancing, and, why they should avoid crowding for their own safety.

In Middle East projects such as Dubai, the local manpower supply has been suspended, and, only critical construction activities are being continued. "We're working with a very limited workforce. We're trying to ensure workers maintain social distancing as much as possible. Our buses are plying at fifty per cent capacity to make sure people can maintain sufficient distance even during travel to work," said Anand Varadharasan, Deputy Project Manager, Entrances to Jewel of the Creek project.







## Personal Hygiene

The next focus area was sanitation, and, personal hygiene. Sites were fumigated regularly. Appropriate personal hygiene measures were taken by installing mobile wash basins, and, providing masks, soap and hand sanitisers to every site personnel. Handheld thermal scanners were used on every person reporting for work with random temperature checks in camps.

## Quarantine Measures

Immediately after a nationwide lockdown was announced, Afcons made sure all camps were regularly sanitised for the safety of staff and workers. At Nagpur Metro project, nearly 1,200 workmen are being housed in two special colonies – at Nagalwadi and Khairi respectively. Quarantine facilities, weekly health check-ups, free medicines on requirement, and, two ambulances have been arranged

for any kind of eventuality.

“We’re providing regular counselling through our doctors so that the workers stay positive and follow the preventive measures,” said Amar Raut, Project Manager, Nagpur Metro (Reach-2).

Most sites have also set up emergency teams/committees to address issues during the crisis. The teams are tasked to provide necessary medical support to workers and personnel who must be quarantined. Regular health checks have also been arranged at worker colonies and site offices for safety reasons.

## Good Samaritan

Afcons has not limited its caregiving initiatives to employees alone. At various sites, for example, Nagpur Metro, Afcons is reaching out to on-duty police personnel by providing them with hand sanitisers, masks, and, even food. Afcons recognises the sacrifice of the police force to



Distribution of food amongst poor affected by lockdown



Distribution of food amongst on-duty police personnel



Multiple awareness camps at sites and head office



Regular health check-up at camps



Fumigation of office premises



Fumigation of staff and worker camps

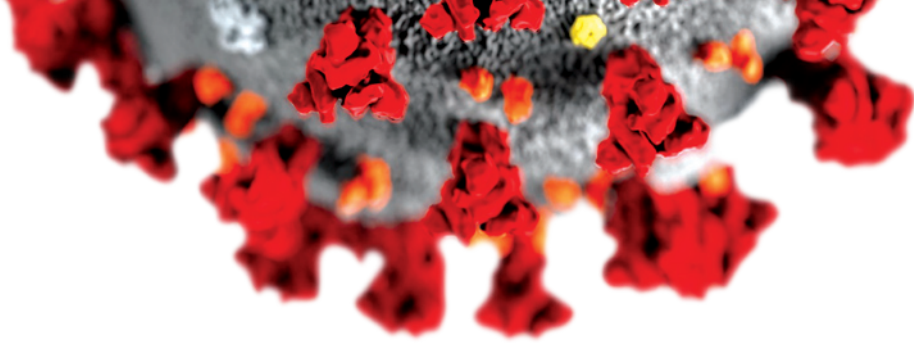


Social distancing strictly implemented at sites



Anti-Covid PPE for staff and workers





Dedicated isolation wards at every site



Hand sanitiser facility for staff and outsiders



Distribution of grocery among the needy



Random thermal scanning of staff and workers



Ambulance on stand-by at every site



Donation of soap, hand sanitisers in Zambia



enforce a peaceful lockdown. The Nagpur Metro team has also extended support to people who have been stranded on streets with food during the lockdown.

At Wardha district, where Afcons is constructing the Nagpur-Mumbai Super Communication Expressway project, the team has distributed food kits among 5,000 villagers. Each food kit is stuffed with a month's ration. The team has also arranged ration for Yelakeli villagers who are below the poverty line. In another initiative, Afcons encouraged the Local Women's Group Organisation, in the region, to make face masks which were purchased and distributed among local villagers. This not only generated income for

one group but also provided another group with free Covid-19 protection gear.

In Zambia, the Afcons project team is supporting the local district commissioner by distributing hand wash, hand sanitisers, disinfectant liquid and spray pumps.

"We're distributing grocery items to nearly 5,000 families in various parts of Lusaka. We have planned to distribute this in five phases," said Subrata Bandyopadhyay, Project Manager, Lusaka City Roads Decongestion Project, Zambia.

The world is dealing with a pandemic at a level of intensity that we have not seen before. As we live with a hope to see its end soon, Afconians will continue its fight (against Covid-19) till the fight is done.

## Anti-Covid-19 measures at sites

- ◆ 9000+ construction workers provided with food & shelter
- ◆ Distribution of masks and gloves
- ◆ Counselling offered to workers
- ◆ Thermal scanning of site staff and workers
- ◆ Random testing for high temperatures
- ◆ Regular health check-up of staff & workers
- ◆ Dedicated doctors for emergency duty
- ◆ Dedicated response team at every site
- ◆ Isolation wards prepared at every site
- ◆ Emphasis on personal hygiene
- ◆ Emphasis on social distancing
- ◆ Ambulances on stand-by



# BREAKPOINT

**With two new multi-purpose berths, and, ensconced between two breakwaters, Afcons-refurbished Gopalpur Port promises to turn into a heavyweight along India's east coast**

**O**disha's Gopalpur Port, which currently operates out of three multi-purpose berths, is emerging as one of eastern India's major sea-trade centres. Once a fair-weather lighterage port, it was periodically ravaged by devastating cyclones. Thanks to a recent overhaul, today, Gopalpur Port is capable of berthing capesize vessels of up to 1,05,000 DWT and vessels up to 14.5m. Its handling capacity has jumped to approximately 5.5 million tonnes in 2019-20 from approximately one million tonne between 2017-19.

While the numbers promise a bright future for the country's trade and economy, all this has been possible due to the determined efforts of Afcons. The team overcame one challenge after another to give Gopalpur Port its present shape.

## Battered and Bruised

In a bid to rehabilitate and expand the port, the Government of Odisha signed a concession agreement with Gopalpur Ports Pvt Ltd in 2006. While the port

became fully operational in 2013, tropical storms and severe cyclones ravaged the 'south' breakwater, rendering operations risky.

Afcons came into the picture in 2017, when it was assigned the task to:

- Rehabilitate the 1.76-km damaged south breakwater and extend it by 450m
- Refurbish the existing berth and extend it by 75m

- Construct two new multi-purpose berths with four approach trestles

- Build a 380m intermediate breakwater

And, all this had to be done within two years.

Project Manager Mr Vidyasagar Babu recounts the time when the team first set foot at the site. "Marine construction at this port can be precarious because of cyclonic weather in the monsoon seasons. Rebuilding the south breakwater, which is the only protection for the port, seemed next to impossible. All we knew was we had an extremely tricky job on our hands," he says.

## Thinking out of the box

Just months after Afcons started operations at the port, the devastating Cyclone *Titli* hit the Indian east coast, damaging the breakwater. However, the team regrouped quickly and continued the operations on rebuilding the south breakwater.

Within months, struck Cyclone *Fani*, damaging the breakwater once again. This set the team back, but Afconians accepted this challenge head on. Two separate task forces were formed – one to repair the damaged breakwater, another to work on the berth expansion works.

To expedite work, Afcons used advanced technology for placing accropodes and a Split-Hopper barge for marine dumping.

In a first in India, and, fourth globally, Afcons used the advanced Echoscope Sonar technology for underwater placement of accropodes instead of having divers to do the task manually in precarious conditions. The echoscope is the world's highest definition real-time 3D imaging sonar. Equipped with GPS and motion sensors, it provides accurate position and imaging through its highly efficient CMS software.

Also, substantial time was



saved by using a Split-Hopper barge, which was used for marine dumping through GPS, to build the intermediate breakwater. Using this vessel, around 750 tonne of rock material could be dumped at a desired location at a time. Here, it was used to dump approximately 3,000 tonne of rock daily for five months.

## In the Big League

The second and the third berths were inaugurated by honourable Chief Minister of Odisha, Mr Naveen Patnaik, in 2019. The watershed moment for the port came in October 2019 when it received a vessel carrying 1,05,000 DWT. "We are proud to complete the intermediate breakwater and the two new multi-purpose berths within a year despite multiple design changes and devastating cyclones," says Babu.

Work is now on in full swing to complete the toughest part of the project – the south breakwater, which will provide the ultimate shield for the port. With this project, the team is setting yet another example in Extreme Engineering and Construction.

**"In the past two years, during the construction phase, the port has faced three cyclonic storms which hampered the progress of construction activities. Despite all this, Afcons did their job pretty well and completed the berth construction well on time."**

**Captain Sandeep Agarwal, CEO & Director, GPL**





## Chotte Scientist programme

Afconians made their mark at the second year of *Chotte Scientist* programme at the Tribal Ashramshala. Fourteen of them (double the number from last year), along with participants from other SP Group companies, mentored around 70 students in science experiments as part of the three-day corporate volunteering programme. Over 40 students of classes 7, 8 and 9 were tutored by five groups of Afconians on science concepts such as heat, light and sound waves. A team from Afcons comprising Ms Sarita Joshi, Mr Prathamesh Mhatre and Mr Prasad Hatwalne took home the top honours!



## Making a difference

Afconians from Lusaka City Road Decongestion Project, in Zambia, stepped into the new decade by spreading cheer among the lesser privileged. On the last day of 2019, they organised a grocery donation event at Joachim Schiffer School Care for Kids Orphanage. Afcons has also built a basketball court in this school. A day before, the team visited a home dedicated to vulnerable girls - Future in My Hands – and donated stationery. Refreshments were also organised for 140 students. Interestingly, this home is run by the sisters from Congregation of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), which was found in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, in 1911.

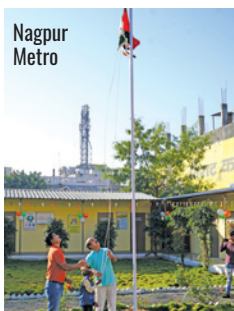


LIFE@AFCONS

## Republic Day



Lusaka City Roads Decongestion Project



Nagpur Metro

## Women's Day



Women's Day celebrations at Afcons HO



Lusaka City Roads Decongestion Project team felicitated the women employees on the occasion of Women's Day



Afconians during the Shapoorji Pallonji event with cancer patients at Masina Hospital

## new projects

### Road projects in Bangladesh

Afcons has bagged two road projects in the neighbouring country of Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh has assigned Afcons the task of improving and maintaining sections of Dhaka-Sylhet Highway and Cumilla (Moinamoti)-Brahmanbaria (Sarail) Highway, in the first week of 2020. At present, Afcons is constructing a railway project between Dhaka and Tongi (Afcons-KPTL JV) as well as a Marine EPC project. Earlier, the company, in a JV with IRCON, built the Second Bhairab Bridge over River Meghna in the country.

### Marine project in Gujarat

Gujarat Chemical Port Terminal Company Ltd (GCPTCL) has awarded Afcons the job of debottlenecking its Marine and Onshore facilities at Dahej.

## WORLD SAFETY WEEK



Afconians listen to motivational speeches in rapt attention at Chhara Port project



Quiz competitions were held for staff and workmen at Jaffrabad Port project



Safety pledge being taken at Four Lining of End of Pandoh bypass - Takoli project



# AWARDS

## ASSOCHAM AWARDS

- ◆ Equal Opportunity Enabler Award — Afcons
- ◆ Outstanding Leadership Award — Ms Bhakti Prasad, Director-HR
- ◆ Best Talent Management Award — Mr Abhijit Kamthe, Senior Manager - HR



Ms Bhakti Prasad, Director-HR, was honoured for being the only woman HR leader in the infrastructure industry. She was also named among 101 Fabulous HR Leaders (India) by the World HRD Congress.

### BEST EMPLOYER IN BHUTAN

Afcons was recognised as the Best Employer in Bhutan at the 14th Employer Branding Awards instituted by the World HRD Congress.



## PRCI AWARDS 2020

- ◆ Chanakya Award to Afcons — Global Indian Company of the Year
- ◆ Chanakya Award to Mr Bivabasu Kumar, Head - Corp Comm — Communicator of the Year (External Communication)
- ◆ Award in Best Documentary Category
- ◆ Award in Best English Newsletter Category



Afcons received four awards at the 14th Global Communication Conclave organised by the Public Relations Council of India (PRCI)



### CORP COMM & PR EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020

- ◆ Best Corporate Website of the Year — Afcons
- ◆ Most Creative Corp Comm Professional of the Year — Mr Bivabasu Kumar, Head - Corp Comm



## ALERTS

Afcons now has a dedicated Youtube channel. Scan the code to visit the channel and stay tuned with the latest videos

