

# INSIGHT

**AFCONS**

VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 2 | APRIL 2018

  
Shapoorji Pallonji

“Excellent brand name in the market”

*hurray!*

“Very proud of being an Afconian for 24 years”

Afcons' hallmark

employee FRIENDLY

PROUD AFCONIAN

**GREAT PLACE TO WORK**

Love TO WORK here

86% OF ALL EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATED

EXCELLENT BRAND

FIRST Indian infrastructure company to be certified

ETHICAL PRACTICES

**TO WORK**

“Completing projects in an honourable and honest manner is Afcons' hallmark”

CHALLENGING projects

2564 employees took part in SURVEY

highly COMMITTED

“Top management is committed to ethical practices”

Afcons' DNA

“I love to work in Afcons because of its brand name and management”

**AFCONS BECOMES THE FIRST INDIAN INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY TO BE CERTIFIED AS GREAT WORKPLACE**





# 'You proved that we're great together'

The first quarter of this year came with several laurels.

We became the first infrastructure company in India to be certified as Great Place to Work. This has been possible only because of your unwavering faith in Afcons. Pride and mutual respect are our greatest strengths and you have reinforced this with your honest feedback. Getting the certification in the first attempt is a huge achievement. I thank each one of you for the time you have spared and emotions you have shared.

Your candid views give us an opportunity to build on our strengths and focus on areas that need improvement. I firmly believe that we can be at par with other great workplaces in the world if we continue to work together the way we have this far.

We have finished a very important chapter in our tunnelling efforts over the past months. Tunnelling works for our East-West Metro project in Kolkata is over. Between Howrah Maidan and Esplanade, the two TBMs have successfully bored below several dilapidated buildings and heritage structures. I am proud of the entire team who made this delicate journey seem like a cakewalk.

Afcons has also entered a new segment this quarter, with the Afcons-JAL JV bagging the power house package of the 1000-MW Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project in Jammu & Kashmir. With this, we add another page to our legacy of strengthening infrastructure in the northern-most state of the country.

Let's now keep working with the same energy to keep this momentum going. Good luck!

**K Subrahmanian**

## VCMD ROLLING TROPHY 2017 FOR ROHTANG TUNNEL PROJECT

The prestigious annual VCMD Rolling Trophy 2017 for best HSE performance has gone to Rohtang Pass Highway Tunnel Project. The Strabag-Afcons JV has also been praised by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for outstanding achievement of 20 million safe man hours (till February 2018) for the project. An appreciation certificate was presented to the team in recognition of their efforts.



## AFCONS BAGS BBS PRACTICES AWARD

The forum of Behaviour Based Safety held its second Annual National Conference at NITIE, Powai on January 19, 2018. Afcons participated in the Forum alongside other organisations such as Jindal Steel, ONGC, HPCL, Vedanta, Tata Projects, Adani Ports, etc. The event turned out to be extra special for Afcons as it received an award for its strategy and initiatives to implement Behaviour Based Safety (BBS).



## SAFETY AWARDS FOR AFCONIANS IN NAGPUR

Mr Sudhir Kumar (in photo, right), Nagpur Metro Reach-03 project, has been named the Metro Safety Hero for February 2018. He received an appreciation certificate from Director Projects, MMRCL, Mr Mahesh K Agarwal on National Safety Day, March 5, 2018, at Metro Bhawan, for his outstanding performance in safety.

In recognition of the best HSE practices and their implementation at Nagpur Metro Project – Reach 03, Mr Karimulla Masthan, Chief Safety Manager, received a commendation certificate from Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL).



AFCONS PHOTOS

## ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Mr K Subrahmanian, who was the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Afcons, is now the Executive Vice Chairman of the company. Mr S Paramasivan, the former Deputy Managing Director, is now the Managing Director. Ms Bhakti Prasad, who was earlier Executive Vice President - HR, is now Director - HR.

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## EDITORIAL

S Paramasivan, Bhakti Prasad, Krishnakumari C,  
Bivabasu Kumar, Chandrika Sen

# 'Hurray, we're a certified Great Workplace'

Afcons becomes the first Indian infrastructure company to be certified as 'Great Workplace' and one of the very few companies to be certified in its maiden attempt, writes **Hitesh Singh**



**H**ow does Afcons Infrastructure Ltd fare as a workplace? When the company posed this question to its employees, the answer was unanimous – Great! Afcons engaged Great Place to Work Institute to conduct an employee engagement survey last year. An exhaustive online questionnaire was generated for around 2,564 management employees, and, the result was overwhelming – over 86% of all employees took part in the survey. And of this, 86% believed Afcons is a Great Workplace.

The high response rate indicated the employees' belief in the management's intent to act on feedback and the respect the management had for their attachment with Afcons. To top this, our scores were far better than the average score of the domestic infrastructure industry in India (74%), and, very close to the average score of top 100 companies to work for in India (89%).

Not just that, in all the parameters Afcons fared far better than the domestic infrastructure benchmark. It's very unique to get certified in the very first attempt and that too with commendable scores. Organisations across sectors take years to get certified.

## EMBRACING CHANGE

The last employee engagement survey was conducted at Afcons by BCG way

back in 2010. The company scored 4.3 on a scale of 5 and was among top 20 percentile of companies in the world to be rated greater than 4.2. Afcons has become a whole new world since then.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY (AS PER GREAT PLACE TO WORK INSTITUTE)

All management employees who joined Afcons before Sept 30, 2017, were eligible for the anonymous online survey

**2564**

Afcons is only Indian infrastructure company to be certified as 'Great Workplace'

In all parameters Afcons has scored far better than domestic infrastructure industry benchmarks

**86%**

Of all Afcons' employees participated, which is a very high response rate and demonstrates employees' belief in management's intent to act on feedback and attachment with the company

While organisations across sectors take years to reach this level and get certified, Afcons getting this kind of scores in its maiden attempt is a rarity across companies

In most parameters Afcons' score is close to average scores of

**Top 100**

**86%** employees believe Afcons is a Great Place to Work. The scores are far better than average of domestic infrastructure industry in India (**74%**) and very close to the average of Top 100 companies to work for in India (**89%**)

The scores also highlight the focused effort taken in developing the fundamentals and culture of the Afcons

- ▶ 80% of current employees joined post 2010
- ▶ Total employees increased from 1,606 to 2,665
- ▶ Order book size jumped from ₹ 5,754cr to ₹19,231cr
- ▶ Turnover increased from ₹2,323cr to ₹6,406cr
- ▶ Average project size increased from ₹ 350cr to ₹750cr
- ▶ Majority of the project moved from item-rate, BOQ contract to EPC

While the primary reason for conducting the survey was to assess the current level of employee engagement, we knew that the results would go a long way in shaping Afcons' future. We wanted to know how we could be a better employer and where we stand vis-à-vis our peers and great workplaces in India and abroad.

**ACTION PLAN**

This initiative was kick-started under the able guidance of Ms Bhakti Prasad, Director-HR. She provided strategic alignment to the core team comprising Mr Eshan Garg from HR, Mr Mayur Bhagat from Corporate Strategy and myself for the engagement and mentored us on a regular basis.

We worked closely with Great Place to Work Institute to chalk out a two-pronged action plan – a simple yet impactful questionnaire and maximum employee participation.

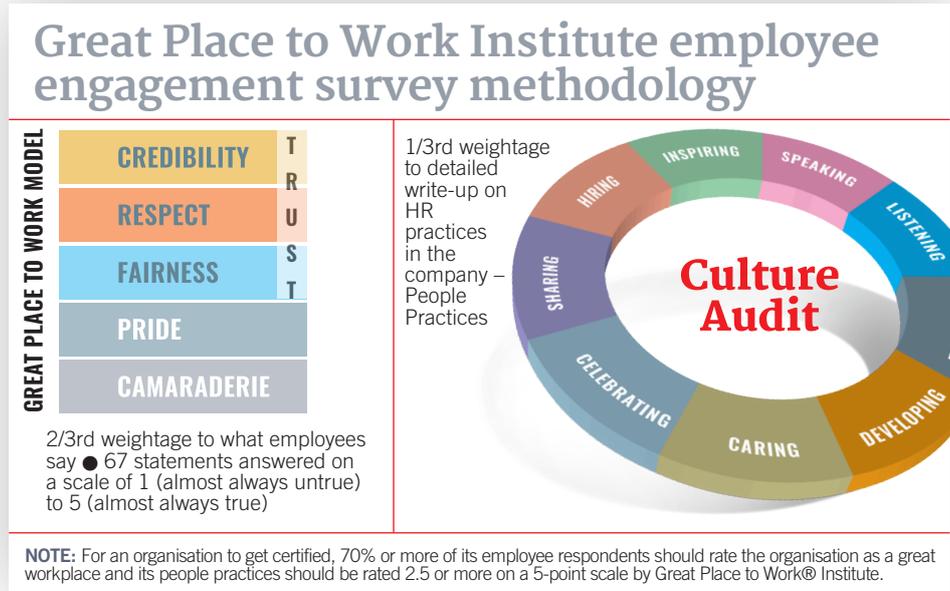
The questionnaire, based on the Great Place to Work Institute employee engagement survey methodology, was tailor-made to suit Afconians. Employees were given the option of filling out the questionnaire in any of the six languages – English, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu.

We were extensively supported by the Corporate Communication team in designing an elaborate and engaging campaign, **Open Up**, across platforms to ensure maximum employee participation. The aim was that every Afconian should be honest while participating in the survey. Apart from spreading the word through posters, emailers and wallpapers, the team held one-on-one sessions with employees at head office and sites.

**THUMPING SUCCESS**

Our efforts bore fruits with 86% employees taking part. The results of the survey revealed pride, camaraderie, management competence and integrity as Afcons' major areas of strength. It also identified areas that needed improvement, including bottom-up communication and fair performance evaluation. While the employees appreciated the training and development initiatives, they expressed the need for more opportunities to train.

The survey is a proof that the focused effort taken in developing the fundamentals and culture of Afcons has had a positive influence on our employees. The fact that we scored better than domestic infrastructure industry benchmarks across parameters shows our strength as a unit. We are proud to have come this far, and are driven to touch new heights.



**Afconians were provided the option of filling out the questionnaire in any of the six languages – English, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu**

REPORT CARD				
Great Place Parameters	Afcons Score	Domestic Infrastructure Benchmark	India Top 100 2017	Global Infrastructure Benchmark
Credibility	78	70	83	84
Respect	75	67	83	83
Fairness	70	61	79	82
Pride	84	78	86	89
Camaraderie	78	70	85	87

Hitesh Singh was the Project Manager for the GPTW survey. He's Head - Strategy and Executive Assistant to Executive Vice Chairman

# Paul Verrall

## ‘Heritage preservation is an integral part of tunnelling’



**D**igging in the dark into an unknown world in a gigantic rumbling machine – that’s what a typical work day looks like for Paul Verrall. With Afcons completing tunnelling works for East-West Metro project, in Kolkata, and completing India’s first under river tunnels in record time, Verrall has become the toast of the city of joy.

“We’re still celebrating our success in Kolkata. This project has been extremely rewarding. We were a passionate and driven team who achieved the feat of building India’s first underwater Metro tunnels. Passing below the Hooghly river without a glitch propelled this project in the spotlight worldwide. It is remarkable,” he says.

Verrall’s first overseas assignment was the Athens Metro in Greece. “This was built under extremely difficult geological conditions and many artefacts were found buried in the ground during construction. They have been displayed in cabinets at various stations,” he shares.

Heritage preservation is an integral part of tunnelling, and both

Chennai as well as Kolkata Metro teams were required to dig below several heritage and old structures. Recognising the sentiment that goes behind these structures and their significance in the fabric of the cities, Verrall says adequate care was taken to ensure there was no major damage on the surface.

“Apart from ensuring correct operation of TBMs, we made sure that correct earth pressure was maintained. The grout injection was carried out very strictly and additional grouting was performed where it was required under the foundations of building to strengthen them and remove existing voids,” he adds.

While tunnelling below the Hooghly was the highlight of Kolkata Metro, there were several moments that are worth a mention. “We passed under Hooghly river, Brabourne Road flyover and several dilapidated buildings with minimal impact on the surface,” says Verrall, adding, “The cooperation, backing and working atmosphere has been something I have rarely experienced.”

Verrall takes inspiration from Channel Tunnel and Gothard Base Tunnel. His repertoire includes some of world’s key infrastructure projects. “I have worked on the mass rapid transport system in Malaysia, the Ermenek Hydro power project in Turkey and Lesotho Highlands water project in South Africa. I’ve also been part of Cairo waste water system, deep sewer system in Hong Kong and North South bypass road tunnel in Brisbane. In India, I’ve also worked on Delhi Airport Line C1.”

When asked about the most memorable project of his career, he says without a thought, “Out of all the experiences I’ve had around the world, I would have to rate the Kolkata Metro UG 1 project as the most memorable and satisfying!”

Paul Verrall is the Tunnel Manager, Transtunnelstroy-Afcons JV, Kolkata Metro Rail Project. He spoke to Chandrika Sen

## 2 TUNNELS, 2 TBMS, 1 HISTORIC RIDE!

When Afcons started the tunnelling work for the East-West Metro corridor linking Howrah Maidan to Sector V, what lay ahead was a treacherous and unknown journey. All eyes were on the two Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs), Prerana and Rachana, who were assigned this colossal task. But, overcoming every challenge on their way, the two TBMs reached Esplanade on March 22 and April 5, 2018, respectively.

Both TBMs started the west-bound journey from the crowded Howrah Maidan site. Passing under Hooghly riverbed, and boring under bustling central Kolkata, the TBMs navigated through Brabourne Road, Beth El and Magen David synagogues, heritage structures like Raj Bhawan, Esplanade Mansion, Writers’ Building and St Andrew’s Church at BBD Bag, numerous



crumbling and ramshackle structures.

Mr Paul Verrall, Durban-based mining engineer and global tunnelling guru, was at the heart of everything that happened. He and his team of over 300 engineers and workers owned this Herculean task. The two TBMs will now be dismantled and retrieved. It will be a hard goodbye, but, the mindboggling experience, will always be cherished by everyone.

### AFCONIAN SHINES AT WTC2018

Animesh Sharma, geotechnical engineer from East-West Metro project, presented a paper titled ‘Finite Element Analysis of Factors affecting the Ground Movements & Geotechnical Capacity loss induced due to Shield Tunnels’ at World Tunnel Congress 2018 in Dubai.

### REMEMBER THIS

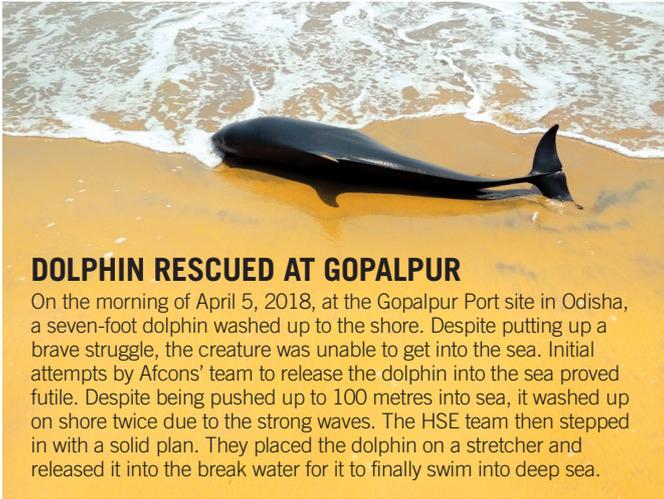
Rachana and Prerana (TBMs) are named after the daughters of the late Afconian, Mr Bimal Saha

### RINGSIDE VIEW



Rings built along the way

Prerana: 2694
Rachana: 2714



**DOLPHIN RESCUED AT GOPALPUR**

On the morning of April 5, 2018, at the Gopalpur Port site in Odisha, a seven-foot dolphin washed up to the shore. Despite putting up a brave struggle, the creature was unable to get into the sea. Initial attempts by Afcons' team to release the dolphin into the sea proved futile. Despite being pushed up to 100 metres into sea, it washed up on shore twice due to the strong waves. The HSE team then stepped in with a solid plan. They placed the dolphin on a stretcher and released it into the break water for it to finally swim into deep sea.



**BRO JAWAN RESCUED AT ROHTANG PROJECT SITE**

In another act of selfless courage, Afconians saved a Border Roads Organisation (BRO) jawan, who was trapped in an avalanche, at the north portal of Rohtang Tunnel, on Saturday, February 24, 2018. A Strabag-Afcons rescue team, including Mr Chuni Lal Thakur, sprang into action immediately after being about the incident by the portal guard. The team located the jawan using avalanche probes and dug almost five feet to reach him. The men continued on relentlessly even as the threat of another avalanche loomed. The swift action ensured that the jawan was rescued. He was immediately rushed to the company's hospital in Dhundi, where he was treated.

**AFCONIAN DELIVERS LECTURE AT NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

The National Symposium on Challenges in Project Engineering and Management of Infrastructure Sector in India was organised by NICMAR, Goa on February 17, 2018. Honourable Chief Minister of Goa Mr Manohar Parrikar was the Chief Guest for the event Setu-Nirman 2018. Afcons was represented by Mr S M Vishwamurthy, Project Manager, Chenab Bridge Project, who was also a guest speaker at the event.



**TOUCHING NEW HEIGHTS**

The Chenab Bridge Project team has built the tallest steel pier of the project, P40. It stands 130.855m from the top of the foundation of 46.836m - the combined height being 177.691m. P40 is almost two-and-half-times taller than the Qutub Minar and was completed in record time of 45 days!



Among other tall piers Afcons built in recent months is the 89.1m rectangular tapered pier, P4, which is part of Bridge 39 of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramullah Rail Link (USBRL) Project. This is one of the 16 bridges on the Katra-Dharam section of the project.

**AFCONIANS DONATE BLOOD AT CAMP IN GABON**

A blood donation camp was organised at Gabon, on February 1, 2018. Sixty three Afconians, including staff and workers, donated blood at the camp.



**KYOTO PROTOCOL DAY AT AHMEDABAD**

Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project site (2291) observed Kyoto Protocol Day on February 16, 2018. Mr Mahesh Pandya, Director, Paryavaran Mitra (an NGO in Ahmedabad), was invited as the chairperson. The team later participated in tree plantation at site area and the day was rounded off with an awareness programme for the workmen at site.

**HSE**

**SAFETY FIRST**

National Safety Day / Week is an important event on Afcons' calendar and, like every year, this year too it was marked in its true spirit at the head office and across sites. This year's theme was Mobile Safety and all celebrations revolved around this theme. At the head office, a drawing competition (photo extreme right) for the children of employees was organised, and an event highlighting the importance of safety at work place was held on March 7, 2018.



(From left) Employees being felicitated at Ahmedabad Metro site; Safety skit being performed at HO; Safety pledge at Gopalpur Project site



**NEW PROJECTS**

**POWER HOUSE PACKAGE FOR AFCONS JAL JV**

Afcons JAL JV has been awarded the Power House package of the 1000-MW Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project by Chenab Valley Power Projects Ltd.

**ROAD PROJECT IN MOZAMBIQUE**

The National Roads Administration (ANE), Maputo, Mozambique has awarded Afcons the project to rehabilitate two-lane, 131km long Road N280/N281 between Tica, Buzi and Nova Sofala in Sofala Province, Mozambique.



AFCONS PHOTOS

**SOFT SKILLS TRAINING**

**Managing people at work**

A training programme on Managing People at Work (photos top and right) was organised in three batches at Afcons HO. The training was attended by 68 participants from sites and HO.



**Negotiation skills**

A two-day workshop on negotiation skills was conducted at Afcons HO on March 8-9, 2018. The workshop helped 16 participants understand the basic concepts and styles of effective negotiation, critical components /structures of negotiation process by obtaining the knowledge of tested strategies and techniques.

**FINANCE & ACCOUNTING PROGRAMME**

**Finance for non-finance**

A training programme on Finance for Non-Finance was conducted at Afcons HO on March 22-23, 2018, to enable employees from non-finance background understand the scope and concepts of financial management.

**WHOLE WELLNESS WORKSHOP**

**Bone densitometry and spirometry test**

The spirometry (lung function) and bone densitometry test was conducted at Ahmedabad Metro Project site on February 26, 2018, with participation of 100 staff and workmen; and at Afcons HO on February 28, 2018, with participation of more than 150 employees followed by a talk on general respiratory diseases. Spirometry (lung function test) helps to find out the lung capacity of each individual. It gives a good indication of the lung power and gives details about the breathing capacity. This test is also a good indicator about the lung condition for people who are exposed to dust, cement and chemicals for a longer period of time. Bone densitometry evaluation is carried out to assess the level of osteoporosis in the bones, and accordingly take necessary corrective steps.

**NEW JOINEES**

**Mr Uday Vartak,**  
Vice President (Special Initiatives), HO- EVC's Office

Mr Vartak has an overall experience of over 29 years and has worked with companies like Hindustan Construction Company Ltd, Tata Realty & Infrastructure Ltd, Leighton Welspun, Continental Engg. Corporation. His last assignment was with ITD Cementation Ltd. at the level of Vice President (Commercial).

**Mr Kumar Rudra,**  
Executive Vice President (Operations), HO (Oil and Gas)

Mr Rudra has an experience of over 26 years and has worked with companies like Larsen & Toubro and IOT Infrastructure Ltd. His last assignment was with IOT Infrastructure Ltd. at the level of Sr Vice President (Projects).

**Mr KVV Rama Sarma,**  
General Manager (Operations), HO (Hydro -Special Projects)

Mr Sarma has an experience of over 29 years and has worked with companies like Lakshmirsi Projects Pvt Ltd, Tay Construction Pvt. Ltd, Cementation India Ltd, Trafalgar House Construction India Ltd, Sew Infrastructure Ltd, GKC Projects Ltd, Pratibha Industries Ltd, Gannon Dunkerley Ltd. His last assignment was with Megha Engineering Ltd at the level of Projects Director.

**Mr Sandeep Badhe,**  
Vice President (Business Development), HO (Oil & Gas)

Mr Badhe has an experience of over 28 years and has worked with companies like Hindustan Dorr Oliver Ltd, Larsen & Toubro Ltd. His last assignment was with IOT Infrastructure & Energy Services Ltd at the level of Project Director.

**Mr Manmeet Singh,**  
General Manager (Projects), Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project

Mr Singh has a rich experience in Underground and Hydro Projects over 33 years and has worked with companies like Continental Construction Ltd, Hindustan Construction Company Ltd. His last assignment was with APCO Infratech Ltd at the level of Associate Vice President.

**AWARDS**

# Light, Camera, Afcons

The Afcons corporate film clinched the Diamond Award in the corporate film segment at the 12th Global Communication Conclave held in Pune, on March 10, 2018. This is not all. The company also bagged two Bronze Awards in the in-house journal / magazine category for our newsletter, Afcons Insight, and in the documentary film section.

The collaterals emerged among the best in over 100 entries from leading companies. Afcons found a place amidst tough competitors, including GVK, Aditya Birla Group, Indian Oil, GMR, Reliance Infra, SBI, Novartis, Indiabulls, Tata Steel, UAE Exchange among others.



**Bivabasu Kumar from Corporate Communications collects the award for Best Corporate Documentary**



**ALERT**

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

