

INSIGHT

AFCONS

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Shapoorji Pallonji
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Pride, Purpose & Progress

Dear Afconians,

I trust this message finds each of you in good health. Our recently-concluded Quarterly Review Meeting and interaction with various teams have given us some really useful insights into the trajectory of our organisation.

In our current orderbook we have many marquee and strategic projects, including the High Speed Rail, Greater Male Connectivity Project, Mumbai Pune Missing Link etc. We have also expanded into newer areas in domestic market like water supply - a point of pride for all of us.

But along with pride comes responsibility: to focus our efforts and ensure on-time, top-quality outcomes. A study of our project financials has revealed that there is a significant scope for resource reduction and fixed cost optimisation, making us more agile and efficient.

Historically, in all successful Afcons' projects, we have seen that collaboration is the key. Whenever HO, business units, and project sites work together hand-in-hand, victory becomes inevitable. And when it comes to successful leadership, our research shows, that it is based on three important qualities: taking responsibility, staying dedicated, and being engaged. These qualities are essential

for both project successes and personal achievements.

I have a strong belief that each one of us possesses the capacity to internalise and actualise these principles. United in purpose, embracing ownership, upholding commitment, and engaging wholeheartedly, we are not mere constructors of projects - we are the architects of our own narratives of success.

Wishing you the very best.



K SUBRAMANIAN

MAKING HEADLINES

MD delivers keynote address

Mr S Paramasivan, Managing Director of Afcons and Co-Chairman of the Roads & Highways FICCI Committee for Transport Infrastructure, delivered a keynote address on the growth and trends in tunnel construction at an international conference organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), in New Delhi, in May. The Honourable Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari, was welcomed by Mr Paramasivan on this auspicious occasion.



Afcons bags HSR C-2 package

The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has awarded a tunnelling works project (Package MAHSR-C-2) to Afcons, between Mumbai underground station and Shil Phata, in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project. The 21km-long tunnel project (C-2 package) includes India's first 7km-long undersea rail tunnel in the state of Maharashtra. The contract for the project was signed in June.

Rail min visits Kolkata's E-W Metro

Union Railway Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw visited the Kolkata East West Metro's UG-1 stretch in June. He took a trolley ride between Howrah Maidan Station and Esplanade Station, covering India's first underwater Metro tunnels. The minister visited India's deepest Metro station, Howrah Metro Station, and took stock of the safety parameters of India's deepest ventilation shaft. Terming the underwater tunnels an 'engineering marvel', he expressed satisfaction over the quality of work in the stretch.

EAM Jaishankar visits Tanzania

External Affairs Minister, Govt of India, Dr S Jaishankar, visited Tanzania from July 5-8, 2023. During his visit, the minister visited India-supported water projects in Tanzania and Zanzibar. He highlighted that water projects built with India's support are a reflection of the Government of India's *Jal Jeevan Mission*. The minister and the dignitaries were given a tour around the Chalinze Water Supply project constructed by Afcons. He was accompanied by Mr Binaya Pradhan, High Commissioner of India to Tanzania, Mr Jumaa Hamidu Aweso, Minister of Water and Irrigation, Tanzania, Mr Shambhu Singh, Vice President & Head of Water Segment, Afcons, and Mr Dhaval Soni, Head East Africa, Afcons.



EDITORIAL

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DECODING **infra** LOGISTICS

The Covid-19 pandemic dealt a massive blow to the global supply chain, causing unprecedented disruptions across industries.

The repercussions were further exacerbated by the Russia-Ukraine war, creating a maelstrom of challenges. **Dimitrius John D'Mello, EVP** and Head of Supply Chain Management at Afcons, sheds light on the complexities of infrastructure logistics and the organisation's innovative strategies to maintain operational efficiency during these trying times. Read on for excerpts from an interview with **Bivabasu Kumar**



Dimitrius John D'Mello, EVP
and Head of Supply Chain
Management at Afcons

How will you describe logistics and supply chain management in infrastructure sector?

Infrastructure logistics is all about dimension, weight, lift, and packaging in addition to flawless documentation and country-specific detailing. The infrastructure industry is different from manufacturing industry primarily because of the shape and size of the cargo which doesn't allow for standardised packaging, lifting, stowage and securing. The different kinds of cargo, machineries, bulk materials, consumables, shuttering and breakbulk call for a multimodal transportation system, including sea-going vessels.

The heavy-lift operations involve lot of engineering inputs, risk assessment, and a hands-on approach.

How do you ensure efficient coordination and communication between various stakeholders?

The involvement of the Logistics and Supply Chain Management (SCM) team begins with pretender assessment of any project. After a particular project has been awarded, the engagement becomes more vigorous — from initial planning till the subsequent stages of mobilisation, execution, and demobilisation. All teams, including the respective Business Units, CPE, and the site teams, have to work in close coordination with each other. Other intricate and complex issues like documentation, process awareness with site ordering team, appointment of trusted Freight Forwarders, Custom House Agents (CHA), shipping companies are only possible because of seamless interaction within the SCM teams. We use a common digitised platform that keeps all stakeholders informed in real time about local transportation, container and air cargo movement etc.

How do you assess and select reliable transportation providers for the movement of goods and materials?

Transportation of goods within the country is streamlined with the introduction of a digitised platform for bidding amongst approved transport companies. We have a similar platform for containerised and air cargo movements. Bulk and breakbulk cargos go through a tender process with tried and tested agencies. Additionally, we also study availability of vessels near the port area and engage with the owners to get competitive costs.

How did Covid-19 pandemic impact global supply chain in the infrastructure sector?

The Covid-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on logistics with prices spiralling four to ten times, inadequate and unreliable availability of containers and vessels coupled with the congestion at ports at both ends. The restricted movement of goods across government-defined zones caused huge delays both in terms of exorbitant cost of sea transit, demurrage to congestion and idling of personnel at site due to non-receipt of materials.

Can you cite few examples of challenging logistics issues you faced and how you resolved them?

While the pandemic was still at its peak, we were to move 42Km of pipes for a project in Zimbabwe. Our team was executing a critical water supply project for Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC), which involved laying of new pipeline to draw water from the Zambezi river and supplying it to the Hwange Power Station. We managed to send the entire consignment in a bulk vessel as against the conventional practice of transporting in break bulk vessel in multiple lots. By doing so, we not only ended up saving time but also reduced significant transportation cost. We chose Beira, in Mozambique, as the destination port to avoid congestion at Dar-es-Salaam port in Tanzania. The unloading and



Digitisation is one of the main thrusts of our logistics strategy. We have already begun with a platform for inland transportation running successfully for nearly a year.

onward transport from the port to site was handled by an Indian forwarder in collaboration with the site team. The entire exercise was challenging but successfully executed.

Similarly, the logistics for one of our projects in Mauritius was handled from Kandla port as opposed to Mumbai Port to reduce cost and ring in efficient handling of containers, bulk cargo, and breakbulk cargo. Vessels were time chartered for a period, for the first time, in Afcons.

What steps did you take to ensure continuity in the supply chain during pandemic?

We had to use novel means to cope with the havoc brought about by the

pandemic. We shifted base for our export materials — storing material and equipment in a warehouse outside the port to reduce high port charges. We used time charter vessels, avoided ports with congestion and planned material requirements in advance to ensure readiness before vessel berthing. This helped us to operate during the pandemic although at higher costs.

Did you adopt any special strategy for inventory management during the period?

Yes. In a proactive manner, the SCM team, in coordination with site teams, increased the numbers of vendors approved by clients. We were also able

to garner an adequate stock of reinforcement steel leveraging the relationship with Steel Authority Of India Limited (SAIL) and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL). Similarly, efforts were made for cement and additives successfully.

How do you leverage technology and digital tools to enhance efficiency?

Digitisation is one of the main thrusts of our logistics strategy. We have already begun with a platform for inland transportation running successfully for nearly a year. Another platform for containers and air cargo placement has been functional for the past four months. Both platforms have resulted in tangible benefits of quick turnaround in vendor allocation, reduction in costs, online real time information and communication to all stakeholders. SCM along with our IT team is in discussion for a comprehensive logistics software which will help in all aspects of cargo movement.

What is your approach to managing last-mile distribution challenges?

We face last mile distribution issues for overseas land-locked projects with weak infrastructure, cross-country barriers, and local interferences. We have evolved over time and have worked with local partners of international repute, many of whom are Indian companies with local offices to counter last mile challenges.

What is your mantra for success?

Prior planning, coordination, communication, educating end users, and being well informed of the external environment, including geopolitical situation.

AIMING HIGHER IN AFRICA

The 18th CII - EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa growth partnership took place, in New Delhi, on June 14-16, 2023. This year's edition focused on fostering trade, investments, and knowledge exchange, aiming to create shared value for businesses between India and Africa.

During the Conclave, Afcons' Managing Director Mr S Paramasivan chaired a session on Transforming Infrastructure for Africa's Development. He highlighted that Indian infrastructure firms are looking at an annual investment of US\$ 130-176 billion in Africa for infrastructure

development, with significant potential for investment in various other sectors.

Energy remains the top area for investments, followed by transport, infrastructure, and water infrastructure, based on investment patterns over the past decade. Afcons has played a crucial role in executing projects in transportation, water, and other infrastructure across 14 countries in Africa, driving positive change in these regions.

Transportation in Africa is experiencing significant transformation, with efforts to reduce logistical costs and diversify modes of transport, including railways. Multi-modal transportation, as seen in Afcons-executed projects like the Tema-Mpakadan railway line in Ghana, is opening up

new opportunities for infrastructure development.

The water sector also presents substantial growth prospects, with India playing a crucial role in providing sustainable water solutions in Africa. Speaking at a forum on 'Partnerships for Sustainable Water Security', VP & Head of Afcons' Water Segment Business Unit, Mr Shambhu Singh, said that collaborative efforts between infrastructure firms like Afcons and funding agencies like India EXIM Bank are essential to ensure access to safe and potable water. Afcons is actively engaged in projects across six different countries in this sector and remains committed to further explorations across the continent.

Africa's economic growth is projected to outperform the rest of the world, making it an attractive destination for potential investors and numerous new projects. As the business environment in Africa improves, the India-Africa relationship is expected to continue flourishing in the future.

TECHKNOW

GMCP Bridge to get world's tallest precast segments

Around 1228 precast segments will be used to construct the superstructure of the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP), which is the single-largest infrastructure project in Maldives. This huge volume of precast segments are being produced and stored at Gulhifalhu island. They will subsequently be loaded on a barge from a load-out jetty, and, transported to the location where the segments will be erected at their final position in the bridge.

Large construction projects often require large construction equipment to transform overwhelming tasks into successful deliverables. The GMCP is no exception. While the precasting of segments are being done using basic methods of Long Line and Short Line casting, Afcons has deployed the world's second tallest precast segment for Short Line, and, the world's tallest precast segment in Long Line casting.

"The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) had 10m tall precast segment done in Short Line casting method. For the GMCP, we are casting 8.177m tall segments in Long Line casting method, which could be the tallest in this methodology," Project Manager S Viswamurthy said.

In Long Line method of casting the whole span of a bridge is cast in one bed. This is possible because the casting bed itself is of the same length as the span. "We can see the real profile of the bridge in the Long Line casting method. For example, if there are 10 segments of 3m length each in one span, the casting bed will be of 30m and all the 10 segments will be cast in that 30m casting bed match next to each other," he explained.

In the GMCP project the precast segments have a maximum height of 8.177m. The entire project consists of three bridges, three causeways, and a total project length of 6.7km. The project will also see development of interchange points and parking zones at each connection stop. Once completed, the project will become a national economic engine providing all-weather connectivity between Male, Villimalle, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.



(Top) Mr Shambhu Singh, VP & Head of Water Segment, Afcons, speaks at the conclave. (Below) Afcons' MD Mr S Paramasivan at the conclave.





Maldives' ministers visit Afcons' projects

A delegation of ministers from Maldives, including His Excellency Shri Mohamed Aslam, Minister for National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, and, His Excellency Shri Shifaz Ali, Minister of State for National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, visited various project sites, including iconic Chenab Railway Bridge and Bangalore Metro projects in May 2023. Shri Mahjoob Shujau, Project Director, PMU, Ministry of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, and, Shri Mohamed Jinan Saeed, Project Manager, PMU, GMC-MTL project, Ministry of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure were also part of the delegation. They were deeply impressed by the works being executed by Afcons.

CAG delegation visits E-W Metro



A delegation from the Comptroller & Auditor General of India (CAG) visited the Kolkata Metro's UG-1 stretch on May 12, 2023. The delegation led by Ms Ila Singh, Deputy CAG (Railways), was briefed about the project and its progress by the Afcons team. She and her team took a trolley ride between Howrah Maidan Station and Esplanade Station, covering India's first underwater Metro tunnels. They also visited the Howrah Metro Station, the deepest Metro station in India.



accompanied by Mr R Anantakumar, Director (Operations) & Urban Infra BU Head, during the visit.

MD visits RRTS PKG-6

Managing Director Mr S Paramasivan visited the Delhi-Meerut RRTS Package-6 in July 2023. He reviewed the project and motivated the team to complete the work with highest standards. He was

DMD makes multiple site visits

Deputy Managing Director Mr Giridhar Rajagopalan visited the Chhara Breakwater and Mokama Rail Bridge projects in June 2023. He reviewed the progress and encouraged project teams to keep maintaining the quality and safety standards. He was accompanied by Mr V Manivannan, Director, CPE, at the Chhara, and, Mr G Mathi Sekaran, Vice President, CMEG, at the Mokama. During the visit, he also took part in a tree plantation drive at Mokama Rail Bridge project.



Northern Rly GM visits T49 B tunnel project

Mr Shobhan Chaudhuri, General Manager, Northern Railway, visited the T49B tunnel project to review the project progress on July 20, 2023. During the visit, he appreciated the project's completion despite the challenging geographical conditions. He was accompanied by Mr SP Mahi, Chief Administrative Officer, USBRL Project, and the Afcons team led by Chandra Sekhar Dixit, Project Manager.



HSE AWARDS & APPRECIATIONS

British Safety Council Awards



Delhi-Meerut RRTS PKG-6 & PKG-8 have been awarded the International Safety Award 2023 from the British Safety Council (BSC) for commitment towards good health & safety management at the project sites. Mr Mike Robinson, CEO, BSC, presented the awards to Mr Ravindran Ramaya, Chief HSE Manager. Mr Sudhir More, Head, HSE along with other Afcons team members were present on the occasion.

Behaviour Based Safety

External Behaviour Based Safety (BBS) training programmes were held at Mumbai Metro Line 5 and Agra UG Metro (phase-1) projects. Dr HL Kaila, BBS India Project Director, conducted the programmes in the presence of the project teams and Afcons' HO HSE team.

7.18 Million Safe Man Hours

The Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation Limited has awarded a certificate of appreciation to Afcons for achieving 7.18 Million Safe Man Hours at Ahmedabad Elevated Metro project.

6.04 Million Safe Man Hours

The Bangladesh Roads & Highways Department has issued a certificate of

appreciation to Bangladesh Road project (WP-02) for achieving 6.04 Million Safe Man Hours. Another certificate of appreciation was issued to Bangladesh Road Project (WP-01) for achieving Five Million Safe Man Hours.

5 Million Safe Man Hours

Afcons has received a certificate of appreciation from Delhi Metro Rail Corporation for achieving 5 Million Safe Man Hours at DC-05 package of Delhi MRTS Phase-IV.

5 Million Safe Man Hours

The Société Autoroutiere du Gabon (SAG), Republic of Gabon, has issued a certificate of appreciation to the Gabon Road Project team for achieving 5 Million Safe Man Hours.



1000 SAPPLINGS PLANTED IN 60 SEC

Afconians, in Bangalore Metro, took a unique eco-initiative on the occasion of the World Environment Day on June 5, 2023. In a collaborative effort with Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), and the Indian Military, they planted 1,000 saplings in just one minute. The plantation was done in Rashtriya Military School and Military premises in Bangalore. Further, in tune with the theme of #BeatPlasticPollution, the team distributed bio-degradable jute bags among locals. Other project sites also celebrated the **World Environment Day** by organising various activities.



HR TRAININGS

- ◆ A training programme on Quantity Survey was conducted virtually at HO for various Marine BU sites.
- ◆ Various mechanical training programmes on Operation & Maintenance of Engines, Hydraulics of Equipment, Operation & Maintenance of Piling Rig, Bearing Failure & Causes, Preventive & Predictive Maintenance, and Equipment Management for Civil Engineers, were conducted virtually for CPE engineers.
- ◆ Several Soft Skills Trainings such as Problem Solving and Analysis, Written Communication Skills, Persuasiveness, Personal Effectiveness, Planning and Organising, Problem Solving, Oral Communication, and High Impact Presentation Skills were conducted for HO and sites.

NEW PROJECTS

Water project in Ghana

Afcons has been awarded a project of rehabilitation and upgradation of potable water system in Yendi, Republic of Ghana, by Ghana Water Company Limited.

Water tunnel project in Maharashtra

The City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) has awarded design and construction of 8.65Km-long treated water tunnel and allied works project (Package-1) to Afcons in Raigad, Maharashtra.

NEW JOINEES

Mr Vikas Chandrakant Rane has joined as Dy General Manager (Design) in Design Department at HO.

Mr Rakesh Pandey has joined as Dy General Manager (QA/QC(Mech)) for Second Liquid Berth, Gujarat Chemical Port Ltd, Dahej.

Mr B Sudheer Babu has joined as Dy General Manager (Projects) for Railway Project in Angul, Orissa.

Mr Arvind Prakash Kulshrestha has joined as Dy General Manager (Projects) for Structural, Mechanical & Plate works Project, Liberia.

Mr Basab Kalidas Choudhury has joined as General Manager in Urban Infrastructure BU.

Mr Sanjay Ningu Bolke has joined as Joint General Manager (Design) in Support Services BU.

Mr Sujoy Kumar Das has joined as Vice President (Projects) in Oil & Gas BU.

Mr Sunil Kumar Ravi has joined as Joint General Manager (Projects) for Road Project in Gabon.

Awards

Dual success at ASSOCHAM Infrastructure Awards



Afcons won two awards at the ASSOCHAM's Annual Flagship Infrastructure Awards 2023. The Chenab Railway Bridge won an award for Innovative Bridge Design while the Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg Package-14 won an award for Fastest Tunnel Construction project. Honourable Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari, was the chief guest. The awards were collected by Mr Satish G Paretkar, Director, Hydro & Underground BU, Mr KNM Rao, Head, Hydro & Underground BU, and Sekhar Das, Project Manager, Package-14. The award ceremony was held, in New Delhi.



EPC World Award for Samruddhi Mahamarg Package-2

Afcons received the Outstanding Contribution in Roads & Highways Award for Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg Package-2 at the 10th EPC World Awards. Shri Nitin Gadkari, Honourable Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, handed over the award to Mr Balbir Kumar Arora, Vice President, Business Development, Afcons, in an award ceremony, in New Delhi.



Awards for Chenab Bridge & Atal Tunnel projects

Civil Engineering & Construction Review (CE&CR) honoured Afcons by bestowing the CE&CR Award in 'Outstanding Tunnel Structure' category for Atal Tunnel. Also, Chenab Railway Bridge won an award in 'Outstanding Infrastructure Projects' category.



ALERTS

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