

## Where is my bulldozer ?

I have learned to adapt to the heat, humidity and even the mosquitoes, in India, during the last 15 years. However, when it comes to having no internet, it suffocates me, because all my planning goes flop. As each year, I prepared my 'to do list' before leaving Belgium. I was already concerned about the existing fluctuation of the network and I was afraid that it could become worse. I was not wrong ! Initial part of my stay went in 'reconnecting' the internet. Later on, it became even impossible to get connection for days. Our staff had to keep calling BSNL, our internet provider, regularly. One fine day, BSNL informed us that the network cable had been cut during some road work and that they had identified the approximate location. They wanted us to go on the spot with our own workers to dig and find the broken cable.

Meanwhile we reached the location, one group of BSNL staff was standing under the shade of a tree waiting for us. Soon we started the work as per their guidance, but no sign of the cable. After an hour I was told that they have called for a bulldozer so that the location can be traced easily, only 5 minutes to wait. 10 minutes passed, no sign of bulldozer, it seemed that the bulldozer fellow went to have lunch and was not ready to come any more. Then they requested the road workers to send their own bulldozer, they too said they will come in five minute, but we waited another 30 minutes without seeing anything coming. It was clear that the work could not be done without a bulldozer. So, what to do ? Almost two hours we spend there and nothing really happened. I decided to leave, and asked one of our staff to stay there to see that somehow we can get the work done. On my way back to *St-Anthony's School*, we found the bulldozer and some road workers. I got out of the car and went to them and explained about our desperate situation. The contractor had pity on me and, with a big smile, sent the bulldozer to get the work done. So, at last this story ended happily. It shows how things can be blocked or can just move in an unexpected way in India. Nothing is really simple, even the smaller action can become an adventure.

Marc Valentin





## « Feeder Separation »

The need for power supply is increasing in rural India. To ensure better load management and reliable supply, the Central Government initiated a program called « *Feeder Separation* ». The main component of it is the separation of power between domestic and agricultural feeders by physically separating agricultural and non agricultural consumers through separate high tension wires. It entails the erection of new high tension line and the reorientation of the existing lines and the installation of new distribution of transformers. The domestic power supply is for 18 hours per day and for the agriculture, it is for 8 hours only.

In the month of May, the village of *Dugawar* was linked to the domestic feeders, but our school was left out. To bring this high tension wire from the village to our school campus it was required to add three electric poles and also the transformer in our campus has to be changed. Directly the school objected and complained to the higher authorities because *St-Anthony's School*, unlike most of the villagers who steal electricity from the overhead cables, is paying its bills regularly ! A survey was done and they informed us that they would connect us to the new grid, but nothing really happened.

So, this was the situation in July, hardly any public supply ! The solar panel power was exhausted in a few hours time and the generator could of course not be run for the whole campus throughout the day and night.

It was urgent to make things move and get it done as early as possible. Many parents were coming complaining about the children suffering from the heat because of the fans not running.

We met the higher authorities and the local engineers and tried to convince them that keeping these 1800 children in the class rooms with hardly any power supply throughout the day was unacceptable.

After a week, the project was sanctioned but next step was to deal with the installation which was not easy... One morning we found the staff who was working on it in our school's office because the villagers were not allowing them to draw the high tension line in front of their houses. Another day, a group of inspectors from the forest department came, threat-



New electric poles had to be place near the road for our St-Anthony's School.



As always, an unusual work or event on the road attracts many people, curious to see what is happening.

ening us to register a case against the school because one tree along the road had been cut. We contacted the local police and eventually they handled all those who objected to the new electric line, we also insulated the cable to pacify the villagers. After some days a new transformer was also erected. So, hopefully we will have now a better electric supply !





Drawing electricity illegally by using a hook on the cable is a common and very dangerous practice in India. There is little effort to hide it. The method is very simple, just find the nearest overhead power cable, sling a metal hook over it, then run a wire from the hook to your house. Many people do not have a legal connection, they use electricity with this illegal way. A huge amount of electricity is stolen. India is chronically short of power and the state run electricity companies are close to bankruptcy. The next move of the government will probably be to insulate all those cables to stop the theft.

Besides the installation of the new electric line, we also bought a new generator which has more efficiency to manage the power in our big campus !

### ***St-Anthony's School of Rahrai***

Children are growing well and bigger ones are very excited about the computer lab installed last year. They are learning a lot of new things. Computers are resisting the heat and working well. It is so far very successful. Children are also very careful and they use them well.

The school of *Rahrai* will require more classrooms for the academic year 2020-21. So our plan is to make the frame structure of the second floor ready by the month of May 2020

and eventually as per our requirement, get the class rooms ready too.

The construction work has been started in the month of May, while the school was on vacation. Roof concreting of this part is scheduled for the first week of October.



The work is going on well, the work on the next half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor will start in the middle of October.





It is amazing to see how passionate are the students in preparing the Science Exhibition !

## Science Exhibition

In India, schools divide the students into four « houses », (the blue, green, red and yellow houses) for extra curricular activities. All ages are mixed. Each house has its own leader elected by its members.

All the extra curricular activities like sports, arts etc. during the year are conducted on a competition base. This is supposed to help the students to have a good competitive spirit and bring the best out of themselves.

Every year in August a *School Exhibition competition* is conducted. The teachers along with the houses leaders choose the theme of the year. This year, the theme was « *Pollution and Global warming* ». A lot of discussions and debates among the students are conducted and they all work in group and produce many working models, crafts, etc, all based on the chosen theme.

In urban areas, most pollution emissions come from vehicles and industries, whereas in rural areas, much of the pollution stems from biomass burning for cooking and keeping warm. In autumn and winter months, large scale crop residue burning in agriculture fields (a low cost alternative to mechanical tilling) is a major source of smoke, smog and particle pollution.



At least 140 million people breathe air 10 times or more over the WHO safe limit and 13 of the world's 20 cities with the highest annual levels of air pollution are in India.

