



Taken in August in *Jadwar*, this picture shows the first floor of the school building in construction. One month later we were able to use a few classes on the first floor.

## Jadwar School: Growing Strong Despite Challenges

Overcoming numerous obstacles, the *St-Anthony's School of Jadwar* continues to make steady progress. The first academic year left a positive impression on the community, leading to the enrollment of 215 new students this year. Some parents requested the addition of Grade 5 for older students who would otherwise need to attend schools in the city. Last year, there weren't enough students to form a new class, but this year, increased demand made it possible to introduce Grade 5. This change also allowed for the promotion of some over-age students from Grade 3 directly to Grade 5.

To accommodate the growing number of students, six new classrooms have been constructed on the first floor. With this expanded infrastructure, the school is now well prepared to meet the educational needs of the upcoming year.

The priority is completing the compound wall to ensure the safety of students and staff living on campus. Wild animals and stray dogs have been entering the school grounds, highlighting the need to secure the campus with a protective boundary.

Providing reliable transportation remains a significant challenge. A new bus costs around 30,000 euros, and managing transportation has been time-consuming and difficult because our three schools are located in rural areas, not cities. Fortunately, local parties have stepped up to run transportation services around our *Dugawar* school, allowing us to transfer an old school bus and a minivan to our *Jadwar* school.

With increased admissions this year, we also engaged private parties to operate two more second-hand minivans. However, the



Let me present you the minivan like those used in *Jadwar*.

main challenge in *Jadwar* is not finding vehicles but ensuring that parents pay transportation fees on time. After three months, it became evident that the fees collected were insufficient to cover drivers' salaries and maintenance costs, making it unprofitable for private operators. Currently, the school is covering their losses, and this remains a significant challenge for the coming years.

## Overcoming Power Struggles in St-Anthony Schools

In North India, soaring summer temperatures create serious challenges for schools in remote villages without reliable electricity. The lack of power means no fans, no lights, and no access to essential educational tools like computers. The heat becomes unbearable, making it difficult for students to focus and for teachers to conduct classes effectively. Moreover, the absence of electricity limits the school's ability to offer extracurricular activities and after-school programs, further affecting students' overall development. This summer, *St. Anthony's School in Dugawar*, the largest of our schools, faced frequent power outages, underscoring the urgent need for a permanent solution.

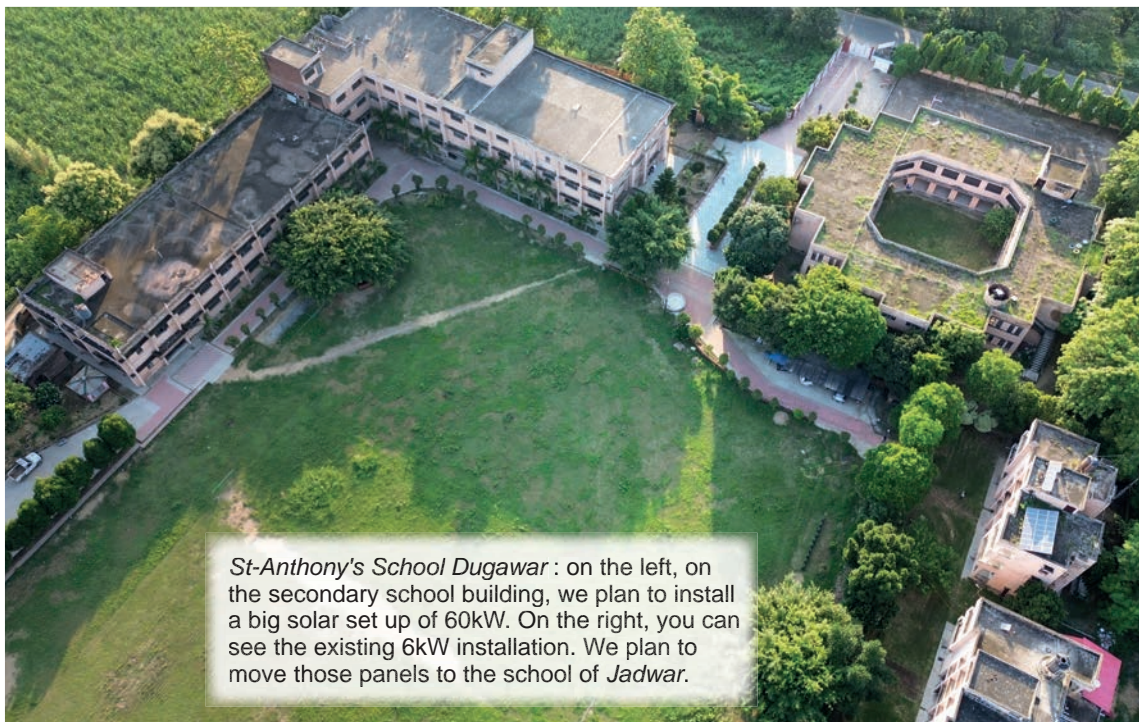


Our students of *Dugawar* are greeting you !

Installing solar panels offers a consistent and reliable source of electricity. Solar panels donated by the *BESIX Foundation* in 2014 and 2016, with a capacity of 6 kW, are still in use for staff residences, but their reach is limited to staff areas and some office computers. Meanwhile, the new school in *Jadwar* remains without any solar support and recently endured a three-day power outage.

The *Dugawar* campus, which has three separate school buildings and a total of 2,250 students, requires 60 kW to operate fans and computers. After consulting with various companies and visiting other schools with solar installations, the proposed solution is

to use solar energy directly during the day, public supply when solar power isn't available, and charged batteries as a backup. Any excess energy could be sold to the government's energy company. The estimated cost for this installation is 40,000 euros. While the upfront expense is significant, solar panels require minimal maintenance after installation and can



*St-Anthony's School Dugawar* : on the left, on the secondary school building, we plan to install a big solar set up of 60kW. On the right, you can see the existing 6kW installation. We plan to move those panels to the school of *Jadwar*.



drastically reduce electricity costs. The only recurring cost would be for battery replacement every 5 to 6 years.

By extending our investment in solar panels, we are not only ensuring reliable electricity for our students but also contributing to the global fight against climate change. Solar power is a clean, renewable energy source that reduces our reliance on fossil fuels, directly lowering our carbon footprint. This step aligns with global efforts to combat global warming and promotes sustainable development for our schools.

The existing 6 kW system can be transferred to the still small school in *Jadwar*, where it would be sufficient for the staff residence and to power fans during the summer for a few years. This transfer would help address some of the immediate power issues at *Jadwar* while the larger installation at *Dugawar* progresses.

### Embracing New Challenges for Inclusion in Rahrai

When senior students reach Grade 9, the school must obtain affiliation from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Although we had prepared all the require-



Before and after. The school is ready to welcome students with disabilities...



ments for the application well in advance for the school of *Rahrai*, we learned that CBSE introduced a new Inclusion Policy in March 2023. This policy aims to provide equal educational opportunities for differently abled students. To comply, schools must install facilities such as ramps in toilets and at the entry/exit points for wheelchair users, auditory signals, and other accessibility measures.

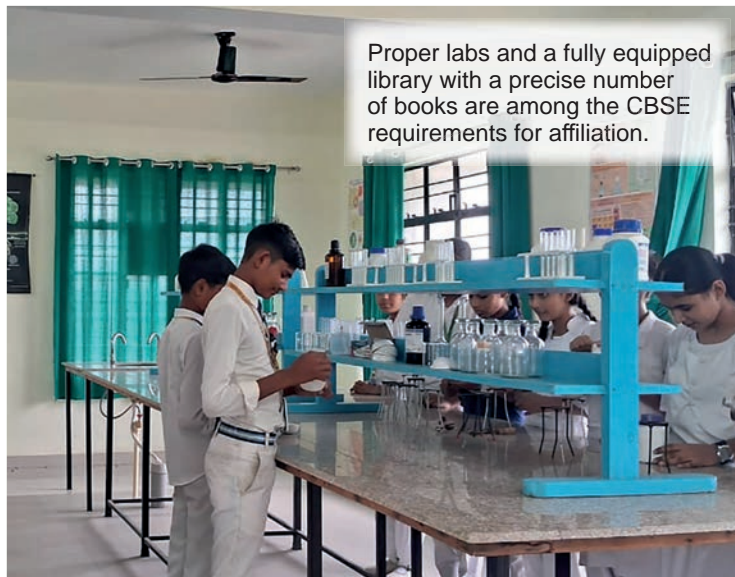
Our school building did not have these facilities, as they were not required when it was constructed. We had to rush to replace the entrance stairs with ramps and rails for wheelchair access. We attempted to convince the CBSE authorities to exempt us from building a lift, considering the area's insufficient power supply, but our request was denied.

We had to install western toilets and accessories.



During our stay in August, we made sure that the computer lab was working well. We even installed 20 extra computers.





Proper labs and a fully equipped library with a precise number of books are among the CBSE requirements for affiliation.



Spending a significant amount of money on a lift that we may not even be able to power seemed unreasonable to us, but not to them. We searched for contractors who could complete the work at a reasonable price.

When new CBSE rules are introduced, they apply to all schools, regardless of the region or local needs. Even schools already affiliated, like *St. Anthony's* in *Dugawar*, will have to comply with this new regulation soon.

Once our application was submitted, an inspection team, consisting of two CBSE School Principals, was sent to *St. Anthony's* School in *Rahrai* for verification. The team was tasked with physically verifying the relevance of the documents and ensuring that every activity complied with CBSE rules.

On the day of the inspection, our staff was ready to welcome the team. Every moment of their visit was filmed, including the school building, playground, campus, and

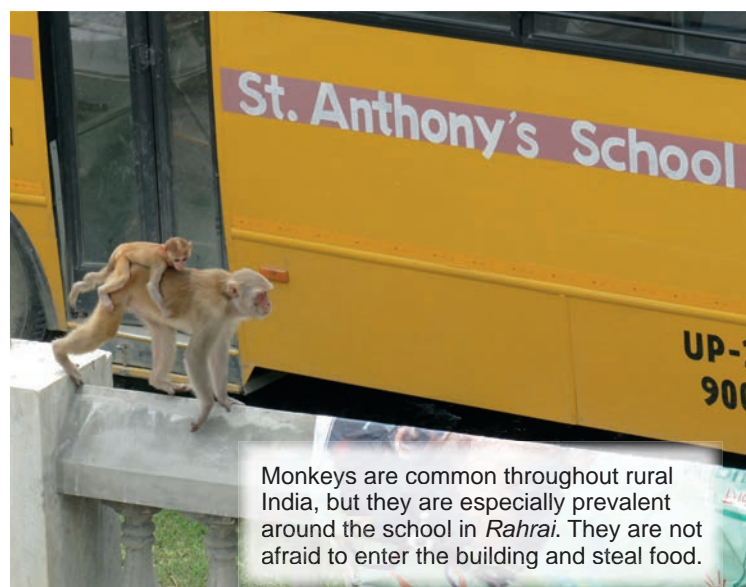
compound walls, with the help of an external photographer and a drone.

The team began with the morning assembly, followed by a thorough inspection of the school. This included measuring classroom sizes, cross-checking student and staff registers, verifying fees and salaries through interviews, and inspecting labs, library books, toilets, and drinking water facilities. At the end of the day, they uploaded all the videos to the CBSE website before leaving.

The team gave us a very positive report, and we certified that they had fulfilled their duties well. Before departing, they expressed how deeply touched they were by the spirit of service behind this social project, and how we manage to run the school with such low fees, even providing free education for many children!

Now that we have completed the process for affiliation up to Class 10, many parents have already asked if we will extend the affiliation to Classes 11 and 12. We consider it our primary duty to offer complete education up to Class 12.

For Class 12 affiliation, we mainly need to provide two additional classrooms and a separate math lab. Currently, two classrooms are being used as staff residences, so we may need to relocate staff and convert these rooms back into classrooms. We will keep you updated on these changes in *Rahrai* in our future newsletters.



Monkeys are common throughout rural India, but they are especially prevalent around the school in *Rahrai*. They are not afraid to enter the building and steal food.