



Employment News



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JOB HIGHLIGHTS

NICL

● National Insurance Company Limited, Kolkata requires 1434 Administrative Officers
Last Date : 03.08.2013

UPSC

● Union Public Service Commission invites applications for approximately 1200 various posts
Last Date : 01.08.2013

INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

● Intelligence Bureau requires 750 Assistant Central Intelligence Officer Grade-II/Executive
Last Date : 12.08.2013

DSSSB

● Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board requires 671 (approx.) Laboratory Assistant, Sr. Scientific Assistant, Armourer, Matron (Female), Warder (Male) etc.
Last Date : 25.07.2013 and 02.08.2013

BANK

● Indian Overseas Bank, Chennai, requires 480 Probationary Officers
Last Date : 29.07.2013

RAILWAY

● North Western Railway requires 290 Trackman, Khallasi/Gateman and Khallasi/Helper against Ex-serviceman quota
Last Date : 13.08.2013

AIIMS

● All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhubaneswar requires 118 Professor, Addl. Professor, Asso. Professor and Asstt. Professor
Last Date : 29.07.2013

CONCOR

● Container Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi requires 43 Sr. Assistant (Technical)
Last Date : 05.08.2013

Turn over the pages for other vacancies in Banks, Armed Forces, Railways, PSUs and other Govt. Deptts

WEB EXCLUSIVES

Following items are available in the Web Exclusives section on www.employmentnews.gov.in :

1. Kashmir linked by train
2. Government on PPP mode for Infra Projects.

UTTARAKHAND TRAGEDY : A MAN MADE DISASTER

- Himanshu Thakkar

Natural disasters involving Himalayan mountains, rivers, forests, glaciers and people over 38,000 sq km area are bound to be complex. Many a times, a natural disaster and its impacts are a result of multiple things occurring together. Current Uttarakhand disaster highlight the anthropogenic reasons which has contributed towards increasing its impact many fold. Uttarakhand is a fragile, new mountain state. Uttarakhand is inherently vulnerable to various kinds of disasters like high intensity rainfall, cloud bursts, land slides, flash floods and earthquakes. Its geology is ridden with numerous fault lines. Climate change is increasing the frequency of high intensity rainfall including cloud bursts and flash floods, Glacial Lake Outburst floods (as it seems to have happened in current disaster at more than one place including upstream of Kedarnath, upstream of Hemkunt Sahib and Pithoragarh) and with them the landslides. In such a situation all our developmental project need to take this reality into account and strive to reduce the risks.

While the rainfall is natural, the root causes which increased the human tragedy include unregulated, unsafe and unplanned infrastructure development along the rivers and development of large number of hydel projects in the fragile zone without proper checks and balances, lack of transparent studies and democratic decision-making processes. Flouting of rules is rampant in Uttarakhand, but the tragedy has shown that nature does not take bribes.

The first principle of disaster management is prior warning, we failed there. The first thing that strikes you when you analyse this disaster is that we did not have the Doppler Radar system in place that could have helped predict even an event of cloud burst at least 3-6 hours in advance of the event. The system and money for it was sanctioned for Uttarakhand since 2008 but due to lack of coordination between Uttarakhand government, India Meteorological Department (IMD) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the system was not available.

The Uttarakhand Meteorological department made a warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall on June 15, 16 and 17 and even warned the pilgrims to postpone the trip to the char dham (Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath) for four days. However, the response of the Uttarakhand administration to this warning has been generally callous. The chief minister has been saying there was no actionable forecast. Even though some in administration claim they took action, there is no evidence of any effective action.

Even after the rainfall started, there was no immediate monitoring of the heavy rainfall at specific locations and prompt dissemination the information about the same to the downstream administration and people. In fact it seems that Kedarnath, epicenter of the disaster, has no rain gauge.

Central Water Commission is India's premier technical body in charge of flood forecasting. However, CWC completely failed to forecast the floods in the entire flood ravaged Uttarakhand area. At Srinagar, even as hundreds of houses faced flooding during early hours of June 17, CWC had no flood forecast, even though it has a flood warning site at Srinagar.

As the CAG report of March 2013 shows, the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) of Uttarakhand was constituted under the chairmanship of state Chief Minister in 2007, but has never met, the state has formulating no rules, regulations, policies or guidelines for disaster management. A functional SDMA in Uttarakhand does not exist. This indicates that agencies like IMD, CWC, NDMA and SDMA have failed to put in place basic systems of warning, forecasting, monitoring and information dissemination that can greatly reduce disaster potential of any area.

Since the Uttarakhand state was formed in 2000, the state is on a path of massive growth of various projects including mining, roads, large number of hydropower projects, buildings, tourism, etc. But the reality of the vulnerabilities was completely ignored. Illegal river bed mining was so unsustainable, destructive and rampant that Swami Nigmanand gave up his life fasting to stop it. There are clear directives from courts that there can be no construction in at least 100 meters on both sides of the rivers, but there is nobody implementing this in Uttarakhand, hundreds of buildings are coming up on the riverbed itself, besides encroachment of the 100 m corridors at many places. Even government buildings have been coming up in this zone, the massive building of the paramilitary Sashstra Seema Bal at Srinagar (inaugurated only last year) and various hotels of the government tourism corporations are evidence of this. During the Aug 3-4, 2012 Uttarkashi disaster also buildings were collapsing along the Bhagirathi River as if made of cardboard boxes, as shown on TV channels this June. The report of the state disaster mitigation and management centre after that and the Sept 2012 Ukhimath disaster in Rudraprayag district made a series of recommendations, but no one bothered to implement any of them.

Roads are being constructed and expanded in Uttarakhand over the last decade, giving a miss to all kind of safety regulations, including geological fault lines, risks of land slides, use of blasting, deforestation, complete lack of attention to risks of landslides and lack of cross drainage structures. Huge expansion of tourism over the last decade has not kept in mind basic norms of disaster management.

Over two hundred hydropower projects of various sizes are in various levels of implementation, some operating, some under construction, others in clearance and planning stage. All of them have significant environmental and social impact as also impact on disaster potential of the area. For proj-

ects below 25 MW there is no impact assessment or monitoring. Even for projects above 25 MW, our former environment minister Jairam Ramesh is on record having said that most EIAs are dishonest, cut-and-past jobs. The Expert Appraisal Committee of Union Ministry of Environment and Forests does not apply its mind to the basic norms of adequacy of EIAs, lack of cumulative impact assessment, adequacy of public consultation process or environment compliance. Even when evidence of violations is presented before the governments, they have failed to take any credible remedial steps. These projects involve large dam, tunnels, roads, townships, deforestation, submergence and so on. They hugely increased the disaster potential of the state. Just to illustrate, the under construction 330 MW Sringar hydropower project on Alaknanda river had dumped over half a million cubic meters of muck illegally on the Alaknanda riverbed. On the night of June 17, the river took all the muck with the floods to the Srinagar town, submerging hundreds of houses under water and some under one to three stories of silt. The illegal dumping of the muck in the river has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the state and the central government, but no effective action was taken. The same phenomena was also repeated downstream of Phata Byung and Singoli Bhatwari hydropower projects on Mandakini River in Rudraprayag district.

The state government and central government agencies like CWC and THDC have been trying to deflect the criticism that the hydropower projects are facing, by making some baseless claims about how the Tehri dam saved downstream Haridwar and Rishikesh. Our analysis shows that even if Tehri dam were not there, there would have been no increase in the flood levels at these towns since the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda floods came at different points of time.

We need to realize that we have made some serious mistakes of omissions and commissions. As Uttarakhand now turns towards rebuilding and rehabilitation, it needs to accept these mistakes and make urgent amends. Initiate cumulative impact assessment and carrying capacity studies in all river basins, and put a stop to under construction and planned projects in the meantime. Ensure an active disaster management department that has key role in all development decision making. Put in place credible environmental governance and compliance system. Assess the vulnerability of the various infrastructure and people in the changing climate. Put in place robust warning, forecasting, monitoring and information dissemination system. If we do not take such minimum steps, next disaster may make the current one look like a trailer.

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CABINET APPROVES FOOD SECURITY BILL ORDINANCE

The Cabinet has approved an ordinance to implement the food security bill that will guarantee that two-third of Indian population will get food grain at highly subsidised rates.

ORDINANCE AT A GLANCE

THE CONTENT

- Guarantees legal entitlement for cheap food to 67% of population.
- To ensure 5 kg of rice, wheat or coarse cereals is supplied at Rs 3 a kg, Rs 2 a kg and Re 1 a kg, respectively, to all identified beneficiaries.
- Poorest of the poor will still get 35 Kg/household under Antyodaya Anna Yojana at above prices.

- Eligible households to be identified by states.
- Maternity benefit of Rs. 6,000 a month. Kids between 6 months & 14 years to get home ration or hot cooked food.
- Eldest women to be head of household for ration card.
- Those falling in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category will get wheat at Rs 4.15 per kg and rice at Rs 5.65 per kg. The Above Poverty Line (APL) population will get wheat at Rs 6.10 per kg and rice at Rs 8.30 per kg.
- All households covered under the Targeted PDS will get wheat at Rs 2 per kg and rice at Rs 3 per kg itself. APL families will get food grain at 5 kg per individual per month with the maximum of 25 kg per household, but the BPL families

and those under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana will get 35 kg subsidised food grain per month.

THE COST

- When implemented fully, it is expected to cost the exchequer Rs 1,24,724 crore, Rs 34,724 crore more than the 2013-14 Budget estimate of food subsidy.

THE WAY FORWARD

- The ordinance comes into effect as soon as the President gives his consent.
- Then, it will need to be passed in both Houses within six weeks of the next Parliament sitting.

(Compilation: Editorial Team, Employment News)