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Inclusive Infrastructure Development for North East India

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There is broad consensus that infrastructure contributes to growth and development. It also helps in improving productivity, increasing the durability of private capital and markedly improving health and educational outcomes in long run. However, there is huge detraction in potential investment due to poor infrastructural management, irregular revenue flows, and high-risk perception emanating from long gestation periods. Financial support for infrastructure development is limited and primarily depends on annual budgetary support. The capacity of the Central and state governments to fund infrastructure creation can vary substantially over time thus making long-term planning challenging. Connectivity is one of the biggest development challenges for the States in the North East India due to which intra and inter regional connectivity is fragile. Resource generation capacity of these smaller States does not coexist with the establishment cost leaving barely any scope for infrastructure development. These States should strengthen their efforts to optimize resource generation capacity. It is generally believed that unless the physical infrastructure is created and connectivity is established, 'Look East' policy will remain difficult to accomplish.

Development efforts of the states of North Eastern Region (NER) are being supplemented by Central Assistance under the State Plans in order to minimize certain distinct geo-physical & historical constraints by addressing the local requirements. The major policy announcement under 'New Initiatives for the NER' in 1996 included a number of measures which covered special area development projects in key sectors. 10% earmarking of Plan Budget of the Central Ministries and creation of a Non-Lapsable Pool out of the earmarked fund are the outcome of this. In fact, it is only during the latter part of 9th Plan when action for identification of infrastructure deficit in the key areas, resulted in prioritization of projects. Along with this, investment in Human Resource and skills also became the key focus for development.

Due to constant efforts on the part of the Central and the local Government and interactions with various stakeholders, the law and order situation is gradually improving in the region. This has helped in implementation of projects during the 10th Plan period. Regular monitoring system at the apex level has paved path for resolving some of the project specific problems like land acquisition, forest clearance etc. Substantial step-up in the Central Assistance to the States Plan during 10th and 11th Plan along with implementation monitoring has helped developing local infrastructure. This has generated economic activities in the States as reflected in the growth.

The growth rate of 5.3% in the 9th Plan improved to 6.2% in the 10th Plan. The average GSDP growth of NER during 11th Plan was 9.8% as against the national average of 8.0%. Even if the exceptional growth of Sikkim (22%) is

excluded, the NER average is (7.9%), much above the earlier plans.

Expedient completion of ongoing central sector projects (roads, rail, airport, telecom and power) has been emphasized in the 12th Plan. States of NER have been expressing concerns about the slow progress of major connectivity and power projects that is effecting private investment despite having huge potential for trade and commerce. Special fiscal package under NEIP (North East Industrial Policy) has not triggered much investment flows as expected. At the National level, based on letter of intent data, the share of private investment in NE is less than 0.6%.

The progress of ongoing projects to upgrade physical infrastructure in NER, was reviewed by Prime Minister on 18th July, 2013. This was followed by regular reviews by all the concerned Ministries. From these reviews it was observed that some of the projects are nearing completion, but a few projects are delayed because of problems like site selection, land acquisition, environmental and forest clearance, shortage of fund, security related issues etc. Hence the government has decided to accelerate completion of three critical rail projects (i) Harmuti - Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh), (ii) Dudhnoi Mendipathar (Meghalaya), (iii) Rangapara-North Lakhimpur (Assam) before March, 2014. Additional resources, if required will also be provided to meet the specific requirements of two important projects i.e. a) Lumding - Silchar b) Bogibeel Bridge to complete stipulated milestone (June, 2015 and March, 2016 respectively).

For major road programmes like East-West Corridor, Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North-East, SARDP-NE (Phase-A), trans

Arunachal Highway along with district connectivity, the focus is on speedy implementation of existing projects by strengthening road execution capabilities on the ground. Dhola-Sadia Bridge, connecting the National Highways on North and South Bank of River Brahmaputra, are being expedited which will largely benefit the Dibang, Pasighat, Roing areas of Arunachal Pradesh. Simultaneously, Jiribam-Imphal (NH-53) in Manipur, NH-44 in Tripura, Lawngtlai to the Myanmar border (part of SARDP-NE-Phase A) in Mizoram are being monitored regularly. These are important connectivity in order to enhance access to NER through Myanmar and Bangladesh.

In the power sector, there are two important Thermal Power projects i.e. Palatana (726 MW) and Bongaigaon (750 MW) which are nearing completion. These projects along with the transmission lines taken up with World Bank assistance are going to improve the availability of power, to some extent. Various Committees are resolving the issues of Lower Subansiri (2000 MW) project work so that it can be resumed as early as possible. Efforts are on to settle those issues by the end of this year. Once completed, this project can address major power deficit of the region.

Expanded infrastructure investments would have significant benefits beyond improving productivity and overall economic growth. Sustained over time, it would raise the annual growth rate and would contribute to the nation's gross domestic product.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

NEW RATE

The DAVP Rates for advertisements published in Employment News is revised to Rs. 190.44 per sq. cm. The rate shall be applicable w.e.f. 7 December 2013 issue of ENIRS. All the advertisers are requested to take note of this and make payment accordingly.

JOB HIGHLIGHTS

RAILWAY

● Western Railway, Mumbai requires 5775 Gangman/Trackman, Helper, Khalasi etc. Last Date : 14.01.2014

BANK

● J&K Grameen Bank, Jammu requires 248 Officer Scale-I and Office Assistant (Multipurpose) Last Date : 12.12.2013
● Prathama Bank, Moradabad requires 138 Officer Scale-III, Officer Scale-II, Officer Scale-I and Office Assistant (Multipurpose) Last Date : 11.12.2013

SSC

● Staff Selection Commission, Western Region requires 195 Assistant Plant Protection Officer, Investigator and Data Entry Operator Grade 'B' Last Date : 27.12.2013

WEB EXCLUSIVES

Following item is available in the Web Exclusives section on www.employmentnews.gov.in :

1. Bharatiya Mahila Bank. (BMB)

Career in Mechatronics

Mechatronics is all about electrical and electronic aspects of mechanical engineering. In simple terms, it deals with building mechanical systems controlled by electronics and computer systems. Mechatronics is relevantly a new branch of engineering that is gaining wide acceptance in many fields. It is an interdisciplinary science of electrical engineering, electronics, mechanical and computer science engineering. The aim of Mechatronics is to build intelligent systems - simple, easy to use, cost-effective and reliable systems. Industrial robotics is a classic example of a mechatronics system. In fact, application of Mechatronics reflects on the inner working of a variety of devices - as simple as mobile phones to washing machines, chemical plant machinery, power generators, auto-focus cameras and robots.

Application of Mechatronics

Mechatronics engineers are responsible for designing hybrid systems - mechanical systems with enhanced functionality. They apply their knowledge in mechanics, electronics, computer science and control theory to improve products, processes and services across a variety of industries.

Mechatronics engineers

- Design and develop intelligent systems and smart devices for automation of industrial tasks
- Research and explore solutions to challenges in industrial automation
- Maintain and improve industrial manufacturing processes
- Build prototypes of mechatronic equipment that are both efficient and cost-effective
- Design and manufacture consumer products like video recorders, targeted at enhancing user experience
- Devise processes to replace human intervention in dangerous tasks such as mining
- Perform feasibility studies and plan budgets
- Outline safety processes
- Document their work

With engineering fields collaborating like never before, new interdisciplinary fields like robotics are emerging. Industries are applying evolutionary advances in other fields to their practices and procedures. The need to implement projects with limited resources is increasing. Hence, Mechatronics is here to stay. Mechatronics finds application in a num-

ber of fields including automobile engineering, biomedical instrumentation, industrial automation, robotics, avionics, data communication networks, embedded and real-time systems, smart infrastructure, human-machine interface engineering and motion control, where electronic performance of the mechanical equipment has to be enhanced. Mechatronics is the technology behind systems that monitor process plants for leaks and faults. Anti-lock brakes are based on this technology. Flight simulators too are products of mechatronics engineering.

Study options

Mechatronics is open to candidates from a variety of educational backgrounds like Mechanical, Electrical, Electronics, Biomedical, Communications, Instrumentation, Industrial, Manufacturing, Production, Space and Chemical Engineering.

Mechatronics as an academic option is available at diploma, bachelor's and post-graduate levels. A diploma level course can help people with engineering background pick up basics of Mechatronics and

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