



The Animal Welfare Board of India is an umbrella of the SPCAs / AWOs and animal welfare workers. The Board encourages animal welfare activities, advises the Central and State Governments on issues relating to Animal Welfare, particularly, the prevention of cruelty to animals, and also helps to formulate animal welfare policies / legislations.

# AWBI Newsletter



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## Message From Chairman



### Uttarakhand Floods: Support & Rescue Efforts

I had been monitoring the flood situation in Uttarakhand right from 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2013. As soon as I heard and saw the news reports about the severity of the floods in Uttarakhand on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2013, I immediately contacted Dr Ashutosh Joshi, Officer in-charge, Uttarakhand State Animal Welfare Board, Shri Rajeev Gupta, IAS, Secretary, MoD & AWBI Board Member from Uttarakhand and Maj. Gen. M.L. Sharma (Retd), CEO, Brooks Hospital India.

I also met with Lt. Gen. Kanwar, Director General, Remount and Veterinary Services (DGRVS) to request support from two Remount and Veterinary Corps units (Mobile Field Veterinary Hospitals) located near Joshimath and Pithoragarh in the relief operations. DGRVS informed me that three teams from these units had been deputed from Joshimath with medicines and relief material to provide necessary help to the affected animals. He also assured me that another five Remount Vet. Corps teams from the Indian Army would join the relief and rescue operations. He informed me that a large number of ponies and mules had died near Badrinath and there is an acute shortage of fodder and grains for the affected animals.

In this newsletter, on page 2, you can read in more detail about the contributions of feed and fodder made by the various organizations that participated in the rescue and relief work. Out of the total available funds of Rs. 10.70 lakhs, available under Natural Calamity scheme of AWBI a sum of Rs.8.00 lakhs was immediately sanctioned to the State Animal Welfare Board Uttarakhand. A further additional amount of Rs 2.50 lakhs is being provided soon to the Uttarakhand State Animal Welfare Board.

Ms. Gauri Maulekhi and her team from PFA Uttarakhand was the first team from an Animal Welfare Organization to reach the Kedarnath area. They were followed by support from Ms. Kamna Pandey, Co-opted Member AWBI and her team from Lucknow who joined the relief operations in Pithoragarh area. Maj. Gen. M.L. Sharma (Retd.) currently, the CEO of Brooks Hospitals, also sent two teams of volunteers to provide support. Another volunteer team from AAGAAS Federation, PAL Thane supported by Help Animals India also came forward to help in the Hemkund track with relief material and medicines. For the first time, we had good support from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) which sent a team of Vets for the rescue work and to provide veterinary treatment to the stranded animals in Uttarakhand. ... Continued on pg 3

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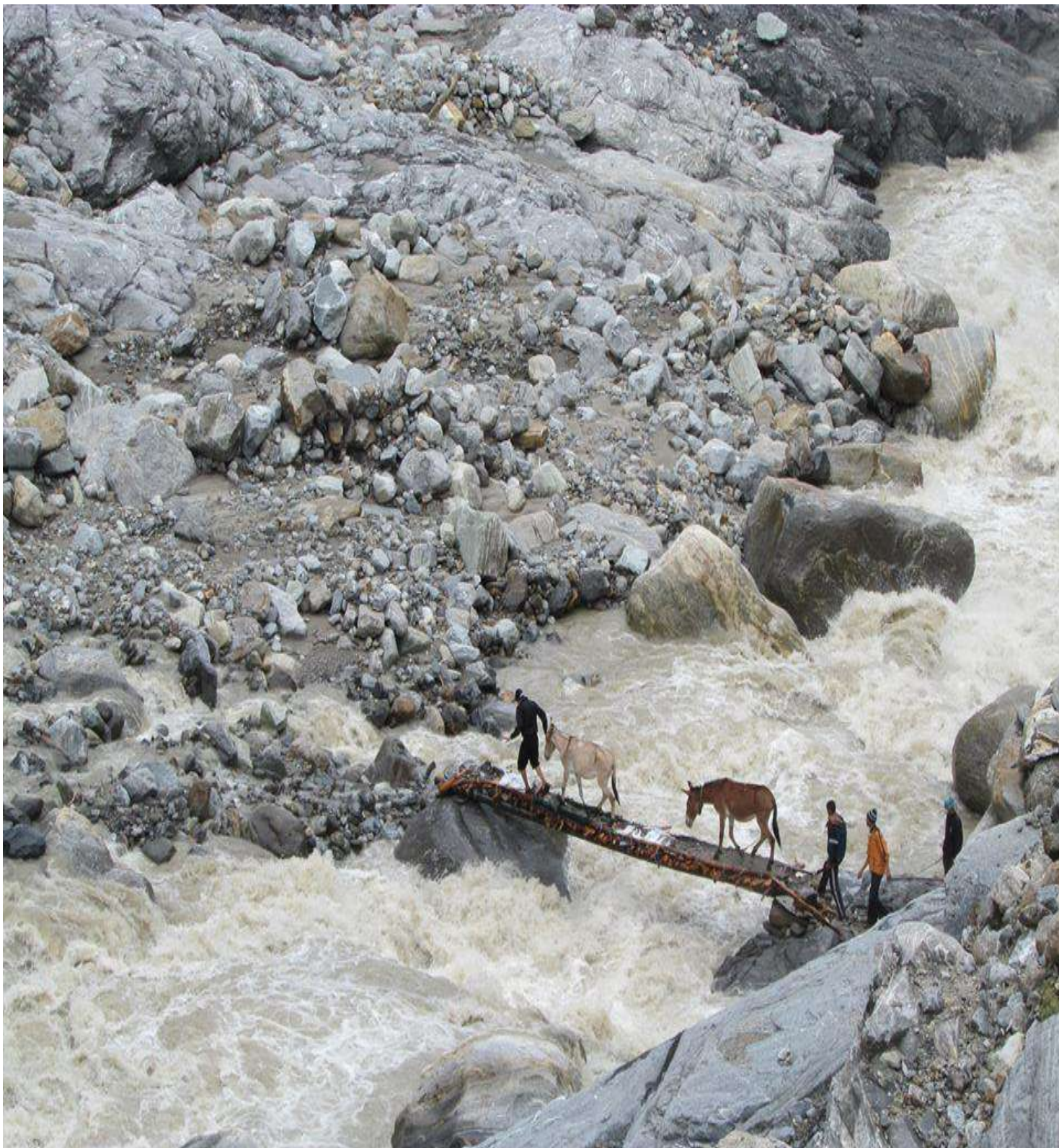
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# Uttarakhand Flood Relief Measures



Describing the event, Dr. Ashutosh Joshi, Officer In-Charge, Uttarakhand State Animal Welfare Board said, “From the night of 14<sup>th</sup> June to 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 there was heavy flooding in most of the rivers and tributaries, large scale landslides, cloudbursts, excessive damage to infrastructure like roads, bridges, buildings, land and most painfully, a heavy toll of human mortality along with livestock mortality. The flash floods along with the glacial landslide led to the bursting of the Gandhi Sarovar –a natural lake above Kedarnath, where the maximum human and animal mortality was reported”

Talking about the worst affected districts, Dr Joshi notes, “In this monsoon disaster, five districts have been hit most seriously. District Chamoli has reported the maximum human mortality and mortality of equines in the Kedarnath track. In district Chamoli, the maximum number of animals – most of them being mules got stranded on the Hemkund track across the river Alaknanda. In district Uttarkashi, the area surrounding Yamunotri track and Gaumukh track has been most seriously hit. District Tehri, particularly in Jaunpur block and district Pithoragarh has also been heavily struck by this monsoon disaster.

In this large scale Monsoon Disaster Management Operation, the rescue efforts and flood relief operations were undertaken with focus on the following key areas :-

- Providing motivation for the disappointed animal owners and grievance support.
- Arranging for rescue of the stranded animals in non-accessible hills and providing feed / fodder.
- Arrangements for temporary shelters for homeless animals.
- Proper disposal of dead bodies of the animals.
- Treatment of sick animals and stress management.
- Mass vaccinations to prevent disease outbreaks.
- Compensation to owners against animal mortality.
- Restructuring of livelihood from animal husbandry sector.”



Talking about the challenges faced, Dr Joshi writes, “Feeding of stranded animals in such a big number was a tough task. Plenty of government organizations – e.g. Remount Veterinary Corps of Indian Army, Animal Welfare Board of India, Ministry of Environment & Forest, Government of India, Livestock Development Board & Uttarakhand Animal Welfare Board under Uttarakhand Animal Husbandry Department & non governmental organizations like Brooks Hospital India, Rahat Hospital, P.F.A. Dehradun, AAGAAS, Donkey Sanctuary India, P.F.A. Uttarakhand and W.S.P.A. gave remarkable contributions in Rescue Feed Donation”. A brief report regarding the Rescue Feed Donations received is as below :-

Name of the Organization	Quantity of Feed Donated
▪ SPCA Dehradun	10.00 Quintal Gram for mules
▪ Brooks Hospital India	50.00 Quintal Equine Feed for mules
▪ Uttarakhand A.H.Department	264.60 Quintal Kutta for mules
▪ Various N.G.Os and PFA	76.00 Quintal Kutta for mules
▪ R.V.C. (Indian Army)	100.00 Quintal Crushed Jai seeds + 100.00 Quintal Jai Hay
▪ AWBI (MoEF, Govt. of India)	60.00 Quintal Equine Feed + 194.80 Quintal Compact Feed Blocks
▪ N.G.O. Pet Lovers, Thane	76.00 Quintals
▪ Uttarakhand Livestock Devrelopment Board (This board is the biggest manufacturer of animal feed from Government Sector in Uttarakhand).	Meeting all the surplus demands of Relief Feed.



Narrating the difficulty in accessing some of the remote areas, Dr. Joshi noted, “It was virtually impossible to approach many of the stranded animals, even by movement on foot. Particularly, areas across the river Mandakini surrounding Kedarnath track and areas across the river Alaknanda surrounding Hemkund Sahib track were completely non accessible from the animal rescue point of view. Thus, the teams of Animal Husbandry Department and non-governmental Animal Welfare Organizations were moved by chopper. At some of the sites, landing of the helicopter was also not possible. Thus in such places, the fodder and feed was delivered by air-dropping them” (see picture above and the adjacent photograph).



Mrs Gauri Maulekhi and members of the rescue team



Reporting on the efforts made by PFA, Uttarakhand, Dr. Joshi wrote, “On 21st July, 2013 a eleven member team led by Mrs. Gauri Maulekhi (Member Secy. PFA Uttarakhand/ Copted Member AWBI/ Member Uttarakhand Gau Sewa Ayog) was sent to Bheembali (near Rambara) by helicopter. This team had three members from PFA Uttarakhand and one Livestock Extension Officer along with six laborers from the Uttarakhand Animal Husbandry Department. It was the second round of camping in the Kedarnath region led by Mrs. Gauri Maulekhi. This team had a target to rescue all the stranded animals in the region. All the eleven members camped in the remote area of Rambara Bheembali near Kedarnath”.



## Livelihood Relief Measures

Citing the reports of mortality as well as sick and injured animals, and need for rehabilitation measures, Dr. Joshi writes, “Until this monsoon calamity, religious tourism was a major source of employment for majority of the people living in areas like the Kedarnath track in district Rudraprayag, Hemkund Sahib track in district Chamoli, Yamunotri track and Gaumukh track in district Uttarakashi. Since most of the roads and tracks have been washed away, therefore, re-establishment of religious tourism is going to take time.

To prevent mass migration of people seeking employment and to provide self employment at local level, the Uttarakhand Animal Husbandry Department has to play a key role. Particularly, to establish supply chain of Relief Stocks, routine rations and daily needs, construction material and infra-structure development, the mules have to play vital role. In the present circumstances mule husbandry offers scope of employment.

Considering the existing situation, the Government has approved a pilot project of Rs 3.00 crores under R.K.V.Y. (Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana) of Agriculture Ministry, Government of India. Under this project animal farmers are to be provided mules on 50% subsidy basis. The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries, Government of India has released a total of Rs 5.46 crores under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (ESVDH, Fodder Development, ASCAD, Livestock Census, ISS, NPCB) to the Uttarakhand Animal Husbandry Department.

The Animal Welfare Board of India has also given a remarkable contribution by giving a grant of Rs 8.00 lakhs through Uttarakhand Animal Welfare Board. This grant has been utilized for provision of logistic support, medicines, vaccines, relief feed, disinfectants and chemicals. Soon, more grants are expected to be released by AWBI”. □

## Message From Chairman

*Continued from page 1...*Dr Ashutosh Joshi, Officer-in-charge, Uttarkhand State Animal Welfare Board has done a commendable job of mobilizing support and coordinating the relief and rescue operations carried out by the Uttarakhand Animal Husbandry Department. A total of 128 Veterinary Relief Teams comprising of 113 Veterinary Officers, 53 Veterinary Pharmacists, 188 Livestock Extension Officers and other staff from employees available in various districts were deployed by the Uttarakhand Animal Husbandry Department. Additionally, in the worst affected districts of Chamoli, Rudraprayag and Uttarkashi, additional Officers and staff deployed from the Uttarakhand Animal Husbandry Department included 34 Veterinary Officers and 51 support staff, besides 11 daily wage labourers for the disposal of dead bodies of the animals in Kedarnath and Gaurikund. Most of the horses, donkeys, mule, cattle and sheep belonging to the local villagers were separated from their owners. It was distressing to note that many animals were trapped due to massive landslides. In the relief measures at Uttarakhand, the main problem was to reach the affected areas due to badly damaged roads, landslides and inclement weather conditions. In some of the areas, we had helicopters dropping the fodder packets by air in the affected regions. The natural calamity has severely affected the districts of Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Uttarkashi, Tehri, Pithoragarh and Haridwar. So far as livestock casualties are concerned the worst affected districts were those of Chamoli, Rudraprayag and Tehri.

The cumulative confirmed animal deaths, as of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013 are 12, 172 (446 cows, 279 buffaloes, 166 bullocks, 1322 mules/horses, 4151 small animals, 5760 poultry and 48 others) and 378 injured / sick and treated ( 48 cows, 34 buffaloes, 58 bullocks, 163 mules/horses and 168 sheep/goats and 7 others). Also as of July, 2013, a total of 7741 animals have been vaccinated against HS / BQ / FMD. Surveys are on to get a more complete estimate of the number of animals that are missing, injured, ill or dead as a result of either being swept away in floods or buried beneath the debris of landslides and cloud bursts. To curtail the likelihood of infectious disease outbreaks, the Department of AH, Govt. of Haryana donated one lakh doses of HS vaccine and 16000 doses of BQ vaccine to the state. The relief and rescue operations continue along with the livelihood reconstruction measures.

Much work needs to be done, especially in providing rehabilitation and support to the small farmers and mule owners. The Department of Animal Husbandry has come forward with a generous package of financial assistance of Rs 5.46 crores to the small farmers. I do hope that the funds will be utilized properly and will go to provide rehabilitation support for the needy small farmers, mule owners and the suffering animals. I appeal to all Animal Welfare Organizations in the country to always be alert about natural disasters in your respective states and come forward to assist in whatever way you can.

Sd/-

With best wishes,

Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Dr. R.M. Kharb, AVSM □

## Rescue Efforts by PFA Uttarakhand

Mrs Gauri Maulekhi, Secretary, PFA Uttarakhand

Amidst hell breaking loose in the valley, we were the only group struggling to get it across to the government and the army that animal evacuation was also necessary for ethical, constitutional, legal and economic reasons. Smt Maneka Gandhi sought support from the Head of the Army operations and got assistance in rebuilding a crucial horse bridge between Gaurikund and Sonprayag. More than 800 mules were evacuated through this route by PFA with the help of locals. We headed towards Kedarnath after the Gaurikund mules had been taken to safe places. Locals who wanted to go up the mountain to bring back their livestock were being prevented by the district administration as the focus was on getting every last human out of the very unstable and still very dangerous valley. We got the order reversed and sent up hundreds of local young men to bring back as many animals as they could bring. “Finders will be keepers”, we told them and asked them to simply get every animal down. More than two thousand animals were waiting to be evacuated from the upper reaches where the tree line ends. All humans had been evacuated and Kedarnath was a ghost town. In the three days spent there, hundreds of animals were evacuated through local men.

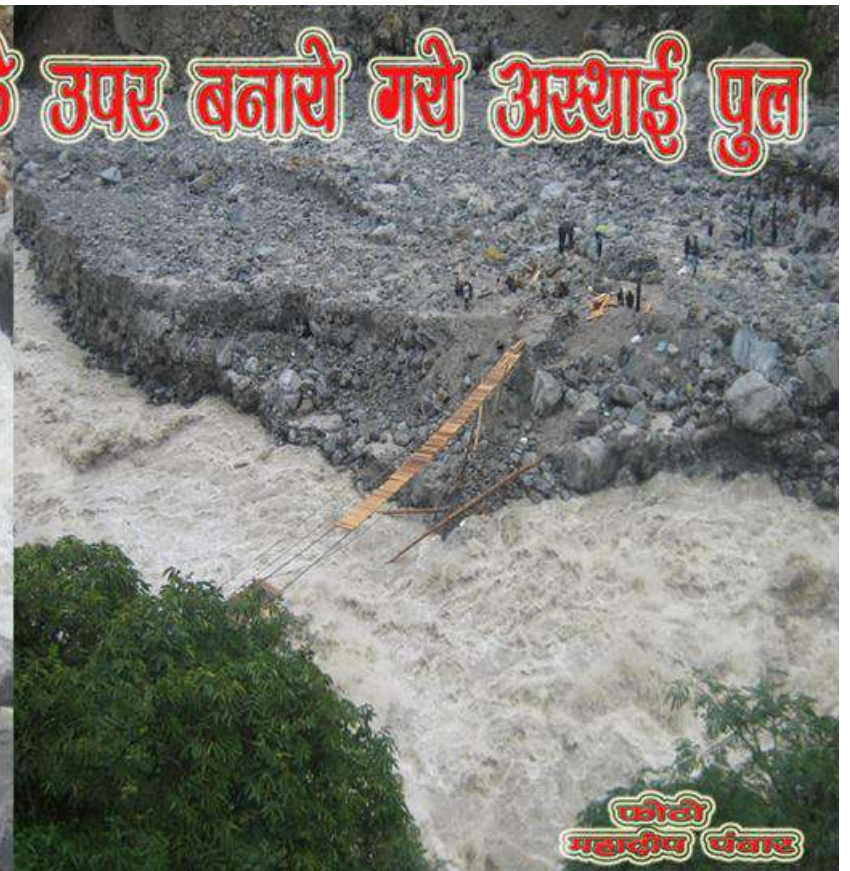
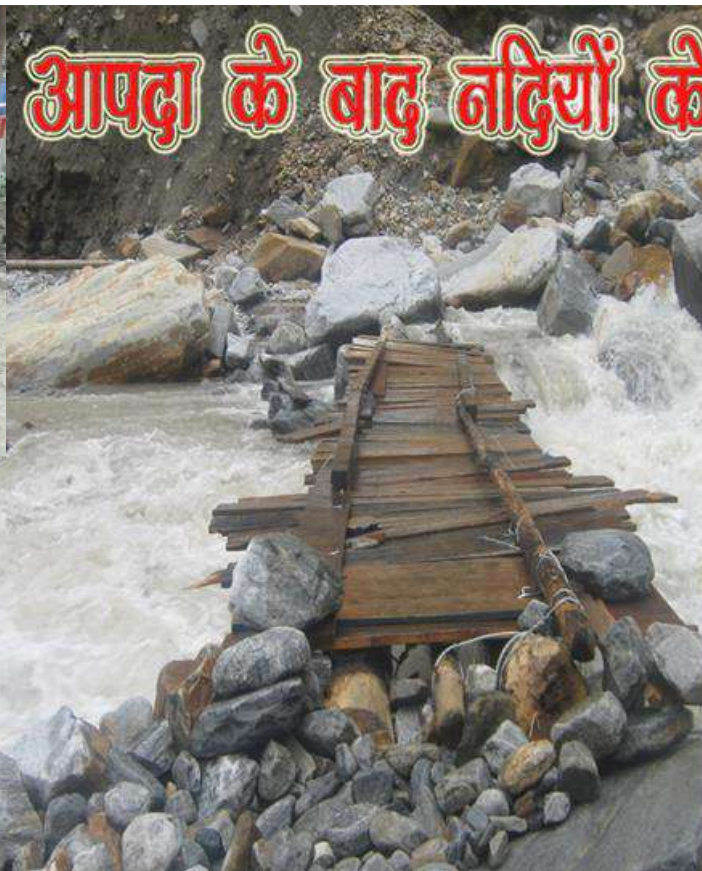
There were still those animals that were stuck in the narrower parts of the valley where the devastation was unprecedented and which were still quite inaccessible. We had neither the equipment nor the resources to survive or help in such terrain. A short visit to Dehradun settled the matter. With the footage that was brought back and the huge number of animals that we helped evacuate, we were able to convince the administration that animal evacuation was necessary for humane and economic reasons. The footage can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6L-mA6pLJSE>. The Animal Husbandry Department was rushed in to camp at various sites and the animal rescue teams were offered all the support possible.

Team PFA headed back to Rambara, the eye of the storm, with renewed energy, more technical help, engineers, equipment, and better government support. The five days spent at Rambara were perhaps the most fruitful and fulfilling as mules were pulled out from the brink of death, out of the landslides, away from currents. The animals that were alive were standing hopelessly amid carcasses and rubble. Some could barely walk. With tears of joy at finding each animal on the eight kilometer stretch in the crumbling mountains, we struggled on. Our camp was on an unstable ledge on a mountain that was littered with dead bodies and carcasses, therefore we did not have many days before the team members would start falling ill. With no network or any land route to get anywhere, for five days, the eleven member PFA team was as far away from help as it could be. More and more animals were rounded up each day and taken across the river Mandakini on a log bridge constructed for the purpose and reinforced with iron pipes, so that it takes the weight of the mules, we kept taking them to a safe pasture near the Chaumasi hill, till we could find no more live animals left on the entire stretch.□



Cash Prize of Rs 50,000/- was given by PFA Uttarakhand to the six brave compassionate and committed men who agreed to work with us in Rambara. They put their life at risk countless times to rescue every last mule that was stuck there. They have now been hired by the Government to do more rehabilitation work at Kedarnath and surrounding area. The picture shows Dr Purushottam, IAS, Relief Commissioner (Guptkashi) giving away the reward money to the boys!!





**पुलेना, भ्यूंडार, घांघरिया में फंसे घोड़े खच्चर मालिकों का जोशीमठ में जबरदस्त प्रदर्शन**



Photo-credits – Dr. Ashutosh Joshi - all pages except in page 3 article by Mrs Gauri Maulekhi

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To

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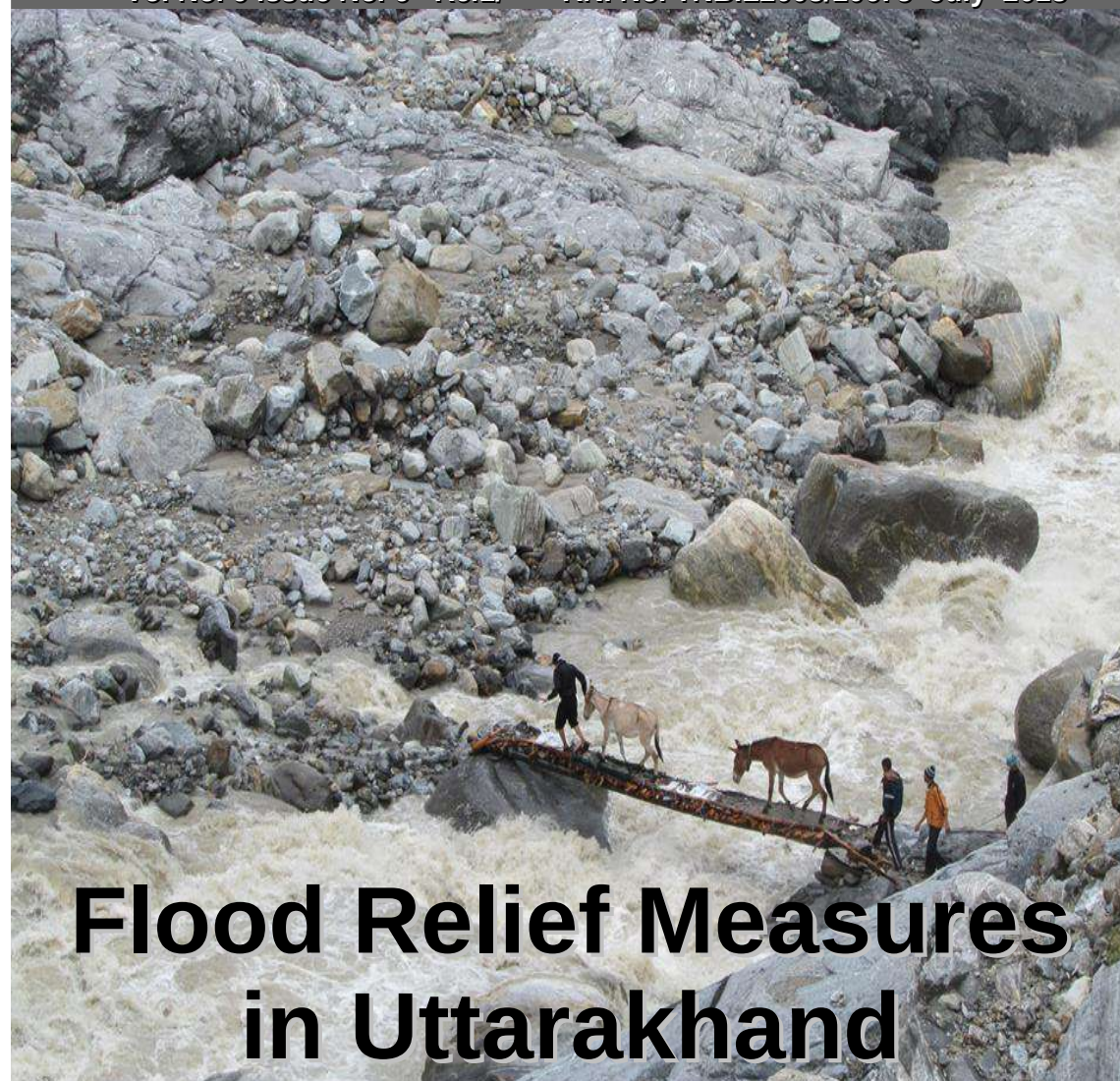
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## Flood Relief Measures in Uttarakhand

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