# The Water News Collectives

From Northeast India (November 2024)

It's a Northeast India Water Talks (NEIWT) initiative.

**The monthly takes.**

- **The springs in the northeast are getting dry slowly.**
- Arunachal is investing in water supply systems.
- **Groundwater conservation is an urgent necessity.**
- As per the IMIS of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 290 habitations in Assam are arsenic-affected.
- **The dying down of the river Brahmaputra shows increasingly erratic behaviour of the rivers.**
- The supply of water in Guwahati becomes a major problem.
- **The Bharalu River in Guwahati, India, has become one of the most polluted rivers in India.**
- The government of Meghalaya is using SCADA technology at the New Shillong WSS.
- **Residents of Tripura's Poangbari village were frustrated by the prolonged water crisis and blocked the road to bring attention to their plight.**
- The $225.5 million Enhancing Landscape and Ecosystem Management (ELEMENT) project was funded by the World Bank for Nagaland and Tripura.
- **Cachar DC announced a goal to transform the Ambicapur Pt XI village project's Water Users Committee into a "5-Star Model."**
- Out of 852 JJM schemes, Mizoram completed 832.

# Arunachal Pradesh:

## *Addressing Water Security in Arunachal Pradesh: Community-Led Efforts and Ecosystem-Based Approaches*

The GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (GBPNIHE), in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), recently organized a focal group discussion (FGD) on "Water Security Challenges and Spring Rejuvenation in the Himalayan Region" in Lower Subansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh. The event, part of the 'Scaling Ecosystem-Based Approaches in the Indian Himalayan Region for Climate Adaptation and Biodiversity Resilience' project under the HI-REAP programme, brought together 50 participants, including experts, local stakeholders, and community members.

GBPNIHE-NERC Scientist Dr. C. Tridipa Biswas led the discussions, highlighting the importance of natural springs and springshed management for long-term water security. She emphasized the region's groundwater scarcity and urged communities to take active roles in preserving and rejuvenating their water sources for future generations. Experts from ICIMOD, Yogesh Barola and Goma Khadka, provided valuable insights into spring ecosystem governance, hydro-geological assessments, and the integration of gender equality in water management efforts.

Villagers from Kalung shared their personal experiences of water shortages during dry seasons, stressing the urgency of spring rejuvenation. The discussions blended traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches, demonstrating the value of community involvement in sustainable water management.

Additionally, a field survey conducted from November 23 to 28, 2023, focused on identifying recharge zones for the Siya Piro spring. This initiative aims to address water security and enhance ecosystem resilience, serving as a model for sustainable water resource management in the Indian Himalayan region.

**Source:**
https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2024/11/30/hydrogeological-survey-for-spring-rejuvenation/
https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2024/11/29/fgd-on-water-security-challenges-held/

### *Arunachal CM lays foundation stones for development projects worth Rs 105 crore in Namsai*

Chief Minister Pema Khandu today laid the foundation stones for two significant projects in Namsai district: an augmentation of the water supply system with a capacity of 7.80 million litres per day (MLD) and a multi-sports facility and outdoor stadium.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu today laid the foundation stones for two significant projects in Namsai district: an augmentation of the water supply system with a capacity of 7.80 million liters per day (MLD) and a multi-sports facility and outdoor stadium. The projects, valued at Rs. 105 crores, are aimed at strengthening the district's infrastructure and promoting its rapid development.

**Source:**
https://www.indiatodayne.in/arunachal-pradesh/story/arunachal-cm-lays-foundation-stones-for-development-projects-worth-rs-105-crore-in-namsai-1126957-2024-11-25?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

# Assam:

### *Brahmaputra is drying….!!!*

The Brahmaputra River, once a lifeline for millions in Assam, is experiencing an unprecedented drop in water levels, causing severe disruptions in ferry services and raising concerns about the long-term ecological consequences. On Thursday, the Inland Water Transport Department was forced to suspend ferry services between Guwahati and North Guwahati due to the unusually low water levels. The situation has been similar in Majuli, where ferries, crucial for connecting the island with the mainland, have also been affected. On October 20, ferry services between Majuli, the world's largest river island, and Jorhat were suspended due to a drastic reduction in the river's water level, which plummeted to as low as 1-2 feet in some areas, far below the required 4-6 feet for safe ferry operations. The drastic change has caught authorities off guard, as this is considered an unusual occurrence for this time of year.

In response to the crisis, the Inland Water Transport (IWT) division initiated dredging operations to clear silt build-up in the riverbed, aiming to restore ferry access. However, the water's insufficient depth has meant that only smaller vessels can navigate the route, while larger ferries remain grounded. The situation has led to overcrowding on alternate ferry routes, causing further inconvenience for residents and travellers.

The falling water levels of the Brahmaputra reflect a larger, alarming trend seen in rivers worldwide. Scientists attribute the increasingly erratic behaviour of rivers, including the Brahmaputra, to the effects of climate change. The river has fluctuated drastically between extreme floods and drought-like conditions, with reduced rainfall, silt accumulation, and human interventions like dam construction contributing to the crisis.

Authorities are scrambling to mitigate the effects, but experts warn that the region's ecosystems, including endangered species like the Gangetic dolphin, face dire consequences. As climate change continues to intensify, the Brahmaputra's drying up may be a glimpse into a future of more frequent and severe water shortages in Assam and beyond.

**Source:**
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/ferry-service-disruption-majuli-to-jorhat-suspended-amid-declining-brahmaputra-water-levels/articleshow/114407418.cms
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/state-minister-announces-urgent-dredging-to-restore-disrupted-ferry-services-on-brahmaputra/articleshow/114523150.cms
https://www.pratidintime.com/latest-assam-news-breaking-news-assam/brahmaputras-drying-waters-lead-to-crisis-in-ferry-services-to-majuli
https://www.maritimegateway.com/majuli-jorhat-ferry-services-resume/
https://www.sentinelassam.com/topheadlines/assam-ferry-services-from-majuli-suspended-after-sudden-fall-in-brahmaputra-water-level
https://www.sentinelassam.com/more-news/editorial/is-brahmaputra-drying-672975

## *Guwahati Water Crisis: Resident Protests Drain Water Shortage amid on-going Supply Disruptions*

A significant water supply crisis has been unfolding in Guwahati, where residents have been facing severe disruptions in essential water services for several days. The disruption began after the local water utility announced a scheduled shut down for maintenance, which was expected to last from November 15 to 17. However, delays in the restoration of water supply left many areas without water for extended periods. Although the water board claimed to resume supply by November 20, the situation remained unresolved in many parts of the city, further exacerbating the hardship for residents.

In response to the prolonged shortage, one local resident resorted to an extreme form of protest. On November 19, he took to the streets, using drain water to bathe in public, highlighting the dire conditions many were facing. The protest symbolized the frustration and desperation of those affected, as clean water for basic daily needs became increasingly scarce. His actions drew attention to the on-going water supply crisis, underscoring the importance of a reliable water system in urban areas.

For some, the disruption has been on-going for weeks, with broken water connections due to construction work and inadequate infrastructure causing further issues. Many residents have been forced to purchase water, adding to their financial burdens.

Authorities have cited on-going maintenance and necessary pipeline upgrades as the cause of the prolonged shortage. However, despite efforts to resolve the situation, residents are becoming more vocal about the lack of timely solutions. This protest highlights the critical need for efficient water management and reliable infrastructure in rapidly growing urban centres. The crisis has intensified calls for immediate action to restore water supply and prevent future disruptions.

**Source:**

https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/assam/guwahati-man-bathes-with-drain-water-to-protest-jal-boards-supply-shutdown/article68889134.ece

## *Bharalu River: From Lifeline to Polluted Tragedy in Guwahati*

The Bharalu River, once a vital watercourse flowing through Guwahati, Assam, has now become one of the most polluted rivers in India. Rapid urbanization, unplanned drainage systems, and illegal dumping of waste have contributed to its deteriorating condition. Sewage, plastic waste, and untreated industrial effluents regularly contaminate the river, severely impacting its water quality and ecosystem. Once home to various species of fish and aquatic plants, the river now faces a grim future with many aquatic life forms vanishing due to pollution. The situation has worsened despite periodic clean-up drives, highlighting the need for a long-term solution. Authorities must focus on improving waste management, creating awareness, and implementing strict regulations to save the Bharalu from further degradation. If left unchecked, this once-thriving river could become an irreversible symbol of environmental neglect in one of India's fastest-growing cities.

**Source:** The Assam Tribune. Published dated 13Nov, 2024.

## *Arsenic in Assam's water raises alarm over heart disease epidemic*

A recent study conducted by Columbia University has revealed that exposure to arsenic in drinking water may significantly heighten the risk of cardiovascular diseases, including ischemic heart disease (IHD). A recent study conducted by Columbia University has revealed that exposure to arsenic in drinking water may significantly heighten the risk of cardiovascular diseases, including ischemic heart disease (IHD). What's particularly concerning is that this risk is present even when arsenic levels are below the regulatory limit of 10 micrograms per liter (µg/L). This research is of crucial importance to Assam, where arsenic contamination in groundwater has been a longstanding issue, affecting a large portion of the population.

According to data from the Central Ground Water Board, arsenic levels above the safety threshold of 0.01 mg/L have been detected in 19 districts across Assam. These districts include Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Hailakandi, Karimganj, Cachar, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Dhubri, Nalbari, Nagaon, Morigaon, Kamrup, Darrang, and Baksa. This alarming situation is not unique to Assam; several other states in India, including Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, are also grappling with arsenic contamination in their groundwater. The study, which highlights heart disease risks at arsenic exposure levels as low as 5 µg/L, assumes added significance in India, where permissible levels of arsenic in drinking water were revised by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) from 0.05 mg/L to 0.01 mg/L in 2015. Dr. Tamorish Kole, Chair of the Clinical Practice Committee of the International Federation for Emergency Medicine, commented on the study's findings, explaining that even at half the Indian and U.S. regulatory limits, women with a 10-year average exposure to arsenic at or above 5 µg/L showed a significantly elevated risk of ischemic heart disease.

**Source:**

https://www.indiatodayne.in/assam/story/arsenic-in-assams-water-raises-alarm-over-heart-disease-epidemic-1115369-2024-11-04?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

## *Assam: Cachar DC pushes for 5-star water model at Jal Jeevan Mission site*

Cachar DC champions a 5-star water model at Jal Jeevan Mission site to enhance water quality. Emphasis on best practices aims for efficient water management and sustainability. Cachar District Commissioner Mridul Yadav visited the Jal Jeevan Mission project site in Ambicapur Pt. XI village, Silchar, to review progress on the Rabidaspara Water Supply Scheme. The project, which aims to deliver clean, safe drinking water to 138 local households, underlines the district's commitment to sustainable water access.

Joined by Assistant Commissioner Anjali Kumari, DC Yadav emphasised the critical need for reliable water quality and urged project teams to maintain high standards. He also announced a goal to transform the project's Water User's Committee (WUC) into a "5-Star Model," setting an example for efficiency and maintenance across Cachar's WUCs.
The district administration's proactive steps aim to bolster public health and ensure long-term water security for the community.

**Source:**
https://www.indiatodayne.in/assam/story/assam-cachar-dc-pushes-for-5-star-water-model-at-jal-jeevan-mission-site-1116790-2024-11-06?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

## *Union Jal Shakti Minister reviews Brahmaputra board's strategic plan in Guwahati*

Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil chaired the Brahmaputra Board's 13th High Powered Review meeting on Tuesday, approving measures aimed at strengthening the board's operational capacity and enhancing water resource management. Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil chaired the Brahmaputra Board's 13th High Powered Review meeting on Tuesday, approving measures aimed at strengthening the board's operational capacity and enhancing water resource management.

Key initiatives included establishing a Central Planning Unit and a Project Management Unit at the board's headquarters, along with specialised cells for IT, AI, GIS, media, and international cooperation. Highlighting the importance of water conservation, Minister Paatil urged national commitment to safeguard water resources for future generations, noting that this aligns with the Prime Minister's priorities. Senior water resource officials from Northeastern states participated; signalling a collaborative approach to river basin management.The minister also inaugurated the Springshed Management Workshop 2024, a two-day event addressing the conservation of springs—vital drinking water sources for many

communities. Brahmaputra Board Chairman Ranbir Singh underscored the importance of springs and the need for sustainable management strategies to support affected communities.

**Source:**
https://www.indiatodayne.in/assam/story/union-jal-shakti-minister-reviews-brahmaputra-boards-strategic-plan-in-guwahati-1119834-2024-11-12?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

## *Assam government identifies 206 water bodies for flood mitigation using NESAC*

The Assam government, in collaboration with the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), has identified 206 water bodies across 17 districts in Assam as part of a strategic initiative to reduce the frequency and impact of floods.The Assam government, in collaboration with the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), has identified 206 water bodies across 17 districts in Assam as part of a strategic initiative to reduce the frequency and impact of floods. Using advanced space technology, NESAC's study aims to harness these wetlands to absorb excess floodwater, potentially mitigating annual flood devastation in the region.

**Space Technology-Based Study for Flood Mitigation**
Assam, owing to its geographic and hydrological features, experiences severe floods each year, causing widespread damage to life and property. In a joint initiative between the Union and State governments, NESAC conducted a detailed study of Assam's wetlands, identifying specific water bodies with potential for floodwater diversion and storage. The study focused on locating wetlands and oxbow lakes positioned in low to medium flood zones, using flood hazard maps prepared by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC).
The selected wetlands meet strict criteria: each exceeds 10 hectares in area, is located within a 3.5 km buffer zone of a flood-prone river, and has the capacity for significant excavation and embankment work.

**Detailed Plan for Wetland Excavation**
The identified wetlands span 16,842 hectares, with a current volume capacity of 575 million cubic meters. As part of the flood mitigation project, these wetlands will be excavated to a depth of 2 meters, and surrounded by 2-meter-high embankments, effectively increasing their volume to an estimated 1,291 million cubic meters. This increase in capacity is expected to significantly reduce flood occurrences, with projections indicating a potential flood frequency reduction of 20% to 80% in affected areas.

**Comprehensive Approach to Flood Management**
The Assam government also plans to implement additional flood-control measures, including the construction of check dams, catchment treatment plans in upstream areas, and extensive land and water management projects aimed at sustainable flood management.The ambitious project reflects a combined Union-State commitment to addressing Assam's flood challenges through science-backed strategies, potentially bringing long-awaited relief to the region's flood-prone areas.

**Source:**

HTTPS://WWW.INDIATODAYNE.IN/ASSAM/STORY/ASSAM-GOVERNMENT-IDENTIFIES-206-WATER-BODIES-FOR-FLOOD-MITIGATION-USING-NESAC-STUDY-1120593-2024-11-14?UTM_SOURCE=GLOBAL-SEARCH&UTM_MEDIUM=GLOBAL-SEARCH&UTM_CAMPAIGN=GLOBAL-SEARCH

## *Assam: Dudhnoi residents protest sand mining impact on water levels and livelihoods*

The residents of the Damra area under Dudhnoi Police Station are angry that no action has been taken despite repeated written objections to the Goalpara District Commissioner and DFO against sand mining from the Dudhnoi River. As a result, Mothers' Union Assam & Meghalaya and GSU Assam State Zone took out a protest rally with the support of the people of the area. During the protest rally, many NGOs from Meghalaya, All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), KMSS leaders and people from various communities took part and shouted slogans against the sand mining from the Dudhnoi River. More than one thousand people from Garo and other communities from Kalikapara, Damra, Nokmakundi, Kasumari, Patpara, Thengshot, Bakrapur and many other villages from Meghalaya took part in the rally.

The protest rally took out from the Damra High School Playground to Nokmakundi Playground in Dudhanoi LAC. It is worth mentioning that the image of suffering the villagers from sand mining came to light when several frustrated tribal women with babies in their laps came to the National Highway to protest. Mothers' Union President Soma Marak said that due to the mining in the Dudnoi River, the level of the water is decreasing day by day. "Even in the rainy seasons, we see very less water than we have seen in the river. On the other hand, sand smugglers using motors to extract the sand from the river and therefore massive erosion started in the area from Dudhnoi to several villages in Meghalaya." added Soma Marak.

Soma Marak also said, "State government of Assam planned to decrease erosion in the rivers and therefore Assam state minister Pijyush Hazarika also visited many river side places in Dudhnoi area along with the RHAC Chief Tankeswar Rabha and ordered the department to work for stopping erosion. What is the point of spending unnecessary money on these things when sand mining continues in the river day and night?" ABSU advisor Dhiraj Hazowary said, "The sand mafia are creating havoc on nature through sand mining by disobeying government regulations for sand mining. On the other hand, departments like forest, transport and police do not see the overloaded sand laden dumpers. Even after carrying sand without challan or less challan while carrying more sand on the dumpers. Police, Transport department only take actions against E-Rickshaws, scooties, bikes etc."

Hazowary added, "When we request to stop the sand mining to the Goalpara DFO, he replied that we have to show him the majority against the sand mining. We were shocked at that time and today we warned the DFO to take immediate actions against sand mining otherwise people will stop the sand mining."ABSU advisor Dhiraj Hazowary said, "We also come to know that all forest offices and police stations are collecting money from every dumper monthly from Dudhnoi to till Guwahati. We suspect some ministers or powerful political

persons are involved in this matter that is why more than 200 overloaded sand laden dumpers went to Guwahati without any problems from any departments."

GSU Goalpara district president Bablu Sangma emphasized, "We do not understand, even after protesting against the sand mining many times, which now created problems on livelihood in the area. People facing problems for cultivation and other works due to the decreasing water level of the river. Sangma also said, "We filed memorandums regarding this matter to the Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, DC Goalpara, DFO Goalpara many times, but not yet taking actions against it. If the government will not take any actions, we will start resistance movements against mining and transportation and whatever consequences will come out; only the government will be responsible."

**Source:**

https://www.indiatodayne.in/assam/video/assam-dudhnoi-residents-protest-sand-mining-impact-on-water-levels-and-livelihoods-1125471-2024-11-22?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

# Meghalaya:

## *Meghalaya Introduces SCADA and IoT for Water Supply Modernization in New Shillong Township:*

The Meghalaya government has taken a significant step toward modernizing its water distribution system by incorporating Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) technology integrated with the Internet of Things (IoT) for the New Shillong Water Supply Scheme. This initiative, part of the state's broader water management strategy, aims to improve monitoring, enhance efficiency, and promote better governance. The project is part of Phase-I of the New Shillong Water Supply Scheme, which has been allocated Rs 538.44 crore under the State Plan. The scheme is being executed through an EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) contract, covering everything from surveying to installation of the entire water supply infrastructure.

PHE Minister Marcuise N. Marak explained that SCADA will be implemented from the water source to the treatment plant, featuring real-time data capture, pressure monitoring, and automated leak detection. The system will allow issues to be immediately identified via a command control room dashboard, enhancing response time and reducing operational delays. While the project marks a significant leap towards modernized water management, Marak acknowledged the challenge of involving local contractors with limited expertise in high-tech systems. Nevertheless, the integration of SCADA and IoT technology is expected to revolutionize water governance in Meghalaya, ensuring more efficient and responsive service delivery.

**Source:**
https://northeastlivetv.com/around-ne/meghalaya/it-to-the-rescue-internet-of-things-to-better-manage-meghalayas-water-distribution-system/

https://youtu.be/cQQfaNMZf1U

## *Meghalaya: Groundwater conservation training at NEHU stresses urgent need for sustainable practices*

Training at NEHU emphasized the urgency of groundwater conservation. Experts discussed strategies and community involvement for sustainable practices. A Tier-III training programme on "Ground Water Development and Management Practices," organised by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) State Unit Office in Shillong, gathered experts and stakeholders at North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) on November 2, emphasising the urgency of sustainable groundwater management.

D Rabha, Scientist-D and Head of CGWB's Shillong unit, opened the programme, stressing the need for grassroots involvement in water conservation. She explained the three-tier structure of CGWB's training—National, State, and Grassroots levels—emphasising that local stakeholders play a critical role in protecting groundwater, a relatively cleaner but limited resource compared to surface water.

Guest of Honour Dr Ravi Ranjan Kumar, from NEHU, acknowledged the importance of groundwater in India's water-reliant landscape and commended national initiatives like the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan' and 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana' aimed at recharge and rainwater harvesting efforts. He noted that the programme could help bridge knowledge gaps and empower participants with essential skills. Prof Devesh Walia, Dean of the School of Human and Environmental Sciences, spoke on the rising seasonal water scarcity in Meghalaya, a challenge intensified by pollution risks to surface water. He highlighted the need for collaborative action in groundwater conservation, expressing NEHU's gratitude for CGWB's support in bringing stakeholders together for shared learning.

The event included technical sessions on hydrogeology fundamentals, groundwater quality, and rainwater harvesting methods, with field visits to sites such as a monitoring station at Golf Link and a rainwater harvesting site at Mawdiangdiang. Nathanael Newmai was recognised for his exemplary rainwater harvesting system, showcasing how individual initiatives contribute to environmental stewardship.

**Source:**
https://www.indiatodayne.in/meghalaya/story/meghalaya-groundwater-conservation-training-at-nehu-stresses-urgent-need-for-sustainable-practices-1114999-2024-11-03?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

## *Meghalaya HC directs state to submit action taken report on protecting Jaintia Hills' Myntdu River*

The Meghalaya High Court has ordered the state government to report on Myntdu River protection measures. Concerns include construction debris and riverbank erosion affecting water flow. The Meghalaya High Court has issued a directive to the state government seeking an action taken report to safeguard the Myntdu River, in Jaintia Hills region.

Passing an order after hearing a PIL on the matter on November 19, the bench comprising Chief Justice Indra Prasanna Mukherji and Justice W Diengdoh said, “The Amicus Curiae is directed to file a report by 28th February, 2025. The government will also file a report indicating the action taken and also responding to the report of the Amicus Curiae by 13th March, 2025.” In his joint inspection report, the Amicus Curiae P Yobin noted the importance of the river which irrigates two fertile valleys in the State – Pynthor Nein and Pynthor Wah – providing sustenance to about 40,000 people. The river is worshipped as a goddess and regarded as the Tawiar Takan (divine angel guardian) by the local people.

The grievance made in the petition is that permission has been given by the government to do construction work by the side of the river. Such construction is being done indiscriminately resulting in unloading of debris into the river bed. Secondly, the government has not taken adequate steps to stop erosion of the river resulting in deposits of silt in the river bed. The combined effect is choking up of the river, preventing adequate flow of water for cultivation, drinking and other purposes.

The bench however stated that it is satisfied from the report filed today by the AAG that the government has taken steps to prevent soil erosion and also to remove the debris generated by construction work and deposited in the river. “It appears from the report that the process is time consuming. It is pointed out by the Amicus Curiae that the dry season has started and it is likely to become drier in the near future. Some emergent measures are required to facilitate the free flow of water in the river. We direct that the government shall continue with the work they have already undertaken,” it said. The bench further directed that an appropriate administrative order should be issued by the government immediately prohibiting any materials generated from construction work to be deposited in the river and directing that it should be taken away by truck or any other vehicle to a place designated by the administration and dumped there.

“Secondly, up to a distance from the side of the river, inwards construction work should be regulated in terms of distance to be maintained from the bank of the river inwards and the volume of construction to be sanctioned by the government in a fair, transparent and reasonable manner,” it stated in the order.

**Source:**

https://www.indiatodayne.in/meghalaya/story/meghalaya-hc-directs-state-to-submit-action-taken-report-on-protecting-jaintia-hills-myntdu-river-1123879-2024-11-20?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

# Tripura:

***Tripura: Residents of Kanalbari Endure 13 Days without Clean Water and Power, Stage Protest***

For nearly two weeks, 85 families in Tripura's Kanalbari area of Poangbari ADC village, located in the Sabroom subdivision under South district, have been left without access to clean drinking water or electricity. Frustrated by the prolonged crisis, residents blocked the main road connecting Powangbari to Manu Bazar on November 8 to bring attention to their plight. The severe water shortage has severely impacted daily life for Kanalbari's residents, who have repeatedly appealed to local authorities for help. Despite their urgent requests, local officials—including the Panchayat Secretary and Block Development Officer—have yet to provide substantial assistance, according to residents.

In response to mounting complaints, the Block Development Officer's office reported that it had contacted the Drinking Water and Sanitation Department (DWSD) three times, requesting immediate intervention. However, with no significant response from the DWSD, frustrated residents took matters into their own hands by staging a road blockade. The crisis drew media attention, prompting local officials to intervene. At approximately 11 a.m. yesterday, the administration delivered 1,500 litres of water to affected households. While residents appreciated the support, they say the temporary measure falls far short of addressing the broader crisis.

Local sources indicate that a contributing factor to the water shortage is the lack of payment for the village's water pump operator, who reportedly has not received a salary in over a year. Additionally, residents have faced challenges due to power outages, which have exacerbated the lack of access to clean water. Some families have resorted to using polluted stream water, which flows down from nearby hills and is often filled with mud. This has raised concerns about potential waterborne diseases among the villagers.

Residents expressed their frustration over the situation, noting that the local government has promoted the central government's Jal Jeevan Mission, which promises clean drinking water for all households. They are now calling on the administration to take effective and lasting measures to resolve the crisis, ensuring clean water and reliable electricity for all.

**Source:**
https://www.northeasttoday.in/2024/11/11/tripura-residents-of-kanalbari-endure-13-days-without-clean-water-and-power-stage-protest/#google_vignette

## *Tripura: Union minister likely to attend foundation stone-laying of Unakoti wetland transformation*

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh is set to visit Tripura for the Soteromiar Hawor wetland project launch. The initiative aims to transform the area into the state's largest water body. Tripura Animal Resource Development and Fisheries Minister, Sudhangshu Das, announced that Union Minister of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, is likely to visit the state soon for the foundation stone-laying ceremony to transform the Soteromiar Hawor wetland into the largest water body.

The wetland is located at Kailashahar under Unakoti district. Soteromiar Hawor is a marshy area fed by the waters of two streams, namely Jarail Cherra and Bagua Cherra, the watercourses of which meet at the center of the field. It is said that 17 Muslims (Mia) were crossing the water body by boat when their boats sank. Since then, the area has been known as Soteromiar Hawor. Earlier, it was full of aquatic trees.In winter; swarms of migratory birds from Siberia visit this place. Minister Das mentioned this while attending a review meeting of his departments in the Unakoti District on November 19. He stated that the work of converting Soteromiar Hawor into the largest water body will commence within a few days.
"For the time being, work will start on around 60-plus acres of land for setting up water bodies, and preliminary agreements with the landowners have already been completed. We have also invited Union Minister of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, for the foundation stone-laying ceremony," he said.

Additionally, he noted that the primary objective of the review meeting was to assess the schemes and projects undertaken by the department and evaluate their implementation in the Unakoti District.

"We have also reviewed the targets for this district and analyzed where we have succeeded, identified loopholes, and addressed other issues. We held detailed discussions on all the departments. The funds sanctioned for the people must be utilised properly. In the coming days, we will introduce more innovative and revamped schemes for the welfare of the people. We have set specific targets for the Fishery and ARDD departments and are focused on increasing production in the Unakoti district," he added.

**Source:**
https://www.indiatodayne.in/tripura/story/tripura-union-minister-likely-to-attend-foundation-stone-laying-of-unakoti-wetland-transformation-1123264-2024-11-19?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

# Nagaland:

***Nagaland to benefit from World Bank project aiming improved forest management.***

World Bank's ELEMENT Project aims to improve forest landscapes in Tripura and Nagaland, benefiting over 700,000 people. It focuses on economic growth, carbon reduction, and job creation. The World Bank has approved a new project aimed at helping over 700,000 people in Tripura and Nagaland improve forest landscape management and enhance forest value chains in more than 400 villages.

As per the World Bank with almost 1.5 million hectares, forests form a vital part of the rural economy in Nagaland and Tripura, providing livelihood to significant tribal populations. However, over the past decade, the states have experienced reductions in forest cover, threatening biodiversity and the well-being of forest-dependent communities.

The $225.5 million Enhancing Landscape and Ecosystem Management (ELEMENT) Project will help conserve and restore over 100,000 hectares of forest thus enhancing landscape-based value chains for economic transformation while avoiding almost 435,000 tons of carbon emissions per year. The Project will also strengthen soil conservation and improve water availability.“The Project will contribute to leveraging forests for private sector driven job creation in non-timber economic activities, enhancing the carbon sink capacity of the forest, and ultimately contributing to economic growth and social well-being in Tripura and Nagaland,” said Auguste Tano Kouamé, the World Bank’s Country Director for India.

The ELEMENT project aims to open up economic opportunities for communities through forest produce such as agarwood, bamboo and honey in partnership with the private sector. It will also help to enhance national parks and protected areas, as well as develop nature-based tourism facilities. The Project aims to create 60,000 jobs for youth and women, by promoting forest-based entrepreneurship through skills training in areas such as hospitality and training for nature guides. The project will take an integrated and holistic landscape approach on forest management.

“This goes beyond traditional forests to include areas like grasslands, wetlands, and farmlands to maximize community benefits,” said Pyush Dogra and Raj Ganguly, the Task Team Leaders for the project. “This will improve climate resilience of rural and forest-dependent communities and increase their livelihoods.” This financing comes on the heels of the Bank’s $43 million financing to support similar activities in the sister state of Meghalaya. The loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a final maturity of 12 years with a grace period of 4.5 years. The Project will also benefit from a complementary Global Partnership for Sustainable and Resilient Landscapes (PROGREEN) grant in the amount of $2.4 million

**Source:**

https://www.indiatodayne.in/tripura/story/tripura-and-nagaland-to-benefit-from-world-bank-project-aiming-improved-forest-management-1127968-2024-11-27

## *Nagaland PHED refutes allegations of misappropriation in Jal Jeevan Mission funds*

The scheme, launched in 2019, aims to provide every rural household with a functional tap connection by 2024. The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) of Nagaland has formally denied accusations by the Nagaland Transparency, Public Rights Advocacy & Direct Action Organization (NTPRADAO) that it misused Rs. 1,712 crore in funds allocated under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) scheme. The scheme, launched in 2019, aims to provide every rural household with a functional tap connection by 2024.

In a detailed response, PHED Additional Chief Engineer and Head of Department,Er. L. Leyang Khiamniungan, clarified the financial and operational aspects of the JJM's rollout in Nagaland. Khiamniungan noted that despite challenging terrains and logistical issues, Nagaland has successfully achieved 92.29% household tap coverage, with ongoing work to reach full implementation by the end of the mission.

Explaining the structured approach, Khiamniungan highlighted the role of village communities in the planning, execution, and maintenance of water infrastructure projects. Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) are crafted based on Village Action Plans (VAPs), which then go through approval by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, ensuring transparency and participation at each step. Once the Annual Action Plan (AAP) is approved, work orders are issued to local Water and Sanitation Committees (WATSAN) or certified contractors, with oversight from local village councils.

Contrary to the alleged misuse of Rs. 1,712 crore, Khiamniungan clarified that the actual funds received since 2019 amount to Rs. 1,426.46 crore, with Rs. 1,282.75 crore as the central share and Rs. 143.70 crore as the state's contribution. PHED stressed that all payments under JJM are processed through the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and are verified by a Third Party Inspection Agency (TPIA) under the supervision of District Water and Sanitation Missions (DWSM). TPIA's involvement ensures transparency and the proper allocation of funds. On allegations of substandard materials, PHED assured that all pipes and other equipment adhere to Nagaland Public Works Department (NPWD) specifications, are ISI-compliant, and undergo both internal and external quality checks. PHED has also implemented a grievance cell to address public concerns and relies on community feedback to maintain quality. Additionally, the Government of India's National Test House conducts further external testing before releasing payments.

PHED outlined that JJM projects in Nagaland involve not only the installation of new water supply systems but also the augmentation and retrofitting of existing infrastructure. Upgrades to pipelines, reservoirs, and other water-related infrastructure initially constructed under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) have been a key focus to improve overall water accessibility.Training and capacity-building programs are conducted by PHED in partnership with North East Initiative Development Agency (NEIDA), Pinnacle Skills, Zynorique Consultancy, and Kuda Tech Skills. These initiatives aim to strengthen the capabilities of both departmental staff and village functionaries in maintaining JJM projects effectively.

In line with its commitment to quality, PHED conducts routine water quality testing through state and district laboratories accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and

Calibration (NABL). Additionally, Field Testing Kits (FTKs) are utilized at the village level, and corrective actions are promptly taken if contamination is detected. Such findings are reported to the Ministry to ensure timely intervention. Addressing the allegations raised by NTPRADAO, PHED emphasized that the claim of misappropriating 70% of funds for piping infrastructure and 30% for civil works is unfounded. Khiamniungan assured the public that PHED is committed to transparency and welcomes constructive feedback to enhance project delivery.

**Source:**

https://www.indiatodayne.in/nagaland/story/nagaland-phed-refutes-allegations-of-misappropriation-in-jal-jeevan-mission-funds-1118553-2024-11-10?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search

# Sikkim:

## *Sikkim embarks on critical expedition to address glacial flood risks*

To mitigate risks of glacial lake outburst floods and enhance climate resilience, the Sikkim government is launching its fourth and final expedition for 2024 from November 27 to December 5. The mission responds to the alarming increase in glacial lake hazards due to climate-induced glacier retreat, with 40 high-risk glacial lakes identified in Sikkim alone, according to an official release. In the earlier expeditions, a comprehensive assessment of several high-risk lakes was completed. Additionally, Automatic Weather and Water Level Monitoring stations have been installed at Shako Chho and South Lhonak Lake, with support from the Swiss Development Corporation.

These monitoring stations have started providing daily weather data, water level data, and photographs. They also have a built-in alert system in case of sudden water level changes, the release said. Building on the earlier studies, the focus is now on designing robust glacial flood mitigation strategies. The expedition team is exploring two mitigation proposals — lowering the lake water level at Shako Chho and a retention structure at Dolma Sampa. Accordingly, a lake discharge study and subsurface geophysical analysis of the southern lateral moraine are planned at Shako Chho Lake.

At Dolma Sampa in Lhonak Valley, comprehensive studies will be undertaken, including subsurface geophysical investigations, discharge assessment of Goma Chu, topographical mapping, debris deposition analysis, and flood-level measurements. The studies will help refine glacial flood modelling, provide insights into subsurface geology, and inform the design of retention structures to mitigate potential glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).

The participants include scientists and engineers from the Science and Technology Department and the Mines and Geology Department, supported by the Indian Army's 27 Mountain Division and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. The expedition team's main challenges will be the high altitude of 17,000 feet and sub-zero temperatures. This expedition underscores Sikkim's commitment to proactive disaster risk reduction, addressing cascading

natural hazards amplified by climate change and protecting its communities and ecosystems, the release said.

**Source:**

https://theprint.in/india/sikkim-embarks-on-critical-expedition-to-address-glacial-flood-risks/2376226/

# Mizoram:

***Chief Minister reviews key Department efforts in horticulture, rural development and water supply.***

**Source:**
https://www.zoramnews.com/2024/11/chief-minister-reviews-key-department-efforts-in-horticulture-rural-development-and-water-supply/

End of the November 2024 update…

North East India Water Talk Water News Collectives (November 2024)

We are Water, and we keep an eye on water!

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