

# Urban Chronicles

## A Monthly Newsletter

By Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of Assam

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Government of Assam

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Brahmaputra River Heritage Centre at M.G Road, Guwahati

## FOREWORD

*From the Desk of the  
State Mission Director,  
AMRUT Assam*



As we celebrate the March edition of our newsletter, we also honor the spirit of International Women's Day—a time to recognize the invaluable contributions of women in shaping our cities and communities. This special edition highlights the transformative initiatives that are redefining urban development in Assam, with a particular focus on the empowerment of women as catalysts for change.

From innovative urban water management programs to community-driven sustainability projects, this newsletter showcases the remarkable strides we are making toward creating inclusive and vibrant urban ecosystems. The stories within these pages reflect the dedication of our stakeholders, the resilience of our communities, and the vision of a future where every citizen plays a pivotal role in driving progress.

This edition brings to light stories of women from ULBs who are breaking barriers and setting new benchmarks. Across Assam, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have taken inspiring steps in urban governance, sustainability, and community-building efforts. Whether it's through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) managing water systems, waste management campaigns, these narratives showcase how policy frameworks and community engagement are creating opportunities for urban citizens to thrive.

As we continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities of urban development, let us draw inspiration from these narratives spearheading community initiatives. Their efforts remind us that sustainable development is not just about infrastructure but also about empowering people to build a better tomorrow.

This edition is a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity. Let us celebrate the achievements of our cities and the women who are shaping their future.

Warm regards,

**Samprity Goswami, ACS**  
State Mission Director, AMRUT Assam

## Initiative of the Month

### AMRUT Mitra: Transforming Water Management and Empowering Women in Assam

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched the AMRUT Mitra initiative in 2024, aiming to revolutionize urban water management by empowering women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs). This ambitious program focuses on involving SHG women in managing urban drinking water supply, creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, and ensuring the maintenance of water infrastructure.

In Assam, the initiative has made remarkable strides across 11 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), engaging 101 SHGs under AMRUT Assam. By combining community participation with technological solutions, AMRUT Mitra has not only improved water management but also transformed the socio-economic status of SHG women.

### Training and Skill Development

To equip SHG women as AMRUT Mitras, extensive training sessions were conducted across the state. Over 20 rounds of training covered water testing, meter reading, and digital payment collection using platforms like PoS machines and QR codes. Collaborations with departments like PHED and Municipal Administration ensured comprehensive skill development.

### Impact on Water Management

AMRUT Mitras have become **vital links between the mission and the public**. Their responsibilities include raising awareness, addressing grievances, reporting leaks, and ensuring water quality through field test kits. This has significantly boosted public trust, leading to a **300% increase in house service connections** within 10 months.

To ensure the sustainability of water projects, AMRUT Mitras collect water tariffs using digital payment systems. For instance, in Nagaon, 18 PoS machines

enabled SHG members to collect ₹7,000 in their first drive, boosting their confidence and efficiency.

### Ecological Guardianship

Beyond water management, **AMRUT Mitras have taken on ecological roles**. At Jorpukhuri Park in Guwahati, the Vaishnavi SHG has been caring for Indian Peacock Softshell Turtles. Their efforts, including constructing sand dunes for nesting, led to successful turtle breeding in July 2024.

### Empowerment and Recognition

The initiative has **elevated SHG women's social and economic status**. By gaining technical expertise and digital proficiency, they have become decision-makers in their families and leaders in their communities. Monthly incentives from the AMRUT Mission have further empowered them financially.



Amrut Mitra's collecting water bill from users

As Smt. Minara Begum from Nagaon's Sangram SHG shared, "We are deeply thankful to the government for this opportunity, which has transformed our lives."



Amrut Mitra's during a door to door awareness campaign

## Conclusion

The AMRUT Mitra initiative demonstrates how community-driven approaches, coupled with technological innovation, can achieve sustainable urban water management and societal transformation. By empowering SHG women, the program has not only improved water services but also fostered economic independence and social recognition, making them true agents of change.



Amrut Mitra's during a door to door awareness campaign

## Buzz from the ULBs

### Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation Forms Special Team to Tackle Encroachment and Cleanliness Issues

The Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation (DMC) has taken a proactive step by forming a special enforcement squad to address key urban challenges, including encroachment of footpaths, illegal constructions, and cleanliness issues. Comprising 5 male and 4 female members, the team has been tasked with monitoring and clearing encroachments from footpaths and public spaces, ensuring better mobility and order in the city.

In addition to tackling encroachments, the squad is actively involved in evictions, drain cleaning, and GVP (Garbage Vulnerable Point) cleaning. Their efforts aim to prevent waterlogging, improve waste management, and maintain public hygiene. The team is also working to bring about behavioral changes among residents by discouraging littering in open spaces and drains.



Enforcement Squad of DMC distributing dustbins

The initiative underscores the DMC's commitment to creating a cleaner, more organized, and sustainable urban environment in Dibrugarh. By combining enforcement with public awareness, the corporation hopes to foster long-term civic responsibility and improve the quality of life for residents.



Enforcement Squad of DMC distributing dustbins

### Implementation of UPYOG in Dhubri: A Step Towards Digital Transformation

Dhubri has successfully implemented UPYOG, transitioning from a cash-based accounting system to a double-entry accrual basis system. This shift ensures accurate financial records by including accrued transactions, such as property tax and other revenues. The process involved entering opening balances, master data, and bill details into the UPYOG portal. Currently, 25 contractor bills, 1 expense bill, and 1 supplier bill have been recorded, with property tax collections updated until January 19, 2025.

Challenges like unrecorded data and limited digital literacy among staff were addressed by appointing a

dedicated computer operator and providing regular training. The goal is to fully migrate to UPYOG by the next financial year, enhancing digital literacy among staff.

## Margherita's Zero-Waste Transformation: Turning Trash into Treasure

The Margherita Municipal Board is leading the charge towards cleaner public spaces with its innovative Cleanliness Targeted Units (CTUs) and Garbage Vulnerable Points (GVPs) initiatives. In 2024, key litter-prone areas were identified and transformed into vibrant, waste-free zones. One GVP near Segunbari Tinali was creatively revamped into a Selfie Stand using old scooters and recycled tires, while a CTU near Satsang Vihar road became a

"Waste to Art" installation, showcasing the potential of upcycled materials.

Despite persistent littering issues, these transformations have successfully eliminated waste and odors, with regular maintenance ensuring their upkeep. In 2025, the Board installed 24 CCTV cameras at GVPs like the Auto Stand and Block Tinali to monitor cleanliness. The CTU near Satsang road was further beautified with a flower plant stand made from plastic bottles, promoting recycling and sustainability.

Margherita's efforts highlight how creativity, technology, and community engagement can turn waste into art and pave the way for a cleaner, greener future.



Before

CTU Transformation in Bazar Road, Margherita



After

## Stories from the First Mile

### Weaving Dreams, Crafting Independence: Celebrating Women Who Shape Their Futures

#### Azmira baking hope: From Lockdown to Liftoff with PMSVANidhi

In the quiet neighborhood of Itakhuli, Ward No. 6, Lakhipur, Goalpara, Azmira Begum ran a small grocery and bakery shop to support her husband and two children. For seven years, she worked tirelessly, but the pandemic lockdown brought her business to a standstill. Savings dried up, and despair crept in.

Through leaflets and announcements, Azmira learned about the PMSVANidhi scheme, a government initiative offering micro-credit loans to street vendors. She applied for the first tranche of Rs. 10,000 and received the loan from the Central Bank of India, Lakhipur Branch. She restocked her shop, and revived her business. Repaying it on time, she took a second loan of Rs. 20,000, bought a new oven, introduced UPI payments, and expanded her customer base. Her confidence soared.



*Azmira Begum also sells her baked products in the weekly markets through a vendor widening her consumer base*

With a third loan of Rs. 50,000, Azmira transformed her shop into a thriving hub. With unrelenting support of her husband and handholding by ULB officials, she defied odds in an orthodox setup. Today, her business flourishes, her family thrives, and her children dream big.

Azmira's story is a testament to how initiatives like PMSVANidhi restore hope, dignity, and opportunity, turning struggles into success.

### Grinding Dreams into Reality: Rita Prasad's Entrepreneurial Rise

Rita Prasad, a resident of Tinsukia, Assam, is a testament to resilience and empowerment. Her journey from urban poverty to becoming a successful entrepreneur was made possible through the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM). Rita's expertise in traditional spice-making, a skill passed down through generations, was initially underutilized due to financial constraints and lack of market access. Her life transformed when she joined Shivay, a Self-Help Group (SHG) under DAY-NULM.

With an initial loan of ₹50,000 from the Uday Area Level Federation, Rita invested in a spice-grinding machine and began selling her products locally. A seed capital fund of ₹40,000 in August 2022 helped her expand operations, and a ₹1,00,000 loan under the SEP-I Scheme in September 2023 enabled her to employ fellow SHG members and scale her business.

In April 2024, Rita secured a ₹2,49,000 loan under the PMFME Scheme, which she used to purchase a larger machine and obtain a food safety license, boosting her production capacity and business credibility.

The Tinsukia Municipal Board supported Rita through Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) training and facilitated connections with the District Industries Centre (DIC) for financial assistance. Her success even attracted the attention of IAS probationers, who visited her unit to learn about her inspiring journey.

Today, Rita stands as a symbol of economic independence and community empowerment. Her story highlights the transformative power of DAY-NULM in fostering entrepreneurship, creating livelihoods, and uplifting communities.



*Spices made by Rita's Shivay SHG*



Photographs: IAS Probationers visiting Rita Prasad's unit, spices made by her unit



Photographs: IAS Probationers visiting Rita Prasad's unit, spices made by her unit

## Blooming Success in Margherita: The Story of Tribeni Chetia and Nandini SHG

In the quaint town of Margherita, Ward No. 4, Mrs. Tribeni Chetia, a determined woman entrepreneur and member of the Nandini Self-Help Group (SHG), has been sowing the seeds of change since 2019. What began as a modest nursery business has now blossomed into a thriving green enterprise, thanks to her hard work and the unwavering support of the Assam State Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM) and the Margherita Urban Local Body (ULB).

The journey started with a subsidized loan of Rs. 1.5 lakh from the Central Bank of India, Powai Branch, Margherita, under the Bank Linkage Program of ASULMS. This initial funding provided the foundation for Mrs. Chetia's dream to take root. With dedication

and careful planning, she transformed her small nursery into a flourishing venture.

Recognizing her progress, the Nandini SHG received a second-term loan of Rs. 3 lakhs, followed by a third-term loan of Rs. 6 lakhs. These funds enabled Mrs. Chetia to expand her nursery, diversify her plant varieties, and improve infrastructure, creating sustainable livelihoods not just for herself but also for others in her community.

Today, her nursery stands as a symbol of resilience and empowerment, showcasing how strategic support and determination can turn dreams into reality.



Tribeni Chetia - Inspiring change, one sapling at a time

## Envisioning Urban: India

### Unlocking Urban Potential: Union Govt Plans City GDP Metrics to Drive Growth and Investment

The Union government is planning to develop a mechanism to measure City Economic Product (CEP) or city-level GDP to assess the economic potential of urban centers, aiming to transform them into “engines of growth.” An inter-ministerial committee, led by NITI Aayog’s Arvind Virmani, has been formed to finalize the methodology. This move, aligned with the Union Budget 2025-26, seeks to attract private investment and improve urban infrastructure planning.

The initiative follows the announcement of a Rs 1 lakh crore ‘**Urban Challenge Fund**,’ requiring cities to raise 50% of project costs through bonds, loans, or public-private partnerships. Currently, India lacks a standardized method for estimating city-level GDP, which the 26-member committee, comprising officials, academics, and urban experts, aims to address. This step is expected to boost socio-economic development and private sector participation in urban growth.

## Urban Lexicon: Emerging Terminologies in shaping urban life

### Resilient City

A **resilient city** is an urban area designed to withstand, adapt to, and recover from disasters like floods, earthquakes, or economic shocks. It **focuses on planning, minimizing damage, and quick recovery, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth**. These cities are strong yet flexible, with interconnected systems that promote collaboration and innovation.

### Resilient Cities: The Challenge of Municipalities

In the face of climate change, urbanization, and economic shifts, building resilient cities has become a top priority for municipalities. Resilient cities are designed to withstand disasters, adapt to challenges, and thrive in the long term. This requires **strong infrastructure, community engagement, and innovative solutions** like smart technologies and renewable energy.

Key strategies include **disaster-ready planning, sustainable development, and collaboration between governments, citizens, and stakeholders**. The goal is to create cities that not only survive crises but grow stronger from them.

Resilience is essential for a sustainable future, and municipalities play a crucial role in turning this challenge into an opportunity for transformative urban growth.



Image source: IDM Albania - Resilient Cities: The Challenge of Municipalities

# Revolving EDITOR'S DESK Feature of the Month



**Jutikana Mishra**  
Executive Officer, Nalbari Municipal Board

## Waste Not, Want Not: Nalbari's Innovative Urban Transformation

### About the author:

An officer from the Assam Urban Administrative Service (AUAS), Jutikana combines her engineering expertise with a visionary approach to urban governance as the Executive Officer of the Nalbari Municipal Board. Her innovative approach has driven sustainable development and financial self-reliance, setting a new standard for community-driven urban management.

### Harmonizing Change: Nalbari's Melody of Sustainability and Self-Reliance

In the heart of Assam, where the lush landscapes meet the vibrant culture of Nalbari, a transformative wave is sweeping through the town. The Nalbari Municipal Board (NMB) is weaving a tapestry of change, blending innovation with tradition to create a cleaner, greener, and more self-reliant future. Guided by the timeless adage, "Think Globally, Act Locally," NMB is not just addressing the pressing challenges of waste management but also sowing the seeds of financial independence.

From the rhythmic beats of a locally inspired waste collection song to the strategic transformation of neglected spaces into hubs of awareness, NMB's initiatives are a testament to what can be achieved when community spirit meets visionary governance. Among the many initiatives that it has spearheaded, the NMB has introduced a unique **door-to-door waste collection system**, accompanied by a locally composed song in the "Nalbariya" accent, which has engaged the community, especially children. GPS-enabled garbage collection vehicles, displaying driver details and routes, ensure transparency and efficiency. Partnering with NGO NESHAR, the initiative has gained widespread popularity.

A state-of-the-art **Material Recovery Facility (MRF)** and **Waste-to-Compost (W2C) plant**, funded by SBM(U) 2.0 and the 15th Finance Commission, have been established. Operated by DLS Envirotech Pvt. Ltd., the facility stands out for employing only female workers for waste segregation. To combat open dumping, NMB has installed 10 CCTV cameras, monitored from the Municipal Board office and local police station, leading to penalties for offenders.

NMB has also transformed garbage-prone areas into **Swachhta Awareness Points**, such as the former **Bhartia**

**Talkies cinema hall, now an IEC hub.** This effort has been recognized by MoHUA as a success story.

On the financial front, NMB has implemented a corporate-style **'Call Centre' system for property tax collection**, resulting in a 67% increase in revenue for 2024-25. Additionally, vacant government land has been repurposed for parking and vending zones, freeing footpaths and boosting municipal revenue.

Through community engagement, technological innovation, and strategic planning, NMB is setting a benchmark for sustainable urban governance.

\*This column is part of our Revolving Editor's Desk featuring monthly articles which highlight diverse perspectives from officers of DoHUA.\*



Images highlighting the transformative impact that Nalbari town has witnessed



The MRF at Nalbari is completely operated by female workers

For sharing your thoughts on the Urban Space in Assam, please mail us at: [dohuaurbanchronicles@gmail.com](mailto:dohuaurbanchronicles@gmail.com)

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