

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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Illustrative image of the CTU Transformation and Mural paintings by Bongaigaon Municipal Board

FOREWORD

*From the Desk of the
Mission Director, Swachh
Bharat Mission (Urban)*



It gives me immense pride to introduce the June issue of Urban Chronicles, which captures the vibrant momentum of Assam's Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban). This newsletter is not just a collection of updates, it is a living record of the determination, creativity and collective will that are shaping Assam's urban future.

Across the state, we see inspiring stories unfolding every day: women from SHGs transforming household waste into livelihood opportunities; surplus food redirected to feed the hungry, not the landfill; cutting-edge geo-tagging tools making our data more reliable and actionable; and thoughtful efforts like "Pehla Roti," where communities come together to care for animals and reduce waste. From GMC's pioneering menstrual hygiene awareness to Dergaon's green legacy through its Environment Day sapling drive, each initiative adds another layer to our sustainable urban tapestry.

These efforts represent more than programmatic achievements; they reflect the heart and soul of Assam's urban transformation. Our mission is to build not just cleaner cities, but stronger, more compassionate communities where every resident plays a role in shaping the environment they live in. By blending technology, local innovation, and people-centered solutions, we are redefining what sustainable urban management looks like.

I see Urban Chronicles as a platform that uplifts these efforts, giving voice to the frontline workers, municipal teams, IEC agencies, and citizen changemakers who drive progress every day. Together, we are not only meeting targets we are creating a movement that inspires, replicates, and scales.

Let's keep moving forward, hand in hand, as we work toward a future where Assam's cities stand tall as beacons of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban living.

Smt. Kriti Chachra (IAS)
Mission Director, SBM(U), Assam

Initiative of the Month

Circular Solutions, Collective Impact: SBM (U) driving Assam's Journey Toward Zero-Waste Cities

Across Assam, transformative innovations are emerging under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), driven by the collective efforts of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), technical and IEC agencies, and local communities. Together, they are creating scalable solutions that combine environmental responsibility, social impact, and strong local leadership.

Why These Initiatives Matter

- ULBs provide the leadership, coordination, and policy push to scale promising ideas.
- Technical agencies and IEC partners like Citiyano De Solutions, Shrishti, and local project teams bring innovation, expertise, and on-ground execution.
- Communities – SHGs, students, local residents, and frontline workers – contribute knowledge, energy, and ownership, making change happen at the grassroots.

These partnerships build not only cleaner cities but also stronger, more inclusive and resilient urban societies..

Sivasagar SHGs: Turning Waste to Wealth

In Sivasagar, the Municipal Board and DAY-NULM teams, in collaboration with the District Agriculture Office and Krishi Vigyan Kendra, have empowered five women-led SHGs to launch home vermicomposting units.

Key highlights:

- Over 11 quintals of compost produced in just two months, generating income at ₹25/kg and reducing landfill waste.
- Women SHG members trained to lead composting operations, setting a model for women-led environmental action.
- ULB and agency collaboration ensures technical training, material support, and monitoring, while



SHGs champion ownership and peer learning.

This initiative exemplifies how ULB-agency-community partnerships turn local waste streams into sustainable economic opportunities.

Tinsukia's Zero Waste, Zero Hunger: Feeding People, Not Landfills

In Tinsukia, the Municipal Board's partnership with Citiyano De Solutions has created the Zero Waste, Zero Hunger program, addressing food waste and urban hunger in one stroke.



Key highlights:

- Surplus food from hotels and restaurants is recovered by Citiyano's IEC team and redistributed to over 100 homeless and vulnerable residents.
- ULB coordination enables bulk waste generator (BWG) engagement, while Citiyano leads sensitization, food safety, and logistical operations.
- Community members, including eatery owners, are stepping up to become active partners, turning unused resources into meaningful social support.

This is a true circular model where governance, agency expertise, and citizen participation combine for social and environmental gain.

Nagaon's "Threads of Hope": Clothing the Needy, Reducing Waste

At the Nagaon RRR Centre, the Shrishti team and Nagaon Municipal Board have rolled out Threads of Hope, a campaign that collects and redistributes gently used clothes.

Key highlights:

- Community donations – from residents, SHG members, and local leaders – are carefully sorted by agency teams and ULB staff.
- Clothes are cleaned, quality-checked, and distributed to low-income families, seniors, and seasonal workers, ensuring dignity and inclusion.
- The program simultaneously reduces textile waste and promotes shared social responsibility.

It's a shining example of how municipal leadership, agency operations, and community generosity create a web of care that uplifts everyone.

Bongaigaon's School Composting: Growing Sustainability in Young Minds

In Bongaigaon, the Municipal Board and IEC partner Citiyano De Solutions have introduced school-based composting at Bhirjhora Higher Secondary School,



engaging students directly in sustainability practices.

Key highlights:

- 3–5 kg of food waste from Mid-Day Meals is collected and composted daily, with over 150 students involved in every step.
- ULB and agency teams provide live demonstrations, visual guides, and technical support, while the school's eco-club leads day-to-day activities.
- Finished compost is used in the school's gardens, connecting waste reduction, soil health, and visible environmental impact.

This initiative shows how governance, agency facilitation, and youth participation together build lifelong environmental stewardship.

Conclusion: The Power of Local Leadership and Partnership

These success stories highlight a central truth echoed in the Mission Director's message: sustainable urban transformation happens when ULBs, agencies, and communities work together. Whether it's an SHG turning waste into income, an agency team leading food recovery, a municipal office coordinating RRR centers, or students transforming waste into compost – every link in this chain matters.

Assam's urban journey is driven by partnerships, shared responsibility, and a commitment to inclusive, resilient progress. Together, we are not just managing waste – we are building cities where every person, every agency, and every institution plays a role in shaping a cleaner, more compassionate future.

Buzz from the ULBs

GMC Champions Menstrual Hygiene Awareness on World Menstrual Hygiene Day

The Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) celebrated World Menstrual Hygiene Day with a dynamic awareness campaign, partnering with gender equity and WASH expert Ms. Swetangana Bhuyan, PRIDE Coop, and Akshar Foundation.

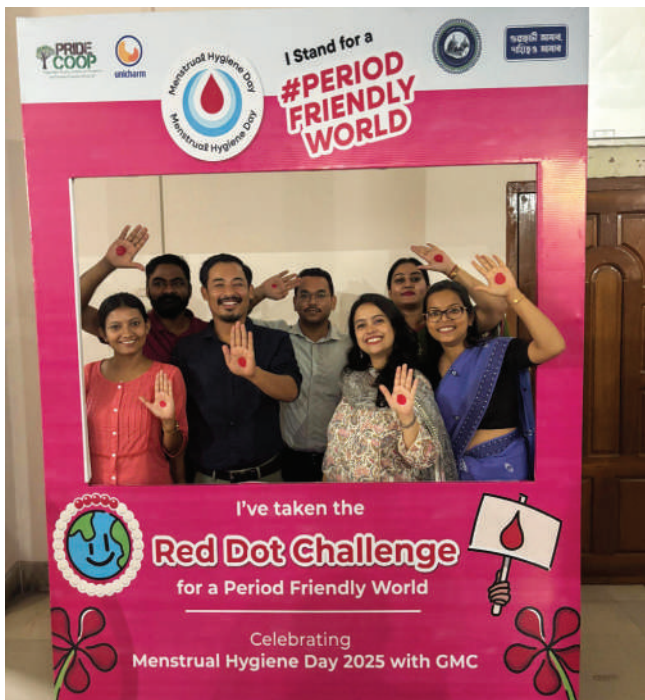
Aligned with this year's global theme, #PeriodFriendlyWorld, the event sought to educate female sanitation workers, school students, and the wider community on menstrual health. Deputy Speaker Smt. Ratna Singh inaugurated the program with a motivating speech, emphasizing the critical need to dismantle societal taboos surrounding menstruation.

Expert-led sessions by Gynaecologist Smt. Tarita K. Kalita, PRIDE Coop, and Akshar Foundation highlighted essential menstrual hygiene practices. Adding a creative touch, a poignant mime performance by Nirbak conveyed the message through powerful storytelling.

In a proactive move, GMC provided sanitary pads to all female workers, girl students, and attendees. The event also included the Red Dot Challenge, where participants pledged to combat menstrual stigma and promote hygiene awareness.

The program concluded on a unifying note with a vote of thanks and the national anthem, reinforcing a shared commitment to progress.

GMC's initiative highlights its dedication to public health and women's empowerment, paving the way for a future where menstrual hygiene is openly discussed and prioritized.



Small towns, big impact - Dergaon's Green Transformation

Dergaon marked World Environment Day with an inspiring plantation drive at Naren Sarma Smriti Pathar, led by Shri Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, Hon'ble MP (10-Kaziranga HPC). The event brought together Dergaon Municipal Board officials, Social Forestry Department experts, and community leaders in a powerful show of commitment to sustainable urban development.

The carefully selected native saplings planted during the drive represent more than just green cover - they symbolize Dergaon's shift toward climate-resilient urban planning. Social Forestry officials provided insights on species selection for maximum ecological benefit, while Municipal Board leaders highlighted how this initiative connects to broader sustainability goals like waste management and



#GreenDergaon #WED2024 #SustainableAssam

water conservation.

Local residents and school children joined the effort, transforming the plantation into a hands-on lesson in environmental stewardship. This celebration sets a new standard for community-led environmental action in Assam's smaller towns, proving that urban sustainability isn't just for big cities. Dergaon is emerging as a model for green township development in the region.

Stories from the First Mile

Threads of Change: Rangia's SHGs Weaving Sustainability and Pride

In a heartening display of self-reliance and community empowerment, local Self Help Groups (SHGs) under Rangia Municipal Board have been actively contributing to both social welfare and environmental conservation through innovative micro-enterprises.

Bijoya SHG, a vibrant group of local women entrepreneurs, has taken a commendable step towards a greener future by producing durable nylon bags as an eco-friendly alternative to single-use plastic. With the growing awareness against plastic pollution, these nylon bags have gained remarkable popularity in the local markets. The initiative not only supports the environment but also provides a steady source of income for the SHG members. Through

their hard work and dedication, the women of Bijoya SHG are setting an example in community-driven environmental responsibility.

Meanwhile, Akota SHG has found a unique and patriotic niche by crafting national flags. Every year, these beautifully stitched flags are sold in large numbers ahead of Independence Day (15th August) and Republic Day (26th January). The initiative has not only brought in profits for the group but has also instilled a deep sense of pride and unity among the members. Local schools, offices, and citizens prefer purchasing these locally made flags, further boosting the morale and income of the group.

Adding to this inspiring lineup is Hiyashri SHG, which has ventured into making homemade Mekhela Sadors and traditional gamoshas. These handcrafted products celebrate the rich cultural heritage of our region while providing livelihood opportunities to women artisans. The mekhela sadors and gamoshas have quickly gained appreciation in the community for their quality and traditional touch, reflecting the skills and creativity of local women.

These initiatives are testament to how small, community-based groups can play a significant



Akota SHG- Flag making



Hiyashri SHG - Home made sadors and gamocha

role in promoting sustainable livelihoods while addressing larger social issues like environmental protection, cultural preservation, and national pride. Rangia Municipal Board remains committed

to supporting such ventures and encourages more SHGs to come forward with innovative ideas that empower communities and foster inclusive growth.

Envisioning Urban: Special Environment Day Feature

Green Governance: ULBs Leading Assam's Eco-Revolution

On World Environment Day, Assam's Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are proving that effective urban governance is the backbone of ecological transformation. From waste-to-wealth initiatives to community-driven sustainability projects, ULBs are bridging policy and action to create cleaner, greener cities.

Grassroots Leadership, Systemic Impact The Sivasagar SHGs' vermicomposting model and Bongaigaon's school composting program highlight how ULBs are decentralizing waste management by empowering women and youth. By providing training, tools, and market linkages, ULBs turn environmental challenges into opportunities for livelihoods and education.

Circular Economy in Action Tinsukia's Zero Waste, Zero Hunger and Nagaon's Threads of Hope showcase ULBs' role in fostering circularity—ensuring resources like food and textiles serve social

and environmental purposes. Municipal boards act as enablers, partnering with NGOs and citizens to redesign waste streams as systems of care and sustainability.

Tech & Community Synergy GMC's menstrual hygiene drive exemplifies how ULBs leverage awareness (IEC campaigns) and infrastructure (pad distribution) to address urban health and environmental waste. Geo-tagging tools, as mentioned in the Mission Director's foreword, further enhance transparency in monitoring green initiatives.

The Road Ahead Assam's ULBs are redefining urban governance as a collaborative, inclusive force—where waste reduction, climate resilience, and community well-being intersect. This Environment Day, let's celebrate these efforts and pledge to support our cities' journey toward zero waste and carbon-neutral futures.

#GreenULBs #UrbanEcoRevolution #WasteToWealth

Urban Lexicon

Emerging terminologies shaping urban life

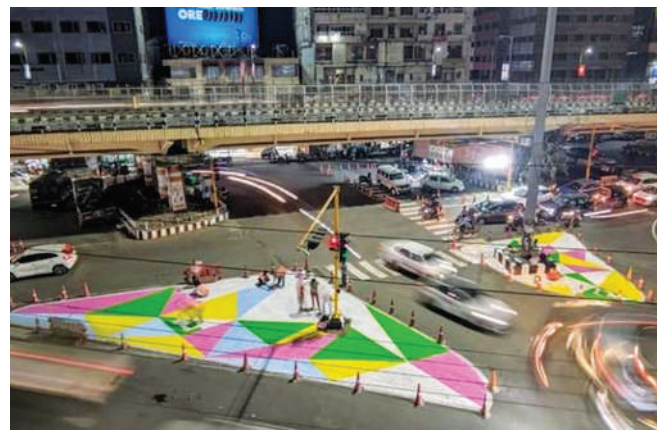
Definition

Tactical Urbanism refers to low-cost, temporary, and scalable interventions in the urban environment aimed at improving local infrastructure, public spaces, and community engagement. These quick, often citizen-led or municipality-supported changes are used to test ideas before committing to permanent investments or policies.

The goal is experimentation, engagement, and evolution turning small, tactical moves into long-term, strategic urban improvement.

For instance, **Tactical Urbanism at Ganeshguri Junction**, a tactical urbanism approach was used to redesign Ganeshguri Junction, improving traffic flow and pedestrian safety. Traffic islands were created,

signal cycles were adjusted, and conflict points eliminated, resulting in better traffic volume and reduced wait times.



Tactical Urbanism project at Ganeshguri junction

Revolving **EDITOR'S DESK** Feature of the Month



Azmal Hussain
Executive Officer, Abhayapuri Municipal Board

Restoring Mora Kujia Ecological Renewal and Civic Confidence in Abhayapuri

About the Author

The author is the executive officer of Abhayapuri Municipal Board. After completing B.Tech and M.Tech dual degree in Chemical Engineering from a premier institute in Delhi, he joined the service with zeal to bring in efficiency in urban governance and urban planning. In the residential town of Abhayapuri he has been working to improve the quality of life of citizen with a focus on sustainable development goals by integrative planning and eco sensitive projects. With projects like cleaning of Mora Kujia river he has been able to retain faith and trust of citizen in urban governance with cascading effects in other areas of co-operation.

The Mora Kujia River, a historically and ecologically significant water body flowing through Abhayapuri, has long suffered from environmental degradation due to unchecked pollution, rampant encroachment, and the pressures of urban expansion. This degradation has led to a host of issues, including foul odors, waterborne diseases, siltation, and recurring urban floods during the monsoon season signs of a distressed riverine ecosystem and strained urban infrastructure.

Recognizing the river's critical role as the lifeline of the town, the Abhayapuri Municipal Board, in coordination with the District Administration, launched an ambitious river rejuvenation project aimed at ecological restoration, flood mitigation, and the revitalization of public faith in urban governance.

Strategic Coordination and Field Assessments

The project began with comprehensive field visits conducted by multiple line departments of the district, including senior officials such as the Deputy Commissioner and Additional Deputy Commissioner. These visits identified key challenges such as illegal

encroachments and debris accumulation while also gathering valuable historical insights from local representatives.

The issue was systematically brought to the forefront through forums like the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) meetings and municipality review discussions chaired by top officials. These engagements helped formulate a phased action plan with clear timelines and stakeholder coordination.

Tracing the River's Original Course

Encroachments and heavy sedimentation had altered the river's path, impeding its natural flow. To address this, GIS mapping and detailed surveys were undertaken to trace the ancient route of the river. Once identified, the riverbanks were demarcated to prevent future encroachment. A scientifically planned widening and deepening of the channel with carefully engineered slopes was implemented to restore the river's original course and enhance water flow capacity.

Encroachment Clearance and Legal Enforcement

One of the most significant interventions was the identification and removal of illegal structures along the riverbanks. These encroachments not only narrowed the river channel but also elevated flood risks. Over 30 such encroachments were dismantled with the legal backing and strong support from the district administration.

River Cleaning and Sustainable Debris Management

Years of accumulated waste including plastic, sewage, and sediment had left the river stagnant and highly polluted. Despite the absence of a functional Solid Waste Management (SWM) plant or a dedicated dumping ground, the Municipal Board devised an innovative solution. During debris removal, it was discovered that layers of alkaline soil had formed from years of composted organic waste. This was

strategically repurposed through layered filling to construct two parking areas, fill an abandoned pond for future commercial development, and build a new kutcha road turning waste into functional urban infrastructure.

Restoring Natural Water Flow

To address the stagnation of water and mitigate flood risks, the following key actions were undertaken:

- Deepening and widening of the riverbed
- Removal of obstructions to restore uninterrupted flow
- Reconnection of tributaries to ensure continuous water movement

These measures have significantly improved water circulation and reduced flood vulnerability within the urban area.

Afforestation and Biodiversity Enhancement

Reviving the ecological health of the river also required the restoration of its green buffer zones. Degraded areas along the banks were identified for afforestation using native tree species that support the local ecosystem. Community-led plantation drives were initiated, along with proposals for

wetland conservation and restoration of aquatic vegetation to further enrich the riverine biodiversity.

Public Awareness and Civic Engagement

Sustaining these efforts requires long-term behavioral change. Public awareness campaigns are being actively carried out through miking, print media, and digital platforms to educate residents about responsible waste disposal, the importance of keeping the river clean, and their role in preserving this vital resource.

Towards a Comprehensive River Rejuvenation Plan

While the current efforts have made notable progress within the municipal limits, the Mora Kujia River's full restoration requires a broader, integrated approach. Since the river traverses both urban and rural areas, a municipal-only cleanup would be insufficient. A detailed proposal is being developed to include riverfront development within the town and full-scale dredging of the river beyond municipal boundaries. This larger vision will be submitted to the state government for funding support, given the project's scale and financial requirements.

Conclusion

The rejuvenation of the Mora Kujia River stands as a powerful example of how environmental restoration, when combined with administrative resolve and community participation, can rebuild public confidence in urban governance. The Abhayapuri Municipal Board's initiative not only addresses pressing ecological and infrastructural challenges but also charts a hopeful path towards sustainable urban development.



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

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