

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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Gandhi Mandap, Guwahati

FOREWORD

*From the desk of the
State Mission Director
Assam, State Urban
Livelihoods Mission,
DAY-NULM*



As we step onto the Monsoon season, which has brought to us immense joy and euphoria in the form of stupendous achievement for our cities and towns in the Swachh Sarvekshan 2024-25 and as we join hands to celebrate the 79th Independence Day, it brings me immense pleasure and pride in presenting the August edition of Urban Chronicles, the Monthly Newsletter of DoHUA.

This edition is adorned with inspiring stories from the ground, changing the way we had traditionally viewed our Urban Landscape i.e. Stories on Transforming Garbage Vulnerable Points, Sustainable Waste Management, while highlighting the Outstanding Performance of our Cities in Swachh Sarvekshan 2024-25 and spotlighting the Karmashree Awardees 2024-25 for the Property Tax Assessment and Reassessment Initiative. This edition also highlights an International Best Practices in Urban Resilience - Tokyo's Underground Flood Control Marvel which is an Engineering Marvel in itself.

As the key tools for promoting Financial Inclusion and Socio-Economic empowerment of women in the urban areas, Self Help Groups play a pivotal role, and this edition of the Newsletter has tried to bring to the fore such stories about women who rose to fame and become financially independent with their sheer resilience, entrepreneurial acumen and tenacity.

Hope the readers will find the stories informative, inspiring, and interesting.

Wishing everyone a glorious 79th Independence Day, 2025

**Shri Sabyasachi Kashyap, ACS
State Mission Director
Assam State Urban Livelihoods Mission, DAY-NULM**

Initiative of the Month

Women at the Forefront of Livelihoods and Urban Greening in Assam under NULM

The National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), is transforming Assam's urban landscape—not just through livelihood promotion but by placing women at the forefront of inclusive and sustainable urban development.

From a homemaker to an award-winning entrepreneur, Ranjila Mahilary shows us that success starts with belief

Ranjila Mahilary, from Kajalgaon, Chirang is a shining example of a determined entrepreneur. Her journey began in 2016 with the formation of the Purnima Self-Help Group (SHG) under DAY-NULM. After facing setbacks in piggery farming, Ranjila pivoted to making pickles and remained steadfast even when others dropped out. With support from DAY-NULM's Revolving Fund, PMFME seed capital, and SEP-I loan, she launched her brand—Mahilary Pickles.

Her venture soon expanded into producing black rice and amla wine, and later bakery products, under the PMFME scheme. Today, her enterprise, Mahilary's Recipes, employs 17 people and generates ₹50 lakh annually. In 2024, she was honoured with the **Magicka Le Extraordinaire Award**, a recognition of her inspiring leadership and resilience.



Preparing Pickles



Receiving of Magicka Le Extraordinaire Award

Eco-friendly water hyacinth Bags made by SHGs under DAY-NULM, Nagaon

In Nagaon, there is another example where SHG women are leading an innovative NULM initiative. Here, 23 trained SHG members are crafting eco-friendly bags, yoga mats, and baskets from water hyacinth—a locally available aquatic weed harvested from the Kolong River.

With training support from NEDFi and DAY-NULM, the women have mastered the process of drying, weaving, and marketing these products. Sold locally and on e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart, their eco-products earn each member between ₹1.2 to ₹1.5 lakh per year. These women also participate in government exhibitions, turning waste into wealth while promoting sustainable urban livelihoods.



SHG women involved in eco-friendly products crafting

Women for Trees – Let's Stand Together for an Urban Greening, Led by Women, Inspired by Mothers

Beyond enterprise, NULM is also building environmental leadership through initiatives like the “Women for Trees” campaign, launched under the AMRUT Mitra programme in convergence with DAY-NULM. In line with the national movement Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam, this initiative celebrates motherhood and

environmental stewardship by mobilizing SHG women across Assam for urban greening.

The campaign, rolled out in three phases, began in May 2025 with joint site visits across 15 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), involving over 210 SHG women. On World Environment Day (June 5, 2025), they led mass tree plantation drives in public parks and urban open spaces. The upcoming third phase focuses on the long-term care and survival of the planted saplings through sustained community engagement.



During tree plantation drive



Together, these initiatives highlight the transformative impact of DAY-NULM in Assam—fostering entrepreneurship, promoting eco-consciousness, and empowering women to become agents of change. Whether by planting trees, crafting eco-products, or building successful businesses, SHG women are redefining urban futures—greener, stronger, and led by women.

Buzz from the ULBs

Transforming Barpeta – From Garbage Vulnerable Point to Civic Pride

A neglected patch near the Circuit House on VIP Road, Barpeta—once infamous as a Garbage Vulnerable Point (GVP)—has now been transformed into a striking symbol of civic pride and urban renewal.

Despite repeated interventions, the site had long suffered from indiscriminate dumping, posing both environmental hazards and a blemish on the town’s image. Taking decisive action, the Barpeta Municipal Board, under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), undertook a dedicated initiative to restore the space.

Through sustained cleaning drives, preventive measures, and aesthetic enhancements, the area was not only reclaimed but elevated into a landmark. Today, the space is home to the vibrant “I ♥ BARPETA” installation, inspiring citizens and visitors alike. The SBM logo stands prominently beside it—echoing the national vision of a cleaner India.

This transformation reflects the commitment to make Barpeta cleaner and more livable. Every small effort count, and this is a step towards creating a more responsible and aware urban society.



Before



After

Doomdooma on the Path to Zero Waste

In a significant move toward sustainable urban development, the Doomdooma Municipal Board (DMB) has inaugurated Tinsukia district's first-ever **Material Recovery Facility (MRF)** and **Waste-to-Compost Plant** in Ward No. 1 at Uchamati. This initiative marks a transformative step in addressing the town's long-standing waste management issues while aligning with the broader goals of the **Swachh Bharat Mission**.

For years, Doomdooma struggled with improper waste disposal that posed threats to both the environment and public health. The absence of a systematic waste segregation and processing mechanism resulted in recyclable and organic waste being dumped in landfills, contributing to pollution and urban decay.

The newly launched facility offers a two-pronged solution to these problems:

- **Material Recovery Facility (MRF):** For sorting and processing waste using trommels of varying sizes.
- **Waste-to-Compost Plant:** For converting segregated organic waste into nutrient rich compost.

With a processing capacity of **50 tonnes per day (TPD)**, the plant aims to handle **100% of waste collected door-to-door** from households and commercial establishments. The integrated system uses both manual and mechanical sorting techniques to ensure maximum recovery and reuse of waste materials.



MRF Centre during inauguration



Before



After

Bio-Mining of Legacy Waste under Doomdooma Municipal Board

A standout achievement of DMB is its successful clearance of **legacy waste** through biomining. The former dump yard in Ward No. 9 is being transformed into a **green park** with a rejuvenated water body — a move that restores ecological balance while providing a recreational space for residents. A **dedicated vending zone** is also under development to better organize street vendors and maintain urban cleanliness.

The inauguration of the MRF and compost plant marks not just an infrastructural upgrade, but a strong commitment to a **cleaner, greener Doomdooma** — setting an inspiring example for sustainable urban living.



Stories from the First Mile

Cleanliness is not an act, but a habit

Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban SBM(U) Assam, believes that every step toward a cleaner city is a stride toward a healthier community. Clean surroundings not only uplift our environment but also foster dignity, pride, and a better quality of life for every citizen.

For SBM(U), this year has been nothing short of extraordinary, as the collective effort and perseverance of all stakeholders across the state have transformed vision into reality across multiple fronts of the Swachh Bharat Mission(Urban) — from outstanding Swachh

Survekshan results to notable achievements in Garbage Free City and Open Defecation Free certifications by the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the State.

On 17th July 2025, the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of India, honoured Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) and North Lakhimpur Municipal Board with the title of “Promising Swachh Shehar of Assam” — a testament to their outstanding performance in the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25. In addition to that, other ULBs were also certified as Garbage Free City – 1 Star (GFC – 1 Star) and Open Defecation Free ++ (ODF++), recognizing their exceptional efforts in promoting sanitation and hygiene.

To further ignite the spirit of Swachhata, SBM(U), Assam unveiled the dynamic duo, —its official mascot “Bheku”, and the citizen-centric mobile application ‘Swachh Sewa Assam’ to create cleaner and more liveable urban landscapes.



GMC and North Lakhimpur Municipal Board receiving Promising Swachh Shehar of State Award

“Bheku” is a frog—an animal symbolizing rain, renewal, and harmony in Assamese culture. Celebrated in folk rituals like **Bhekuli Biya** to invoke rain, the frog reflects the community’s deep bond with nature. Bheku represents not just a mascot, but a shared commitment to cleanliness, culture, and sustainability.

“Swachh Sewa Assam” strengthens SBM(U)’s digital push by enabling citizens to report issues, request services, and stay connected with local authorities. With the vision of “Clean Assam, Green Assam”, SBM(U) upholds the belief that every small act of cleanliness helps build a healthier, sustainable future for all.



Bheku: the official mascot of SBM(U), Assam



Recognition of Excellence: KARMASHREE

Shri Mridul Boro, ACS, Valuation Officer & i/c Deputy Director and Shri Rakesh Kumar Deka, AUAS, Executive Officer, from the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) under the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs have been honoured with the prestigious KARMASHREE – Chief Minister’s Award for Excellence in Public Administration, 2024–2025.

The award, conferred by the Government of Assam, recognises their outstanding leadership and dedication in steering the **State-wide Property Tax Assessment and Reassessment Initiative**. This transformative initiative, implemented through a data-driven, GIS-enabled, web and mobile-based Property Tax portal empowers citizens to perform self-assessment or request assistance from municipal officials quickly and conveniently.

The initiative has introduced a streamlined mechanism for property tax mapping and assessment, leveraging



During Karmashree Award Ceremony

geospatial data to eliminate discrepancies, enhance citizen trust and improve municipal revenue generation. The recognition stands as a testament to their unwavering commitment to administrative innovation, good governance, and digital transformation within the public sector—setting a benchmark for others to follow.

Envisioning Urban

Tokyo's Underground Flood Tunnels

Tokyo's innovative flood prevention underground tunnel system, officially known as the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel (MAOUDC), is an engineering marvel designed to shield the sprawling metropolis from devastating floods caused by heavy rains, typhoons, and river overflows.

Located about 50 meters underground in northern Tokyo, the system features 6.3 kilometers of large tunnels connected to five massive vertical silos. These silos channel excess floodwater from overflowing rivers into an enormous underground reservoir chamber. Supported by concrete pillars, this chamber can hold nearly 100 Olympic-sized swimming pools' worth of water.

During heavy rains or floods, the system temporarily stores excess water underground, protecting Tokyo's low-lying areas from inundation. Powerful pumps, driven by aircraft-grade engines, expel water back into the River once the storm subsides. This controlled discharge prevents sudden downstream flooding.

Since its commissioning, the system has drastically reduced flood damage, saving billions in potential losses and providing enhanced security for vulnerable

communities. Beyond flood control, it has enabled urban development in previously high-risk zones, boosting the city's resilience and infrastructure.

The MAOUDC combines advanced engineering with innovative urban flood management. Its vast underground halls attract tourists and are often called a "cathedral" for their impressive scale and design. Above all, this pioneering infrastructure protects one of the world's largest cities from the growing flood risks intensified by climate change and urban expansion.

By adopting climate-resilient infrastructure like floodwater storage, efficient pumps, and controlled water discharge system, Assam can better protect communities, support safe urban growth, and reduce losses. While replication at Tokyo's scale may not be feasible, scaled-down, context-specific adaptations could strengthen the state's flood preparedness and resilience.



Tokyo's Underground Tunnel

Urban Lexicon

Phased Urbanization: A Sustainable Approach to City Growth

Phased urbanization is a strategic approach to city development where urban growth occurs in well-planned, gradual stages. Unlike unregulated expansion, this method ensures that infrastructure, services, and resources are developed in alignment with population needs and budget availability.

Each phase of development focuses on specific priorities—such as roads, water supply, housing, or green spaces—allowing local governments to better manage growth, monitor outcomes, and make necessary adjustments before moving to the next stage.

This approach helps prevent overbuilding, underutilized infrastructure, and environmental degradation. It also promotes integrated land-use planning, improved connectivity, and better quality of life for citizens.

Under the Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT, many cities are adopting phased urbanization for sustainable, inclusive growth. Pune upgraded the Aundh–Baner–Balewadi area with smart infrastructure in stages; Surat introduced phased digital services for traffic, flood alerts, and waste management; and Agartala improved water supply and transport incrementally.

Similarly in Assam, the integration of satellite towns such as North Guwahati, Amingaon, and Jagiroad is being planned in phases—through enhanced transport links, industrial corridors, and service infrastructure—to balance rapid urban growth with resilience and equitable service delivery.

As urban challenges increase, phased urbanization offers a practical roadmap for building **resilient, efficient, and future-ready cities**.

Revolving EDITOR'S DESK Feature of the Month



Asif Ali Khan, AUAS
Executive Officer, Kajalgaon Municipal Board

Green Innovations Rooted in Community: Kajalgaon's Sustainable Leap

About the Author

The author is the Executive Officer of Kajalgaon Municipal Board from the Assam Urban Administrative Service cadre (2022). With a vision for sustainable and inclusive urban growth, the author has been actively engaged in implementing green infrastructure and citizen-centric development projects across the town.

The urban transformation of small towns often goes unnoticed—but in Kajalgaon, a quiet revolution is taking shape. Nestled in the heart of the Bodoland Territorial Region, Kajalgaon Municipal Board is leading by example, turning everyday governance into a model of innovation and environmental responsibility.

Harnessing the Sun: Kajalgaon's Green Energy Drive

Kajalgaon Municipal Board is leading a green revolution by integrating solar energy for promoting clean, sustainable, and safe urban living. Solar street lights have been installed along key roads and public areas, enhancing night-time safety, especially for women, children, and the elderly. Solar Home Lights distributed to all the PMAY-HFA beneficiaries. Additionally, Office buildings are now powered by solar panels, reducing energy costs and dependence on conventional power sources.

CITY BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT:

Kajalgaon's newly developed UN Brahma Park, "I LOVE KAJALGAON" selfie point, and Mahatma Gandhi statue offer a fresh mix of greenery and public recreation. The park is filled with native plants and includes solar lights, benches, and a walking path. It reflects thoughtful and eco-friendly urban planning. More than just a green space, it serves as a community area that promotes care for the environment.



UN Brahma Eco Park, Kajalgaon



Solar Street Light



Kajalgaon selfie point



Gandhi statue opposite to Circuit House

Old Citizens Rest House: Infrastructure with Empathy

The Old Citizens Rest House at Kajalgaon is a calm, accessible shelter thoughtfully designed for the comfort and dignity of the elderly. Equipped with sitting areas, rest zones, and age-friendly amenities, it offers a peaceful environment that supports both physical ease and emotional well-being. What makes this facility truly impactful is its day-to-day operation—managed with the support of the municipal board and community volunteers, it remains clean, safe, and welcoming throughout the day. Regular upkeep, solar-powered lighting, and staff presence ensure that senior citizens not only have a place to rest, but also feel seen, respected, and cared for in the heart of the town.



Old Citizens rest house

Solar-Based Mobile Toilet: Sanitation with Innovation

Kajalgaon MB solar-powered mobile toilet is an eco-friendly solution designed to provide safe and hygienic sanitation in underserved areas. Fully powered by solar energy, it runs lights, water pumps without external electricity. Its gender-inclusive design offers separate compartments for men and women, promoting safety and accessibility. Being mobile and modular, it can be easily deployed at events, markets, or remote locations, making it a sustainable and flexible public utility. Septic tank cleaning is done using a suction-based desludging system, often operated with a mechanical switch. The process requires minimal manual handling—waste is extracted through an outlet valve or suction port, ensuring safe and sanitary disposal.



Solar-Based Mobile Toilet

Looking Forward

In a time when global climate concerns feel overwhelming, Kajalgaon reminds us that local action matters. These projects are more than just infrastructure—they are a philosophy of governance that centers on people, planet, and progress. With thoughtful leadership and strong citizen participation, Kajalgaon is evolving into a model green town in Assam's urban landscape.

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

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