



THE

WEEKLY



RURAL

NEWSLETTER

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER



Greetings Readers!

An overwhelming population in India continues to live in what is defined as 'non-urban' or rural. As per the 2011 Census, 833.1 million people of the total 1210.2 million population, or 69% of the populace, lived in rural areas in around 6.4 lakh villages. The rural life, while popularly portrayed as simple, slow, and serene, is much more complex, unsettling, diverse and rapidly changing. In a world dominated by the hustle and bustle of urban life, the heartbeat of rural India often goes unnoticed. Welcome to the Weekly Rural Newsletter, where we aim to bridge this gap by shedding light on the stories, struggles, and triumphs of the large majority of India's population. Presented by the diligent students of Rural Sociology, this Newsletter is a humble effort to amplify the rural voices that deserve to be heard. By closely following the national and regional media platforms students cover different states as 'state correspondents' and document the developments unfolding in the socio-economic, political and cultural spheres of the countryside. A team of two students compiles these news reports in the form of a newsletter on a weekly basis and brings the newsletter to you. We believe that having a focus on rural affairs in educational settings can have far-reaching effects in students' awareness about the challenges and opportunities in rural areas, holistic education, empathy, community engagement, and policy advocacy. We hope this exercise also creates a ripple effect among the larger audience. Stay tuned for more stories from the heartlands of our nation!

**With rustic regards,
The Rural Sociology Students' Team, 2024**

ANDHRA PRADESH

AP sets record by conducting over 13000 gram sabhas on a single day

Andhra Pradesh set a world record by conducting gram sabhas in 13,326 panchayats across the state on a single day on August 23, 100 days after Pawan Kalyan assumed office as deputy chief minister and took charge of panchayat raj and rural development portfolios. The record was officially recognized by the World Records Union. During these gram sabhas, resolutions were passed for employment guarantee projects worth Rs 4,500 crore. The meetings saw the participation of local representatives and villagers. Discussions revolved around development works, including projects under MGNREGS. A total of 87 different works were approved, aimed at providing employment to 9 crore people and benefiting 54 lakh families.



(Photo credit: nyaaya.org)

Link to the article: (September 16th, 2024)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/andhra-pradesh-sets-world-record-by-conducting-over-13000-gram-sabhas-in-one-day/articleshow/113403549.cms>

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Arunachal: Cloudburst strikes Mechuka in Shi-Yomi district; extensive damage reported



A dramatic cloudburst dramatically damaged homes, farms, and infrastructure in Mechuka, a town in the Shi-Yomi area close to the Indo-China border. The cloudburst that hit the Dorjeeling and Sekar districts of Mechuka this morning has interrupted life in the region, and local authorities are still analyzing the full extent of the damage. Mechuka is a prominent tourist attraction in Arunachal Pradesh, known for its magnificent scenery and snow-capped mountains. Farmland and bridges have been damaged by the intense downpour, which has completely changed the landscape. Officials and locals are both concerned about the possible effects on the town's infrastructure and tourism business, even though no casualties have been reported.

Link to the article: (September 20th, 2024)

<https://www.indiatodayne.in/arunachal-pradesh/video/arunachal-cloudburst-strikes-mechuka-in-shi-yomi-district-extensive-damage-reported-1095884-2024-09-20>

ASSAM

Assam- Mizoram connectivity crisis: NH-154 in deplorable condition

The inhabitants of Hailakandi district and a portion of the neighboring state of Mizoram are deeply concerned about the deteriorating state of inter-State National Highway 6 (Formerly Known as NH 154) connecting Assam and Mizoram. Because the potholes significantly slowed vehicle movement, commuters have been distressed. The northeastern region of Mizoram is connected to Bairabi, around 70 kilometers from Hailakandi town, through NH6. There hasn't been any road repair in a very long time. The national highway was built in 2008. According to sources, the poor state of the roads in Mizoram is causing the state to run out of supplies since most truck drivers chose not to drive at risk of dying.

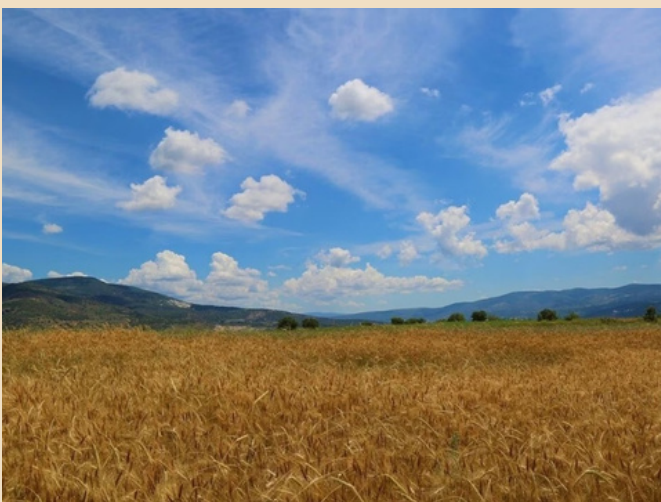


Link to the article: (September 21st, 2024)

<https://assamtribune.com/assam/assam-mizoram-connectivity-crisis-nh-154-in-deplorable-condition-1552140?infinitescroll=1>

BIHAR

Fake Settlement of 85 Kattha Land in Gopalganj, Bihar



A fake land settlement of 85 kattha in Bihar's Gopalganj district was uncovered, with the land being illegally registered under one person's name. Following an investigation report by the Sadar Sub-Divisional Officer, an FIR was filed, and several officials, including revenue officers, were implicated. Departmental action has been ordered against those involved.

(Translated from Hindi)

Link to the article: (September 19th, 2024)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/bihar/fake-settlement-of-85-kattha-land-in-bihar-gopalganj-district-201726704216678.html>

GUJARAT

BJP membership drive hits controversies in Gujarat

Gujarat BJP's membership drive has faced controversies in rural areas, with allegations of forced enrolment. In Narmada district, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) legislator Chaitar Vasava claimed that workers of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme were pressured to join the BJP. Additionally, a viral video in Bhavnagar showed a local BJP leader offering ₹500 to those enrolling 100 new members. In Surendranagar, students in rural schools were allegedly enrolled without consent. The BJP aims to enroll two crore members in the state, but these incidents have raised concerns about unethical practices in rural areas.



Link to the article: (September 19th, 2024)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/gujarat/bjp-membership-drive-hits-controversies-in-gujarat/article68657001.ece>

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Amid fear of collapse, 8 families of Mandi village vacate their houses



Link to the article: (September 21st, 2024)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/amid-fear-of-collapse-8-families-of-mandi-village-vacate-their-houses/>

The villagers of Mandi and Diyod are having to relocate themselves from their homes due to development of cracks in their houses. These cracks are suspected due to the Kiratpur-Manali highway construction. Along with homes the local school also faced troubles. Roshni Devi, the president of hanumant gram panchayat confirmed that the homes have been vacated. The public works department is assessing their situation and immediate action will be taken to protect these houses.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Rural areas of Jammu lack basic amenities: Sawhney

Jammu East Congress-NC candidate, Yogesh Sawhney, expressed concern over the poor state of rural development in his constituency's outskirts. During visits to areas like Sidhra and Bajalta, locals raised issues of nonexistent roads, waterlogging, and lack of basic infrastructure. Sawhney criticized the government's neglect, stating these regions remain untouched by modernization despite being close to urban centers. He emphasized the need for urgent action on road connectivity, water drainage, and essential services, calling it unacceptable that such conditions persist in the 21st century. Development must reach all areas, not just city centers, he asserted.



Link to the article: (September 17th, 2024)
<https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/rural-areas-of-jammu-lack-basic-amenities-sawhney/>

JHARKHAND

Inauguration of Phulo Jhano Child Development Center in Dimra Village, Ranchi

The Phulo Jhano Child Development Center was inaugurated in Dimra village, Ranchi. The center aims to instill discipline, respect for parents, and social responsibility in children, addressing the harmful effects of mobile phones. The event included the distribution of educational materials and emphasized the importance of practical knowledge for better development.

(Translated from Hindi)



Link to the article: (September 22nd, 2024)
<https://www.livehindustan.com/jharkhand/ranchi/story-inauguration-of-phulo-jhano-child-development-center-in-dimra-village-ranchi-201727034676099.html>

KERALA

Kerala proposes to limit its ecologically sensitive area to 8711.98 sq. km in 98 villages



Link to the article: (September 18th, 2024)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/kerala-proposes-to-limit-its-ecologically-sensitive-area-to-871198-sq-km-in-98-villages/article68656811.ece/amp/>

Kerala has proposed to limit its ecologically sensitive area (ESA) to 8,711.98 sq. km in 98 villages by confining ESAs to the forests and protected areas including the wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and tiger reserves of the State. The State is in the process of addressing the concerns raised by the people in the proposed ESAs including the probable restrictions that could be imposed there. The State government had formed district-level committees to look into the issue. The suggestions of the committees were shared with the village panchayats for their responses. The State would come up with the final suggestions after reviewing the suggestions of the village panchayats, the State clarified.

MAHARASHTRA

'100-Year Resolution for Harmony': A Village's Stand Against Divisive Politics in Maharashtra

In the village of Sondeghar, Dapoli, Maharashtra, where people of all castes and religions live together, the community has united to pass a remarkable 100-year resolution promoting harmony and rejecting divisive politics. Inspired by the Mahatma Gandhi Tantamukti Committee, the villagers vowed to maintain interfaith unity and resolve conflicts within the community without resorting to courts. According to the villagers, this step was necessary to safeguard future generations, especially in a time when social media is shaping young minds. By passing this resolution, they aim to ensure that mutual respect, peace, and the spirit of togetherness continue to thrive.



Link to the article: (September 18th, 2024)

<https://thewire.in/video/100-year-resolution-for-harmony-a-villages-stand-against-divisive-politics-in-maharashtra>

MANIPUR

Manipur Unrest: NIA takes over probe into drone bomb attacks in Koutruk



Link to the article: (September 22nd, 2024)

<https://www.ifp.co.in/manipur/manipur-unrest-nia-takes-over-probe-into-drone-bomb-attacks-in-koutruk>

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the investigation into a recent drone attack in Imphal West, Manipur, which killed one woman and injured 11 others. The attack, linked to ongoing ethnic violence, marks an escalation in the conflict, with drones being used to drop explosives, possibly aided by Myanmar militants. The NIA has requested all related documents from the Manipur police to conduct a thorough investigation. The attack occurred on September 1, and rocket attacks by Kuki militants in Bishnupur district also killed one man and injured five others, further intensifying the violence.

ODISHA

Rural Development chief engineer in Vigilance net; raids on at multiple places in Odisha

The Chief Engineer of Odisha's Rural Development Department, NV Harihar Rao was caught in a vigilance raid at multiple locations, including his residence and office. The raids were conducted by the Odisha Vigilance team, uncovering assets worth approximately ₹3 crore, including cash, gold, and property documents. This operation is part of a broader crackdown on corruption within the department, which has faced scrutiny over irregularities in rural development projects. The vigilance team aims to address corruption and enhance accountability in public service delivery in the state.



Link to the article: (September 20th, 2024)

<https://odishatv.in/news/odisha/rural-development-chief-engineer-in-vigilance-net-raids-on-at-multiple-places-in-odisha-244554>

PUNJAB

It's not just doctors, Punjab's healthcare facilities are inadequate too



Link to the article: (September 16th, 2024)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/punjab-healthcare-crisis-insufficient-facilities-and-doctor-shortage/articleshow/113376848.cms>

Punjab's healthcare system faces a critical crisis due to insufficient facilities and a severe shortage of specialist doctors. The state has inadequate primary health centers (PHCs) and community health centers (CHCs), particularly in rural areas, where only 397 functional PHCs exist against a need for 595. Urban areas also suffer from a lack of primary health centers. Specialist vacancies are alarming, with only 119 specialists in urban CHCs against 336 sanctioned positions, and similar shortages in rural CHCs. Basic infrastructure is often lacking, with many centers without essential amenities, compromising healthcare quality and access for the population, especially in rural regions.

SIKKIM

CM PS Golay Celebrates Discovery of 1.5-Billion-Year-Old Fossil, Announces Plans for World-Class Fossil Theme Park

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) celebrated the discovery of a 1.5-billion-year-old stromatolite fossil at the Fossil Park in Mamley, Namchi district, calling it a significant find in Sikkim's geological history. This fossil predates similar discoveries in Canada, Australia, and the USA, marking it as one of Earth's earliest life forms. The government plans to develop the site into a world-class fossil theme park, featuring a geological museum, immersive experiences, and a geopark village to attract researchers and tourists, enhancing Sikkim's prominence in geology and palaeontology.



Link to the article: (September 19th, 2024)

<https://voiceofsikkim.com/cm-ps-golay-celebrates-discovery-of-1-5-billion-year-old-fossil-announces-plans-for-world-class-fossil-theme-park/>

TAMIL NADU

Why is Tamil Nadu's education funding on hold?



Tamil Nadu has not received funding from the Centre under the Samagra Shiksha education scheme. Samagra Shiksha is a scheme for school education, and covers everything from teacher training to school resources. The Centre and States contribute on a 60:40 basis. However, the Centre first requires the State to sign an MoU confirming participation in a scheme aiming to implement NEP 2020. All major Tamil parties have opposed NEP's implementation in the state, since it means replacing the Tamil and English education with a three-language system (which is seen as forcing Hindi into Tamil Nadu). CM Stalin also argues that Tamil Nadu is already implementing many other recommendations by the NEP. The Centre and the State are currently at an impasse regarding the issue.

Link to the article: (September 18th, 2024)

<https://www.thehindu.com/education/why-is-tamil-nadus-education-funding-on-hold-explained/article68648084.ece>

TELANGANA

Village in Telangana's Warangal district selected for Gram Swaraj Award

Mariapuram, a model village panchayat in Warangal district, has been selected for the Gram Swaraj Award among six across India for progress in village development, greenery and cleanliness in 2022-23. The award will be presented at the national-level Panchayati Raj Seminar in Tirupati. Mariyapuram GP, formed in 1995, has 248 families who constructed ISLs, soak pits and banned plastic. A liquor ban was imposed after it became a gram panchayat. 13,209 saplings were planted under Haritha Haram, most of which have grown into trees now.



Link to the article: (September 22nd, 2024)

<https://telanganatoday.com/village-in-telanganas-warangal-district-selected-for-gram-swaraj-award>

TRIPURA

1,48,379 flood-affected farmers will be given Rs 1,000 each within this week, Said Secretary, Agricultural



Link to the article: (September 17th 2024)
<https://tripurainfo.com/news.aspx?intnid=21796&title=148379-flood-affected-farmers-will-be-given-Rs-1000-each-within-this-week-Said-Secretary-Agricultural>

1,48,379 farmers cultivating kharif crops have been affected by the recent floods in Tripura. State Agriculture Secretary Apurba Roy announced at a press conference that the state has taken the initiative to transfer ₹1,000 to the farmers having suffered this loss. He also said that financial assistance has been provided to 45,248 farmers affected in the cultivation of winter vegetables in the first phase. The state has given ₹20 crore to the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department for interim assistance to affected farmers: ₹15 crore for the agriculture sector, and ₹5 crore for horticulture crops.

UTTAR PRADESH

20 UP villages lost their beloved Sakarni River decades ago. They just got it back this July

Sakarni River, which had nearly disappeared from the landscape of 20 villages in Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh district, has been revived thanks to community efforts and MGNREGA funding. Local environmentalist Ajay Krantikari and district officials mobilized 30,000 residents to restore the 28-km river, which had suffered from silt accumulation and encroachment. With an allocation of ₹1.35 crore, the project involved significant labor to clear the riverbed and restore its flow. This initiative not only rejuvenated the Sakarni but also aimed to enhance groundwater recharge and prevent seasonal flooding of fields, marking a significant step towards sustainable water management in the region.



Link to the article: (September 19th, 2024)
<https://theprint.in/ground-reports/20-uttar-pradesh-villages-lost-sakarni-river-pratapgarh-river-rejuvenation-project/2273691/>

UTTRAKHAND

Four villages of Uttarakhand will get the Best Tourism Village Award, CM Dhami's campaign brought results



Link to the article: (September 19th, 2024)

<https://www.jagran.com/uttarakhand/dehradun-city-four-villages-of-uttarakhand-will-get-the-best-tourism-village-award-cm-dhami-campaign-brought-results-23800156.html>

Based on the commitment towards conservation of culture and natural wealth, promotion of community based values and lifestyle and economic, social and environmental sustainability 4 villages in Uttarakhand will be awarded for the best tourism award by the union ministry on international tourism day in New Delhi on 21st September. Jakhol village of Uttarkashi district has been selected for adventure tourism, Harsil village for Vibrant Village, Seemant Gunji village of Pithoragarh district for Vibrant Village and Soupi village of Nainital district for agricultural tourism for the Best Tourism Village Award. The chief minister congratulated the villagers for their dedicated effort. He also sought cooperation from the “god-like” people of the state to make Uttarakhand a tourism state.

(Translated from Hindi to English)

WEST BENGAL

Kalimpong district administration to draft comprehensive plan to boost tourism amid slump

The Kalimpong district administration is drafting a plan to revive tourism after the Teesta flash flood and frequent NH10 closures. District Magistrate Subramanian T. announced that the road map, involving the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and local stakeholders, will boost tourist footfall. A meeting with tourism sector representatives is set for September 25, and the final plan will be sent to the state tourism department for approval. The administration aims to promote adventure sports, floriculture, and birdwatching, while restoring attractions like Gouripur House and the Catherine Graham Memorial Church to enhance the district's appeal.



Link to the article: (September 23rd, 2024)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/kalimpong-district-administration-to-draft-comprehensive-plan-to-boost-tourism-amid-slump/cid/2049782>

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