



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

Andhra to host record-breaking Gram Sabhas in 13,326 villages

Andhra Pradesh will make history by simultaneously holding Gram Sabhas (village meetings) in all 13,326 gram panchayats, a significant step towards strengthening the Panchayat Raj system. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan announced that these meetings approved 87 types of works worth ₹4,500 crore under MGNREGS, finalizing an action plan for 9.54 crore mandates. Kalyan criticized YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's previous government for neglecting the Panchayat Raj system, alleging misuse of ₹40,579 crore released under MGNREGS from 2019-2023. Current government aims to transform panchayats into wealth-generating entities by leveraging their unique identities and specialties while promoting women's empowerment and social forestry.



Link to the article: (August 23th, 2024)

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2024/Aug/23/andhra-to-host-record-breaking-gram-sabhas-in-13326-villages>

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Signify Illuminates 25 Rural Border Villages in Arunachal Pradesh with Support from the Indian Army



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

https://www.business-standard.com/content/press-releases-ani/signify-illuminates-25-rural-border-villages-in-arunachal-pradesh-with-support-from-the-indian-army-124082100458_1.html

25 villages under the Tawang District in Arunachal Pradesh were provided with energy-efficient LED lighting within the primary public service areas and community centers. The lead lighting systems company, Signify, in collaboration with the Indian Army, Civil Authorities, and NGO BHaratCares, completed this project, and has provided efficient electricity to 1,500 households in the villages.

This initiative, whose mission remains to strengthen security measures and access to sustainable electricity within rural communities, has positively impacted more than 7,500 citizens. The sustenance and impact of a private-public partnership for public welfare provisions are yet to be seen.

ASSAM

Rape accused dies in police custody after 'jumping' into pond while 'trying to escape'

Tafazul Islam, a 24-year-old resident accused of gang-raping a 14-year-old girl in the Dhing village area of Assam's Nagaon district died by jumping into a pond on Saturday. The incident took place as Islam tried to escape police custody. Islam was charged under the POCSO act, following protests from the local villagers, calling for a complete business shutdown until action was taken against the accused.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa assured that action would be taken against the culprits. He told reporters that the loss of BJP votes in the Lok Sabha Elections had instigated violence and tensions between communities.

Two perpetrators have not been arrested, as the incident crosses the crucial 72-hour mark.



Link to the article: (August 24th, 2024)

<https://scroll.in/latest/1072393/assam-rape-accused-dies-in-police-custody-after-jumping-into-pond-while-trying-to-escape>

BIHAR

Rising Gandak River levels poses threat to Puchariya village



The rising water levels of the Gandak River have increased the flood threat to Puchariya village, with significant erosion near the Malahi Tola area. Villagers are worried as about 80 to 100 meters of land is gradually being washed away. Despite the ongoing threat, the Water Resources Department has only conducted inspections without taking substantial anti-erosion measures. Villagers demand urgent and effective action to prevent further damage, as many homes and nearly 5,000 people could be affected if the erosion continues.

[Translated from Hindi to English]

Link to the article: (August 24th, 2024)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/bihar/motihari/story-flood-threat-looms-over-puchariya-village-as-gandak-river-water-level-rises-201724521271354.html>

CHATTISGARH

News of a tribal woman being gangraped in the villages of the Raigarh district

A 27 year old tribal woman living in the Pusa block/tehsil of the Raigarh district was gangraped by 10 men, one of whom was a friend of hers. According to police reports, on the day of Rakshabandhan while everyone was celebrating, the woman went to Meena Bazaar with some friends. However on their way back, she was raped by one of her male friends as well as his other companions. Police have arrested six of the ten suspects, but no further information has been released as the case is still ongoing.



[Translated from Hindi to English]

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

https://theruralpress.in/2024/08/21/10-people-gangraped-a-tribal-woman-the-womans-friend-is-also-among-the-accused/?x_tr_sl&x_tr_tl&x_tr_hl

GUJARAT

Mozambican student found dead in Vadodara pond, hunt on for car driver



A tragic incident occurred in Khatamba village, Vadodara, where a master's student from Mozambique was found dead in a pond on Monday evening. The accident happened late Sunday night when the car he was in allegedly plunged into the water. Police suspect the driver failed to negotiate a tricky turn near the pond in the dark, leading to the accident. The incident has raised concerns about the lack of streetlights and poor road conditions in the area, which may have contributed to the tragedy. Authorities are currently searching for the driver responsible.

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

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/vadodara-police-lookout-for-driver-after-passengers-body-found-in-pond-9523566/>

HARYANA

Farmer groups say impact of protests will be seen in Haryana polls

Protests continue in Haryana as the farmers' collective remain antagonistic towards the Bharatiya Janata Party. In 2020-2021, farmers protested under the Samyukt Kisan Morcha against the now abolished farm laws with Haryana being one of the prominent centers. Two new groups were formed namely Samyuk Kisan Morch and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha. Kisan Mazdoor Morcha is currently spearheading the protests at the border of Punjab and Haryana, Shambu and Khanauri. These protests have had an impact on the recent polls as BJP saw a drop in votes in the rural areas, according to Abhimanyu Kochar, farmer who is leading the Samyuk Kisan Morch. These protests are raising awareness on issues like minimum support price and reduction in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme funds.



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

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/farmer-groups-say-impact-of-protests-will-be-seen-in-haryana-polls-101723973392311.html>

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Locals oppose auction of mining sites in Jaisinghpur



The mining department in Himachal Pradesh has decided to auction 6 sites along the rivers and rivulets in the village of Jaisinghpur. While this decision is made by the government many residents oppose this decision as they believe that the mining agencies will destroy the natural wealth of the state. Based on their experience last year, due to the auctioning of one site, resulted in “deep trenches and nature havoc.” Despite the ongoing opposition and report to the Public Works Department, no action has been taken.

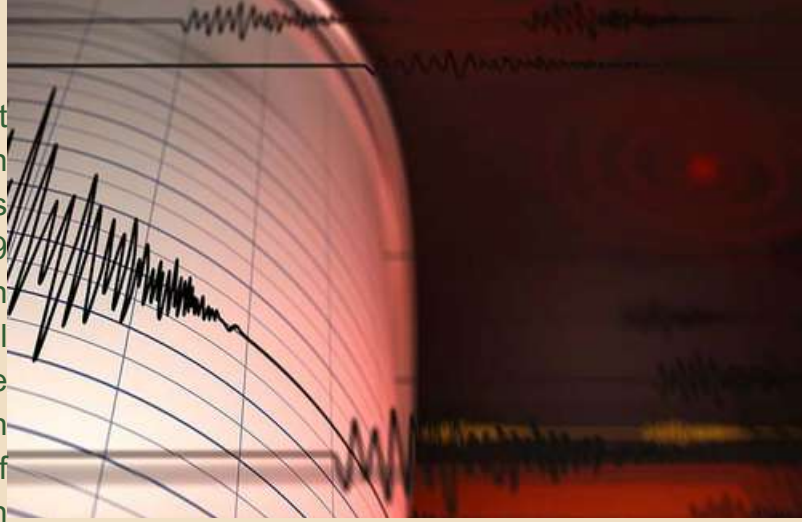
Link to the article: (August 25th, 2024)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/locals-oppose-auction-of-mining-sites-in-jaisinghpur/>

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Two back-to-back earthquakes strike Baramulla; no casualty reported

Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district experienced two back-to-back earthquakes on Tuesday morning, causing widespread panic across the Valley. The first quake, with a magnitude of 4.9 on the Richter scale, struck at 6:45 a.m. with an epicenter in Baramulla district, a primarily rural district, followed by another tremor of 4.8 magnitude at 6:52 a.m. Both quakes were shallow, with a depth of 5 km. Fortunately, there were no reports of casualties or property damage. However, on Wednesday night, residents of Baramulla felt strong tremors again, with official confirmation from the National Centre of Seismology still awaited.



Link to the article: (August 20th, 2024)
<https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/jammu-and-kashmir-two-back-to-back-earthquakes-strike-baramulla-no-casualty-reported/cid/2042187>

JHARKHAND

Corruption in Government Water Distribution Scheme in Saranda village



Corruption in a government water supply scheme in Chaibasa's Saranda village region has led to contaminated water being distributed to villages, causing health concerns among residents. The water, sourced from rivers and streams, is poorly treated, resulting in a foul smell and potential health risks. Despite the scheme's goal of providing clean drinking water, negligence and corruption have compromised its effectiveness. Villagers are demanding immediate corrective measures to ensure safe drinking water.

[Translated from Hindi to English]

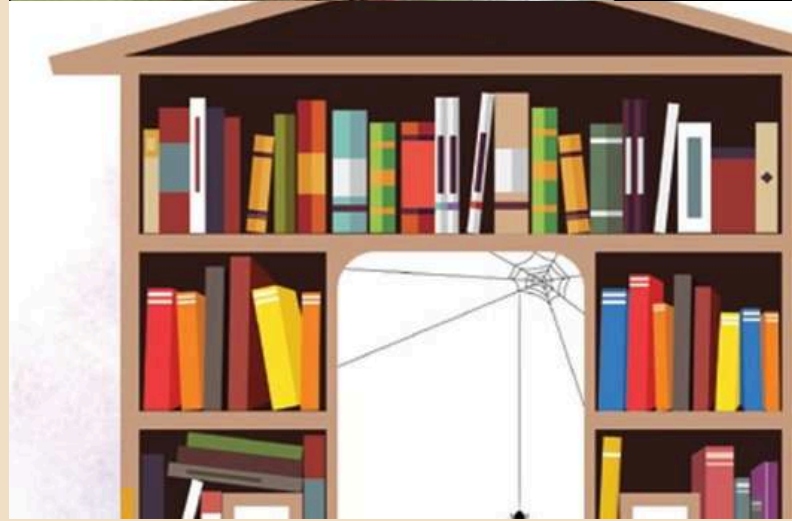
Link to the article: (August 25th, 2024)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/jharkhand/chaibasa/s-tory-corruption-in-government-s-water-scheme-contaminated-water-supplied-to-saranda-villages-201724584604624.html>

KARNATAKA

Karnataka Government identifies 2000 schools to develop with CSR funds

The state government of Karnataka has recognised over 2000 schools in rural areas for the scope of development. The Deputy Chief Minister, DK Shivakumar stated that the government is seeking CSR funds for the improvement of education and other focus areas in rural Karnataka while addressing the CSR educational Conclave- Nurturing Dreams and Transforming Lives under Samatave Programme. Corporate aids can help improve the condition by constructing and furnishing infrastructure like laboratories and libraries. The cornerstone of Samatave programme is to provide a quality of education in rural Karnataka which is at par with Urban areas helping to curb the rural-urban divide.



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

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2024/Aug/20/karnataka-government-identifies-2000-schools-to-develop-with-csr-funds>

KERALA

Kerala to Organize 2000 Onam Fairs Amid Rising Agricultural Prices



In response to escalating prices of agricultural goods, the Department of agriculture Development and Farmers Welfare in Kerala has announced plans to organize 2,000 Onam fairs across the state. This initiative aims to alleviate the impacts of rising costs on consumers and provide direct market access for farmers. The fairs will be established in every village, panchayat, municipality and cooperation with 1076 markets managed directly by the agricultural department, 160 by the Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Keralam and 764 by the Kerala HortiCorp from September 11th to 14th.

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

https://newskarnataka.com/india/kerala-to-organize-2000-onam-fairs-amid-rising-agricultural-prices/19082024/?utm_source=inshorts&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=fullarticle#google_vignette

MAHARASHTRA

42-year-old teacher held for allegedly sexually harassing 13-year-old in Puna Rural

A 42-year-old teacher allegedly harassed a 13-year-old female student by sending obscene messages on WhatsApp and inappropriately touching her in school in a village in Daund Tehsil of Pune Rural. The Pune Rural police have arrested the teacher along with the headmaster, who failed to report the incident to authorities after the students' father made a complaint. However, the police were quick to respond when the girls' parents lodged a formal complaint. Both the teacher and headmaster have been booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences Act, said Police.

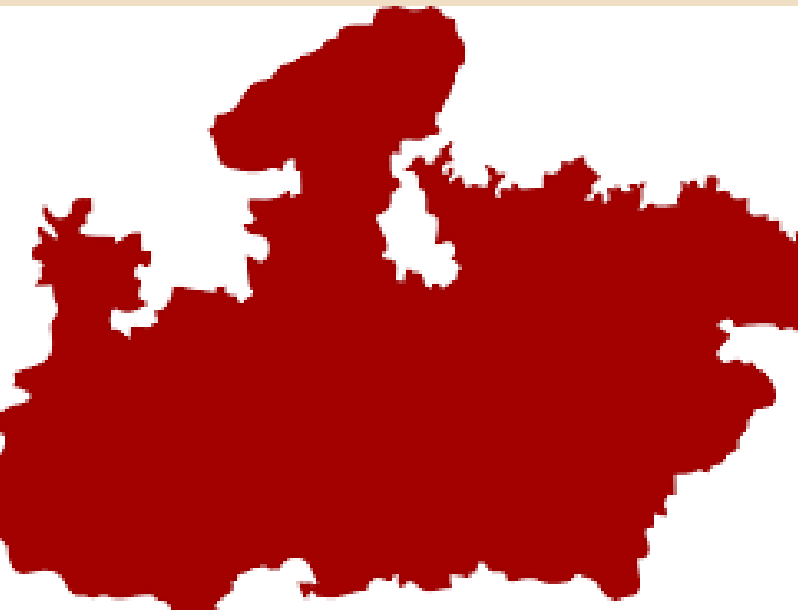


Link to the article: (August 23rd, 2024)

<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/maharashtra-42-year-old-teacher-held-for-allegedly-sexually-harassing-13-year-old-in-puna-rural20240823085728/>

MADHYA PRADESH

Five construction workers dead due to roof collapse in Indore district



Five workers in the Choral village, which is within the limits of Mhow police station limits died when the roof of an under-construction farmhouse collapsed on them while they were asleep inside the farmhouse. Police are unsure of the exact time of the incident, but have filed an FIR under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Section 106 against 3 owners and 1 manager of the farmhouse. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed concern over the incident and offered financial assistance of up to 2 lakh to the families of the deceased.

[Translated from Hindi to English]

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

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/madhya-pradesh/ten-dead-in-separate-incidents-of-roof-collapse-and-bus-accident-in-madhya-pradesh/article68559439.ece>

MANIPUR

Nine villages incorporated to Jiribam district

A memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister of Manipur N. Biren Singh by the Tousem Area Students' Organization (TASO) through the deputy commissioner of Tamenglong, urging action regarding the incorporation of nine villages from the Tousem subdivision into the Jiribam district. TASO president Nehemiah Daime stated that the Manipur Remote Sensing Application Centre (MARSAC) conducted a survey leading to this reclassification. TASO claims these villages, including Muktokhal, Tatbung, and Phaitol, rightfully belong to the Tamenglong district. The organization contends that MARSAC lacks the authority to make such changes without local consultation and urges the chief minister to reverse the decision to avoid unrest.



Link to the article: (August 23rd, 2024)
<https://www.ifp.co.in/manipur/nine-villages-incorporated-to-jiribam-district>

ODISHA

Rural inflation higher than urban for 13 straight months, impacting States such as Bihar, Assam and Odisha



Rural inflation in Odisha has consistently exceeded urban inflation for 13 months, with July 2024 figures showing rural inflation at 4.8% compared to the urban's at 3%. 83.3% of Odisha's population lives in rural areas. This trend is influenced by rising food prices, particularly of vegetables, which constitute a significant part of the consumption basket in rural areas. Additionally, the reliance on traditional fuels and the exclusion of housing costs from rural CPI contribute to this disparity. Overall, Odisha's inflation reflects broader challenges faced by predominantly rural states in India.

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

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/data-stories/data-focus/rural-inflation-higher-than-urban-for-13-straight-months-impacting-states-such-as-bihar-assam-and-odisha/article68550545.ece>

PUNJAB

Hand, foot, mouth disease spreading tentacles among children in Bathinda

For the past two weeks, children in Bathinda have been affected by the HFMD, and local hospitals have also seen a spurt in these affected cases. HFMD, an illness caused by a virus and presenting symptoms such as fever, mouth ulcers, and rashes on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, is easily transmitted but rarely serious. Consultants in pediatrics, such as Dr. Jagjit Singh and Dr. Satish Jindal, reported attending 12 to 15 cases daily, saying the monsoons are to blame. They are encouraged to practice hygiene and make the affected children stay at home to stop the transmission of disease.

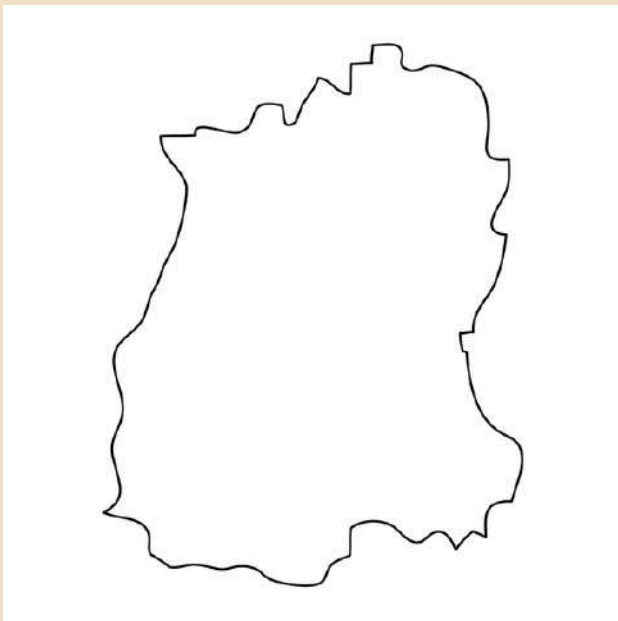


Link to the article: (August 21st, 2024)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/bathinda/hand-foot-mouth-disease-spreading-tentacles-among-children-in-bathinda/>

SIKKIM

Meeting on District Task Force for The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act held.



A meeting on the District Task Force for the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act was held to address child labour issues in the Gyalshing district of Sikkim. Participants included government officials and stakeholders who discussed strategies to strengthen enforcement of the Act. Key topics included enhancing awareness about child labour laws, improving data collection on child labour instances, and implementing effective rehabilitation programs for affected children. The meeting emphasized the need for collaboration among various departments to ensure comprehensive action against child labour, aiming to protect the rights and welfare of children and adolescents in the state.

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

<https://sikkim.gov.in/media/news-announcement/news-info?>

[name=Meeting+on+District+Task+Force+for+The+Child+and+Adolescent+Labour+](https://sikkim.gov.in/media/news-announcement/news-info?name=Meeting+on+District+Task+Force+for+The+Child+and+Adolescent+Labour+)

TAMIL NADU

Migrants Toil in Tamil Nadu's Cauvery Delta

The number of migrants is increasing in the agriculture industry in Tamil Nadu's Cauvery Delta. This is in the context of a severe shorthand of farmhands. Much of the younger population of Tamil Nadu is shifting toward pursuing higher education, which implies that they are unlikely to pursue agriculture. Furthermore, the number of migrants has always been lower in agriculture as opposed to industrial and other sectors. This leaves the older farming population to handle much of the labour work. However, a gradual influx of migrants, mostly in villages near urban and semi-urban areas, is taking on the workload. There is not much backlash against this migration from local trade unions and labourers either, owing to the gradual nature of the migration.



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

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/migrants-toil-in-tamil-nadus-cauvery-delta/article68540274.ece>

TRIPURA

Floods, Landslides in India's Tripura Displace Tens of Thousands



Floods and landslides in Tripura on the 23rd of August have displaced more than 65,000 people and killed 23, authorities said. Soldiers in rescue craft transported people to safety, as disaster management officials note that this is because of four days of incessant rain. Most deaths were caused by landslides.

The displaced have gathered in 450 camps, with a total of 1.7 million affected. There is extensive damage to infrastructure, livestock, and crops. There is similar destruction in Bangladesh as well.

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

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/floods-landslides-indias-tripura-displace-tens-thousands-2024-08-23/>

TELANGANA

Government Okays Relocation of 4 Villages from Within Amrabad Tiger Reserve

The state government has approved the relocation of four villages from the Amrabad Tiger Reserve, a process that has been in the works for nearly 11 years. The villages—Sarlapally, Kudichintala Bailu, Thatigundal Penta, and Kollampenta—are home to 417 families. Of these, 160 families have chosen a one-time payment of ₹15 lakh, while 257 families will receive a relocation package that includes agricultural land and housing. This initiative aims to free 568 hectares of prime tiger habitat from human presence, enhancing conservation efforts as the reserve currently houses around 30 tigers. The relocation is estimated to cost ₹75 crore.



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

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/southern-states/government-okays-relocation-of-4-villages-from-within-amrabad-tiger-reserve-1817837>

UTTAR PRADESH

Ayodhya gang-rapes accused Moid Khan's 'unauthorized' shopping complex demolished.



The district administration tore down a shopping complex owned by Moid Khan, an accused in the alleged gang rape case involving Samajwadi Party (SP) connection. Khan was arrested on July 30 for the alleged rape of a 12-year-old girl who was then pregnant. Hearing that it was constructed on government premises, the shopping complex was razed to the ground after the bank it housed shifted its place. Increased security measures were, however, put in place during the pull-down. While CM Yogi Adityanath and other BJP leaders accused Khan of being an SP member, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav tried to debunk these claims and even suggested Khan take a DNA test.

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

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/uttar-pradesh/ayodhya-gang-rape-accused-moid-khans-unauthorised-shopping-complex-demolished/>

UTTRAKHAND

5% of Crops Destroyed in Uttarakhand But Farmers Won't Receive Compensation, Minister Explains Why.

Weather conditions in mountainous regions have been uncertain, due to the limited network, and questionable authenticity of reports of the meteorological department, the department's data might not be relied upon by the farmers who are unaware of how the data is being collected. Adverse weather conditions like poor rainfall and hailstorms have negatively affected agricultural produce by up to 40-50%. While the Uttarakhand government acknowledges the farmer's problematic and challenging circumstances, it is not providing compensation to the affected farmers. The Agriculture minister Ganesh Joshi, stated that only the farmers enrolled in the crop insurance scheme will receive compensation. Many farmers are not enrolled in this scheme due to the small landholdings. The reason behind this is that the reported loss is less than the 33% threshold set by the State Disaster Response Fund and the National Disaster Response Fund. Unfortunately, even the farmers enrolled in the insurance scheme are facing difficulties in gaining compensation.



Link to the article: (August 22nd, 2024)
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/uttar-pradesh/ayodhya-gang-rape-accused-moid-khans-unauthorised-shopping-complex-demolished/>

WEST BENGAL

Rural Markets are the hope for Consumer Goods



Rural markets in India, previously hit by rising prices, are showing signs of recovery in the sales of essential products like oil, soap, shampoo, tea, coffee, and biscuits. Companies such as HUL, ITC, Dabur, Britannia, Nestlé, and Emami reported improved sales in the April-June period, driven by rising rural demand. Though urban sales of these goods had seen slight growth earlier, overall business was slow. E-commerce contributed significantly to this recovery. Despite concerns over rising food prices, the current 6.6% sales growth is expected to improve further

[Translated from Bengali to English]

Link to the article: (August 19th, 2024)
<https://www.anandabazar.com/business/rural-markets-have-played-a-significant-role-in-lifting-indias-fast-moving-consumer-goods-market/cid/1539377>

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