

Urban Chronicles

A Monthly Newsletter

By Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of Assam

অসম চৰকাৰ



সত্যমেব জয়তে
Government of Assam

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Atal Udyan, Adabari, Guwahati

FOREWORD

*From the desk of the Chief Engineer, Technical Cell,
Department of Housing and Urban Affairs*

I am delighted to share the January edition of Urban Chronicles, which highlights notable initiatives shaping urban development in Assam and beyond.

This edition showcases the Technical Cell of DoHUA as a central driver of urban transformation in the state. Guided by a vision to create inclusive, resilient and future-ready towns, the Technical Cell plans and executes multi-sectoral urban infrastructure projects across Assam. Its work spans civic infrastructure, public amenities, parks, convention centres and traffic management systems, reflecting a consistent focus on sustainable, citizen-centric urban development.

It also showcases innovative approaches and success stories in urban governance and community development. "Low Waste Lanes: Jorhat's Community-Led Model for Decentralized Waste Management" highlights citizen-driven sustainable sanitation initiatives, while Prativa Ray's Journey under DAY-NULM demonstrates the impact of livelihood programs for urban youth and women. Articles on Net Zero City, Canal Systems in the Netherlands as Integrated Modern Urban Infrastructure and Rangia MB's integrated urban initiatives provide insights into best practices and global perspectives that can inform Assam's urban development.

I hope this edition of Urban Chronicles encourages policymakers, urban practitioners and citizens alike to explore collaborative, participatory and technology-driven approaches to building the cities of tomorrow.


(NAGEN KALITA)

Nagen Kalita, Chief Engineer

Technical Cell, Department of Housing and Urban Affairs



Initiative of the Month

TECHNICAL CELL, DOHUA: DRIVING INTEGRATED URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS ASSAM

Assam Urban transformation is no longer defined merely by expansion but by the quality, inclusiveness and resilience of public infrastructure. In Assam, a concerted push towards strengthening urban amenities across multiple towns is steadily reshaping the lived experience of citizens. At the heart of this transformation is the Technical Cell under the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of Assam, which is implementing a wide range of infrastructure projects aimed at creating vibrant, functional and future-ready urban spaces.

Through focused investments under the City Infrastructure Development Fund (CIDF) and the Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF), it addresses critical gaps in civic infrastructure, public spaces, mobility management and cultural facilities. Under CIDF, projects worth over ₹412 crore across 59 schemes have been sanctioned with a significant number already completed. Similarly, UIDF has supported 36 schemes with a sanctioned value exceeding ₹298 crore, enabling steady progress across urban centres.

Creating Civic Anchors: Convention Centres and Town Halls



The Technical Cell, DoHUA has developed modern Convention Centres across key urban centres to strengthen institutional capacity, promote cultural and professional exchange and provide high-quality venues for conferences, meetings and public events. These facilities feature 120-seat conference halls, VVIP/Presidential suites, executive lounges, dining and banquet areas, media briefing rooms and centrally air-conditioned halls with integrated audio-visual systems.

Development of Convention Centres has been completed at Tinsukia and North Lakhimpur under UIDF while a Convention Centre at Silchar is currently under construction. Additionally, a Convention Centre has been completed at Tezpur under CIDF.

Under UIDF, Town Hall and Auditorium-cum Multi-Utility Public Complexes are being developed as accessible civic hubs for meetings, exhibitions, official functions, cultural performances and the promotion of local history, art and culture. Current projects include 1,000-seat Town Halls at Tezpur, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Nalbari, and Bongaigaon, and an 800-seat Town Hall at Kokrajhar. A 1,000-seat Town Hall/Auditorium at North Lakhimpur has been completed and inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam on 07/01/2026.



Convention Centres at Tinsukia, North Lakhimpur and Tezpur respectively

Upgrading Public Infrastructure Across Assam

Under CIDF, DoHUA's Technical Cell is implementing key urban development projects across Assam. Initiatives include renovating Nagaon's Indoor Stadium and Swahid Bhawan and in Golaghat reconstructing the District Library auditorium, upgrading internal roads and drains

and rejuvenating the Jamuna drinking water storage pond along with its Water Treatment Plant. These efforts strengthen public infrastructure, enhance urban amenities, and promote sustainable town development.



Indoor Stadium, Nagaon



District Library Auditorium, Golaghat



Rejuvenation of Jamuna Pond
and Upgradation of Water Treatment Plant



Swahid Bhawan, Nagaon

Transforming Urban Parks and Open Spaces

With rapid urbanization, the development and beautification of parks and open spaces have become a key focus across Assam. Under UIDF, projects include the construction and enhancement of Rajmaw Pukhuri and Hatigarh Shiv Doul Pukhuri, Nehru Park and Gandhi Park in Jorhat, Borpukhuri in Tezpur, Khanikar Park and Phoolbagan Park in Dibrugarh, Naharkatia Park, Jyoti Prasad Agarwal Park in Tinsukia, a new Amusement Park in Doomdooma, Rangapara Park in Sonitpur, Barpathar Park in Golaghat, Kharupetia Park, Lakhipur Park in Cachar and Gossaigaon Park in Kokrajhar. Under CIDF, several parks are being upgraded and beautified, including Jyotirmoyee Children Park, Sankardev Udyaan and Dr. Pamudabhiram Park in



Dr. Pamudabhiram Park,
Golaghat



Jyotirmoyee Children Park,
Golaghat

Golaghat and MMC Park in Barpeta, with improvements ranging from boundary walls, entrance gates and play equipment to boating facilities, cycling tracks, statues and fountains.

Smarter Mobility and Safer Streets

Under UIDF, Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS) projects aim to improve traffic management by integrating CCTV surveillance systems, enabling towns to effectively handle the rising influx of vehicles. Ongoing projects include the implementation of ITMS in Dibrugarh and Silchar. Additionally, an Automatic Traffic Controlling System has been developed in Tinsukia under CIDF, further strengthening traffic monitoring and control in the town.

Looking Ahead

Through a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach, the Technical Cell of DoHUA is transforming Assam's urban landscape by upgrading public infrastructure, enhancing civic spaces and improving mobility and safety. These initiatives not only modernize towns but also create inclusive, sustainable and vibrant urban environments, ensuring that residents enjoy improved quality of life today and into the future.

Buzz from the ULBs

LOW WASTE LANES

Jorhat's Community-Led Model for Decentralized Waste Management

Jorhat Municipal Board (JMB), in collaboration with Saahas NGO, has taken a significant step towards sustainable urban sanitation through the creation of “Low Waste Lanes”—a decentralized, community-driven waste management model rooted in circular economy principles.

Jorhat generates over 50 tonnes of waste daily, much of which historically reached the Garmur dumpsite in mixed form, causing environmental and public health concerns. To address this, JMB piloted lane-level composting in select wards, focusing on source segregation, community participation and local processing of wet waste.

The initiative began with intensive door-to-door awareness campaigns, community meetings and IEC activities to promote segregation of wet, dry and domestic hazardous waste. Self-Help Groups (SHGs), engaged in door-to-door collection, were trained in segregated collection, monitoring practices and basic composting techniques, ensuring alignment between citizens and waste collectors.

Subsequently, Lane composters were installed in suitable residential lanes with active community support. In Ward 5, nearly 94 out of 111 households now regularly segregate waste, diverting about 2,000 kg of wet waste per month for composting. Ward 11 processes around 2,250 kg per month, while Ward 10 has recently begun diverting approximately 2,430 kg monthly. The compost produced is used locally for gardening, visibly closing the resource loop.

Encouraged by these outcomes, JMB plans to scale up the model by developing at least one Low Waste Lane in every ward. With 12 lanes already identified, Jorhat is emerging as a replicable example of how municipal leadership, SHGs and citizens together can transform waste into a valuable resource and reduce landfill dependency.



Segregation of waste bins into wet, dry and domestic hazardous waste



Lane composters



Staff of Jorhat MB and Saahas NGO

Stories from the First Mile

FROM VULNERABILITY TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PRATIVA RAY'S JOURNEY UNDER DAY-NULM

Prativa Ray of Bongaigaon is a compelling example of resilience and empowerment through ASULMS (DAY-NULM). Widowed at a young age, she was left to support her two school-going children without a stable income or business experience. Initially, she began selling fruits and vegetables as a street vendor to survive.

Her life changed when Community Resource Persons mobilized her into the Sonali Rong Self Help Group. Through regular SHG meetings, capacity-building training, financial literacy and access to institutional credit under ASULMS, Prativa gained confidence and entrepreneurial skills.

With support from the Bongaigaon Municipal Board, she established a Food Court under the City Livelihoods Centre component on 15 May 2023 with a total investment of ₹1.37 lakh. Financial support included ₹1.20 lakh through PMSVANidhi and PMFME, with the balance from the SHG corpus. The enterprise offers breakfast, lunch, snacks, tea and ethnic Assamese and Bengali dishes.



Prativa Ray in her Stall

Today, the food court generates an annual turnover of ₹9.00 lakh with a profit of ₹4.50 lakh and provides employment to four women SHG members. Prativa is now a confident entrepreneur, earning social recognition and inspiring other women—reflecting the true spirit of DAY-NULM in creating sustainable urban livelihoods.

Urban Lexicon

NET ZERO CITY

Net Zero Cities are cities that aim to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as close to zero as possible, and offset or remove the remaining unavoidable emissions, so that the net impact on the climate is zero. "Net zero" does not imply that a city produces no emissions at all. Instead, it means that **total emissions produced are equal to emissions removed or offset**, resulting in a net balance of zero.

In India, Net Zero Cities align with national priorities such as the Net Zero by 2070 commitment, Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT and climate-resilient urban development. Cities are encouraged to integrating net zero targets into their City Development Plans, strengthening ULBs with digital and financial tools, leveraging renewable energy potential, adopt compact urban forms and promote citizen participation and local innovation. Several pilot projects under these programs are already demonstrating energy-efficient infrastructure, renewable energy integration, and climate-adaptive urban planning.

Assam's cities face climate challenges like floods, erosion, and pollution. Adopting net-zero principles through renewable energy, efficient buildings, clean transport, waste management, green spaces and digital monitoring can enhance resilience, sustainability, and quality of life while contributing to India's net-zero goals.



Key pillar of a net zero city

Envisioning Urban

CANAL SYSTEMS IN THE NETHERLANDS: INTEGRATED MODERN URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE



The Netherlands is globally renowned for transforming water from a threat into a strategic urban asset. With nearly one-third of the country below sea level, water management forms the foundation of Dutch urban planning. Canal systems demonstrate how historic infrastructure has evolved into a multifunctional urban network supporting resilience, mobility, ecology and livability.

Originally built for drainage, flood protection and trade, canals became the structural backbone of cities such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam. Instead of being replaced, they were progressively upgraded and integrated into modern urban systems, reflecting a long-term, adaptive planning approach that aligns heritage with contemporary needs.

Canals play a critical role in flood resilience and climate adaptation. As part of interconnected networks of rivers, dikes, pumping stations and retention basins, they regulate water levels, store excess rainfall and reduce flood risks during extreme weather. Smart weirs, automated sluices, and real-time monitoring enable precise water control at the city and regional scale.

Digitally enabled through sensors, GIS and data analytics, Dutch canals are fully integrated into smart-city governance. Predictive flood management and coordinated planning across sectors demonstrate how water infrastructure can guide sustainable urban development.

Ecologically, canals enhance urban biodiversity through aquatic vegetation, fish passages and naturalized embankments. They support water purification and function as blue-green corridors linking parks and open spaces within dense urban areas. Socially, canals shape high-

quality public realms—waterfront promenades, cycling routes, cultural spaces and housing—strengthening urban identity. Many canal belts, such as those in Amsterdam, are protected as UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Overall, the Dutch canal system offers a replicable model of water-sensitive, future-ready urban design—proving that resilient cities can be built by harmonizing engineering, ecology, and everyday urban life.

For India, especially flood-prone Assam, the Dutch canal model highlights the need to treat water as core urban infrastructure rather than a hidden utility. Reviving and integrating canals with rivers, wetlands, and drainage networks can improve flood management, climate resilience, water quality, and urban livability. In Assam, canal-based blue-green networks can complement the Brahmaputra system, manage monsoon flows, and create public spaces. Adapted—not replicated—Dutch practices, supported by GIS and smart monitoring, can help Indian cities move toward resilient, sustainable, and water-sensitive urban development.



RANGIA TOWN'S INTEGRATED URBAN INITIATIVES Enhancing Public Amenities, Sustainability and Quality of Life

Revolving Editor's Desk

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About the Author

Sameeron Borah is an Executive Officer in the Assam Urban Administrative Service, currently serving as the Executive Officer of the Rangia Municipal Board in Kamrup District, Assam. An alumnus of NIT Agartala with a background in Bioengineering, he combines technical understanding with administrative insight to address complex urban governance challenges. With a strong commitment to sustainable urban development and efficient, citizen-centric public service delivery, he brings an analytical, adaptive and solution-oriented approach to municipal administration.

Rangia Municipal Board (RMB), established on 1st January 1956 is a key urban local body in Kamrup District of Assam with administrative control over more than 6,200 households. Enriched by its strategic location and strong transport connectivity, Rangia has emerged as an important centre of administration, trade and urban growth. The Board is undertaking people-centric urban initiatives to enhance public amenities, environmental sustainability and quality of life.

Access to Safe Drinking Water through Public Water Canopies

Rangia MB has enhanced public convenience by installing new public water canopies across the town. Ten canopies have already been set up at strategic locations, ensuring easy access to safe drinking water for residents, commuters, vendors and visitors. Construction of another ten canopies is underway in high-footfall areas to expand coverage. This initiative addresses the need for accessible drinking water, especially during summer, promotes public health, and reflects Rangia's commitment to sustainable, citizen-centric urban infrastructure and improved quality of life.



Water Canopy by Rangia MB

Strengthening Solid Waste Management through Enhanced MRF and Composting Operations

Parallel to improvements in public amenities, Rangia MB has made notable progress in strengthening its **solid waste management system**. The Mini Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Waste-to-Compost Plant are currently operating at enhanced capacity to process the town's entire daily fresh waste. By engaging additional manpower and running operations in two shifts—nearly **16 hours a day**—the facility has successfully managed the complete volume of waste generated on a daily basis.



Mini Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Waste-to-Compost Plant

Waste collected from across the town undergoes systematic segregation and processing. Recyclable materials such as plastic bottles, cartons, plastic gunny bags are baled and sold, generating additional revenue for the MB. Operating for nearly four months, it has created local jobs and raised public awareness on waste segregation. The system will continue until the new MRF and Waste-to-Compost facility

becomes operational, which will further enhance the town's solid waste management capacity.

Further strengthening the solid waste management framework, plans for an additional MRF facility have been initiated. Rangia MB has already completed the identification of suitable land for the proposed facility.

Creating Vibrant and Sustainable Public Spaces in Rangia

Alongside infrastructure-led development, Rangia Town has prioritised the creation of vibrant public spaces to enhance urban livability and social well-being. Several leisure and recreational parks—such as Shantiram Lahkar Park, Padum Pukhuri Park, and other public parks—now offer accessible open spaces for relaxation, social interaction, and informal recreation. Shantiram Lahkar Park, a landmark project inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, features an iconic clock tower that has become a symbol of the town's visual identity and civic pride.

Complementing these conventional parks, Rangia has also developed an innovative Waste-to-Wonder Park, where recycled and repurposed waste materials have been transformed into artistic and functional installations. This unique initiative seamlessly blends recreation with environmental education, promoting awareness on recycling, solid waste management, and sustainable consumption while demonstrating how sustainability can be creatively integrated into urban design.



Padum Pukhuri Park



Shantiram Lahkar Park



Waste to Wonder Park

Towards a Citizen-Centric and Sustainable Urban Future

Together, these initiatives illustrate Rangia MB's holistic approach to urban development—one that balances essential services, environmental responsibility and quality public spaces. By prioritizing citizen-centric infrastructure, sustainable practices and inclusive urban planning, Rangia MB is setting a positive example of how small towns can achieve meaningful and lasting urban transformation.



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