

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,
PMAY- HFA (Urban)*



It gives me immense pleasure to present the October edition of Urban Chronicles, showcasing stories that reflect the vision of inclusive, sustainable and resilient urban communities. As we celebrate the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in this month, his principles continue to guide us on our journey towards a “New India,” inspiring us to build cleaner, healthier and more participatory cities.

In line with this vision, from the core agenda of “Housing for All,” we highlight PMAY-U in Assam, which has successfully translated policy into practice by delivering affordable, quality housing to economically weaker sections and low-income groups. Building on the theme of community-led transformation, Palashbari’s achievement as a Zero Landfill Town demonstrates how strong leadership and active citizen participation can drive sustainable urban solutions. Similarly, Swachh Gali, Swachh Nagaon – A Lane-by-Lane Transformation showcases how focused, inclusive, and sustained efforts can revitalize neglected spaces and inspire behavioral change among citizens. The “I Got Garbage” initiative illustrates how technology can bring dignity and efficiency to waste management, while Urban Living Labs showcase innovative ways to test and scale solutions. At the local governance level, the Chapar Municipal Board exemplifies how Small Moves can make a Big Difference in urban living.

Together, these stories underscore the collaborative spirit of our vision—uniting government, communities and technology toward sustainable urban development. I hope this edition informs and inspires readers to contribute to the transformation of our towns and cities.

Richard Ahmed, ACS

State Mission Director, PMAY- HFA (Urban)

Initiative of the Month

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Housing for All (Urban), Assam

Housing is not just shelter but a foundation of dignity and security. To ensure this, the Government of India launched the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Housing for All (Urban)** or **PMAY(U)**, a flagship initiative aimed to provide pucca houses for all eligible urban families. In Assam, the scheme has transformed lives by bringing stability and empowerment.

Under PMAY(U), each house includes toilets, kitchens, electricity and water supply ensuring dignity. Ownership is given to women solely or jointly promoting social and economic empowerment.

Under the **Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC)** component in Assam, 1,65,542 houses have been sanctioned with 1,31,378 houses already completed. Funds are disbursed via **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system** in three installments, ensuring transparency and efficiency.

The **In-Situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR)** initiative offers new hope to families in informal settlements. In Lakhimpur, 64 units and in Fatasil Ambari 40 units are under construction for slum dwellers and Safai Karmacharis under **Demonstration Housing Project (DHP)**, showcasing Assam's commitment to inclusive housing.

Assam goes beyond housing by fostering awareness and inclusion through ULB campaigns under PMAY(U). Ceremonies like Griha Adharxila (foundation laying) and Griha Pravesh (house warming) involve dignitaries and celebrate beneficiaries' journey to permanent homes. In a unique gesture, the Hon'ble Chief Minister wrote appreciation letters to 1,57,420 beneficiaries. To speed up execution, "100 Days" and "50 Days Award Challenges" are held supported by field visits and Ward Sabhas for transparency.



Griha Pravesh of a newly constructed PMAY(U) house

PMAY(U) has transformed lives like Bijulee Konwar's from Morigaon, who replaced her leaky kutcha shelter with a safe, comfortable pucca house for her family. Another

achievement was by Junti Kalita from Guwahati, who completed her dream house with all three PMAY(U) installments and was honored at the President's "At Home" Reception on India's 78th Independence Day in 2024.



PMAY-U Beneficiary Bijulee Konwar, Morigaon



At Home Reception hosted by the President of India

In 2021, Assam was recognized as the "Most Improved State" under PMAY(U) and Bilasipara MB was named 2nd Best Performing ULB among the North-Eastern and Hilly States, highlighting the state's commitment to transparent, efficient and inclusive urban housing.



Assam being recognized as the Most Improved State under PMAY(U) among the North-Eastern and Hilly States

PMAY-U 2.0: Expanding Housing Opportunities for All

"A home brings dignity and an enhanced ability to fulfil one's dreams. With a record investment of ₹10 lakh crore, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban2.0 scheme will benefit countless people and contribute to better cities."

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister, India

Building on its success, the Government of India launched PMAY-U 2.0 on 17 September 2024 to support one crore urban poor and middle-class families across EWS, LIG, and MIG categories in constructing, purchasing, or renting affordable homes. In Assam, 15,365 houses were approved under the BLC component in June 2025,

boosting the State's progress.



Launch of PMAY-U 2.0



Apply online today and take the first step toward your dream of a pucca house. Assam's ULBs are raising the bar in implementing PMAY-U by fast-tracking beneficiary verification, monitoring construction and ensuring timely fund disbursement—building not just houses but also hope, security and a future as the dream of 'Housing for All' becomes a reality across the State.

Angikaar 2025 Campaign

The launch of PMAY-U 2.0 has created a significant need for public awareness and beneficiary participation.

To address this, MoHUA launched “Angikaar 2025,” a last-mile outreach campaign running in Assam from 5 September to 31 October 2025 under the guidance of the State Mission Director, PMAY-HFA(Urban).



“Angikaar 2025” drives PMAY-U 2.0 implementation by raising awareness, fast-tracking application verification and expediting completion of sanctioned houses. It promotes last-mile delivery through community mobilisation, scheme convergence, and ensures beneficiaries also access PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana. Special focus is given to groups like street vendors, safai karmis, anganwadi workers, artisans under PM Viswakarma and construction workers with ULBs conducting door-to-door campaigns, meetings and awareness drives.

The campaign will run across all ULBs through IEC activities, monitored by Project Directors, Executive Officers and City Project Managers under PMAY-U.



Door to door visit at Kamrup Municipal Board



Awareness Meeting at Guwahati Municipal Corporation



Flagging off PMAY-U 2.0 Tableau at Sribhumi Development Authority

Buzz from the ULBs

The Journey to a Zero Landfill Town: Palashbari's Waste Management Journey

Palashbari MB, established in 1954 on the south bank of the Brahmaputra is one of Assam's oldest municipal boards. Rapid population and commercial growth strained its waste management—marked by irregular collection, lack of segregation, mixed waste including hazardous and sanitary was dumped along the Garbhanga riverbank, creating over 35 garbage-vulnerable points, littered streets and frequent plastic burning.

Under the leadership of Chairperson Rina Das Kalita and the Executive Officer, the Board undertook a strategic mission to make the town cleaner and more sustainable. In 2022, Palashbari MB partnered with Feedback Foundation to reform solid waste management.

Palashbari's Collection and Segregation Model
To ensure systematic collection and effective segregation,

Palashbari MB and Feedback Foundation introduced practical measures:



Cleanliness drive by Palashbari MB

- **Capacity Building:** Ward commissioners, officials, teachers, and local influencers were trained on collection methods, segregation, and best practices, with commissioners given defined roles to strengthen community participation.
- **Planned Operations:** Developed detailed route maps for timely and systematic waste collection.
- **Ward Pilots:** Door-to-door collection started in Ward No. 9 and was later scaled to the remaining nine wards.
- **Community Engagement:** Intensive IEC campaigns led by local leadership.
- **Bulk Waste Management:** 11 BWGs have been identified and deployed dedicated vehicles to collect their waste and revised their user fees.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Launched Helpline Number to address all SWM related issues.
- **Retrofitted Vehicles:** With additional bins for sanitary and hazardous waste and covering for the rainy season to ensure segregated & efficient waste collection.
- **Segregation Support:** Households encouraged to use dedicated bins for dry & wet waste or provide waste in untied bags for quicker sorting.
- **Worker Safety:** Provided masks, gloves and safety gear for health and dignity.

Where Palashbari MB Stand Today:

- 100% door-to-door collection across all 10 wards through route mapping
- 98% segregation achieved – Dry, Wet, Sanitary & domestic hazardous waste
- Waste handed over without knots for quicker collection & better sorting

- Sanitation workers equipped with PPE kits, ensuring safety & dignity
- Achieved zero-bin, zero-landfill town

Mini Sanitation Park: Turning Waste into Wealth

On 7th November 2022, Palashbari MB launched a 5,940 sq ft mini sanitation park (₹36 lakh CSR investment) to manage 3 TPD of waste. Wet waste is composted and sold, recyclables sorted and sold to aggregators, non-recyclables converted to RDF for cement factories, and sanitary waste safely incinerated.

Material Recovery Facility (1.5 TPD): At the MRF, segregated dry waste is sorted into 15 categories by four workers. Rates for recyclables are set by the municipality based on the local market demand & RDF is sold to the cement factories.



Segregation of Waste at MRF

Impact so far:

- 348 MT of dry waste processed
- ₹8.13 lakh revenue generated (avg. ₹24,000/month)
- Strong linkages built with aggregators to sell recyclable materials

Waste to Compost plant (1.5 TPD) : Waste-to-Compost plant consisting of 13 beds (1-ton capacity each). Wet waste is chopped, processed, and converted into organic manure over 45 days, with leachate reused as inoculum to aid decomposition.



Compost plant

Impact so far:

- 1,256 MT of wet waste processed

- 10.74 tons of organic manure produced
- ₹1.07 lakh revenue generated (avg. ₹4,000/month)



Landfill site before and after reclamation

After effective processing of dry and wet waste, **zero waste is dumped in the landfill**. The old landfill site has been reclaimed and transformed into a badminton court, converting an environmental hazard area into a valuable community asset.

Palashbari generates nearly ₹1.2 lakh/month from waste management: ₹24,000 from dry waste, ₹4,000 from compost and ₹92,000 from SWM user fees mainly from commercial establishments and nearby industries.

Monthly expenses total around ₹2 lakhs for door-to-door collection, fuel, processing of waste and staff remuneration of 12 sanitation workers.

Current, revenues cover 60% of the costs, leaving a manageable gap of ₹80,000. With greater support from industries, bulk waste generators, and the introduction of nominal household fees, the system has strong potential to become self-sustaining—effectively turning waste into wealth. To strengthen revenue streams, the Municipal Board has begun signing MoUs with nearby industries. A recent agreement with Patanjali has already been finalized and more industries are being actively approached.

Additionally, a Biochar Production Unit is being set up in Palashbari MB in collaboration with IIT-Guwahati. This unit will convert biodegradable municipal solid waste into biochar, promoting the “waste to wealth” and circular economy concept for use by nearby farmers. The unit is targeted to be operational 15th November.



Households Handing over segregated waste to waste pickers

Palashbari highlights the critical role of strong local leadership, where the involvement of the Chairperson and Ward Commissioners ensured effective implementation at the grassroots level by engaging residents, sanitation workers and community groups, making it a replicable model for sustainable urban waste management.

Stories from the First Mile

Swachh Gali, Swachh Nagaon – A Lane-by-Lane Transformation

Nagaon Municipal Board (NMB) is on a mission to make the city cleaner, healthier and more beautiful - starting with people and their bond with the gali, the lanes of daily life and memories. Recognizing this, NMB launched the Swachh Gali Initiative in August 2025, instead of targeting the city as a whole, the campaign focused gali by gali — turning each lane into a model of cleanliness and restoring pride in every neighborhood.

To make the vision real, the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and the Executive Officer with the support of the Shristi team mapped out priority lanes where public participation and youth involvement were already strong.

But one of the most challenging transformations was Tilok Bora Path in Ward 18 — a gali long neglected with

irregular waste collection, zero segregation, multiple garbage-vulnerable points and plastic burning.

To address this, NMB led by the Ward Commissioner formed **Team 18** — a task force of SHGs, youth groups, sanitation workers and volunteers. They created micro-level action plans, mapped routes, improved door-to-door collection and mobilized residents through awareness drives. Every morning, the Ward Commissioner conducted inspections, engaging residents on waste segregation, while SHGs spread the message gali to gali, leaving no household behind.

The results were transformational. 100% regular door-to-door waste collection was achieved while most households adopted source segregation, Garbage-



Team-18

vulnerable points were eliminated, plastic burning

stopped completely and community ownership strengthened with SHGs and youth groups now actively monitoring cleanliness.

As part of *Swachhata Hi Seva 2025*, Tilok Bora Path was officially declared a Swachh Gali by NMB. Today, it stands as a symbol of how community participation and municipal leadership can together drive transformation — inspiring other wards and proving that a gali-by-gali approach can create a citywide movement for Swachhata.

Envisioning Urban

I Got Garbage (IGG) – A Technology-Driven Solution for Waste Management

IGG is a cloud-based platform that streamlines urban waste management by connecting residents, contractors, rag-pickers and suppliers, improving efficiency, transparency and supporting waste pickers' livelihoods.

IGG formalizes rag-pickers into trained workforce with identity tags, improving their working conditions and dignity. The platform manages collection, payments, invoicing, vehicle tracking and workforce management, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and traceability. It also collaborates with local bodies, NGOs, traders and

citizens to promote inclusive, zero-waste cities, establish recycling marketplaces and support Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) initiatives.

By equipping waste pickers with mobile technology, IGG enables them to access structured marketplaces, improve earnings and participate in community initiatives like school engagement and composting projects.

Currently active in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, Hazaribagh, Bhubaneswar, IGG has facilitated the recycling and composting of over **10 million Kg of waste**. The platform demonstrates how IT solutions can transform solid waste management, strengthen livelihoods in the informal sector, and provide replicable, sustainable models for urban centers across India.

The use of IT in waste management can similarly help Assam's cities manage waste efficiently, enhance recycling, and provide dignified livelihoods for waste pickers, paving the way for cleaner, more sustainable urban centers.



Integrating informal rag pickers into a centralized waste collection system

Urban Lexicon

Urban Living Lab

An **Urban Living Lab** is a real-life, collaborative environment where citizens, researchers, businesses and public authorities co-create, test and implement innovative urban solutions through experimentation, stakeholder feedback and continuous learning.

Urban Living Labs address issues such as waste management, air pollution, flooding and heat stress by engaging diverse stakeholders in joint exploration, prototyping and evaluation. By developing solutions at a small scale, they demonstrate potential for wider impact and large-scale implementation, fostering active stakeholder involvement and guiding cities toward a **sustainable and resilient future**.

In Pune, the Mobility and Air Quality Lab brought together citizens, researchers and municipal authorities to tackle

traffic congestion and air pollution using real-time data to design smart traffic signals and cycling lanes, which were tested, refined and scaled. Similarly, Bengaluru's Smart Waste Management Lab engaged communities, start-ups and municipal agencies to optimize waste collection through sensor-enabled bins and route optimization apps, improving efficiency and boosting citizen participation in segregation.

Urban Living Labs offer a practical framework for Assam's cities to address complex urban challenges such as urban flooding, traffic congestion and waste management. By engaging citizens, local authorities, academia and businesses in co-creation, Assam can develop context-specific, scalable solutions that enhance sustainability, resilience and the overall quality of urban life.

Revolving EDITOR'S DESK Feature of the Month



Ratul Ray Chaudhury, AUAS
Executive Officer, Chapar Municipal Board

Small Moves, Big Difference: Chapar's initiatives for Urban Progress

About Author

Ratul Ray Chaudhury, AUAS serves as the **Executive Officer of Chapar Municipal Board, Dhubri, Assam** with an MBA in Human Resources, he brings managerial and administrative expertise to urban governance. Previously, he served five years in the Health Department of Assam, gaining deep insights into public health and community well-being. A strong advocate of teamwork, innovation and inter-departmental coordination, he promotes community participation and implements initiatives for cleanliness, beautification, sustainable urban solutions and citizens' well-being aiming to make Chapar cleaner, healthier and more livable.

Chapar is a small yet significant town located in the Dhubri district of Assam with its strategic location, connecting nearby rural and urban areas. Its cultural diversity mirrors the traditions of Assam, while its growing role in trade, education and commerce marks it as an emerging centre of regional development.

Chapar's Clean Water Success: Reviving Nagpatty Pond

The Chapar Municipal Board (CMB) undertook the cleaning and restoring of Nagpatty Pond, a water body that had remained neglected for nearly 15 years. This initiative highlights how effective local governance can contribute to environmental improvement and community well-being, even within limited financial means.

Efficient Use of Resources

The project was carried out with a budget of ₹98,000 under the 15th Finance Commission Tied Grant. A workforce of 80 laborers, supported by an excavator and two tippers, successfully removed around 20 MT of waste. The initiative was recognized for its efficient planning and was later featured in *Swachh Vaarta*, a newsletter of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2024.

Eco-Friendly Approach

To clean the pond, CMB adopted a traditional banana tree



Use of banana tree raft to clean the pond

raft instead of mechanical equipment. This simple, eco-friendly technique reduced the environmental impact of the operation while proving that indigenous practices can be both practical and effective in modern urban projects.

Holistic Impact on the Community

Beyond its visual transformation, the Nagpatty pond now contributes to better sanitation and lowers the risk of waterborne diseases. To safeguard the site, boundary fencing has been installed along with cleanliness awareness messages, encouraging residents to take part in its long-term upkeep.



Before



After

Chapar's Commitment to Cleanliness: A Tale of Two Swachhata Melas

The CMB has placed environmental health and community participation at the forefront by organizing two Swachhata Melas — on Independence Day 2024 and Republic Day 2025. Both events promoted sustainability and encouraged citizens to actively contribute to a cleaner town.

August 15, 2024 – Community Empowerment

The first mela focused on grassroots action. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) showcased local products, boosting both income and confidence. Activities such as a waste segregation game, pit composting training and demonstrations of eco-friendly alternatives like banana leaf plates spread

awareness on sustainable living. The event also featured stalls, exhibitions, and cultural programs that reinforced the message of cleanliness.



Waste Segregation game



SHG Women Promoted Banana Leaves Instead of Plastic plate

January 26, 2025 – Wider Participation, Visible Impact

The second mela attracted nearly 1,000 participants and saw expanded SHG involvement, with 12 groups selling their products and promoting composting. Adopting a strict plastic-free approach, the event featured a tree plantation drive, street plays and cultural performances by Indian Idol contestant Harshita Medhi and local singer Chiranjit Boruah, who performed patriotic and swachhata-themed songs, further amplifying the campaign's impact. Significantly, 21 kg of waste was collected during the mela, demonstrating tangible results.



Swachhata Mela organized by CMB

A Shield Against Disease: Chapar Municipal Board's Proactive Health Drive

To safeguard public health during the flood season, the Chapar Municipal Board has launched an intensive fogging campaign across all 10 wards. The operation, conducted daily from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, aims to curb the spread of vector-borne diseases such as Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE). Safety measures are strictly followed, with operators equipped with protective

gear and activities supervised each evening by ward commissioners and supervisors to ensure transparency and effectiveness.

Community Engagement for Public Health

The Board has also partnered with Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to strengthen disease prevention efforts. SHGs are identifying households involved in pig rearing — a key factor in the spread of certain diseases — and facilitating joint inspections with the Veterinary Department. This collaboration not only reduces health risks but also builds community confidence during a vulnerable period.

Financial Excellence and Public Service: Chapar Municipal Board Sets a Benchmark

The Chapar Municipal Board has demonstrated how strong financial management can directly enhance community services. In the financial year 2024–25, against a target of ₹25.38 lakh, the board collected ₹45.58 lakh in property tax — achieving 179.54% of its target. This milestone highlights not just fiscal discipline but also effective governance.

A Two-Pronged Strategy for Success

- Linking Services with Tax Compliance**
Property tax clearance was made mandatory for accessing key services like building permissions, land sale approvals, and residential certificates. This step encouraged civic responsibility and improved compliance.
- Proactive Collection Drive**

Dedicated tax collectors conducted regular visits to households, making the process convenient and ensuring steady revenue flow.

Excellence in Service Delivery

The increased revenue has been channeled into improving essential services for residents:

- **Improved Street Lighting** across all 10 wards, enhancing safety.
- **Regular Door-to-Door Waste Collection**, ensuring cleaner neighborhoods.
- **Beautification of Garbage Vulnerable Points (GVPs)** under the *Safai Apnao, Bimaari Bhagao (SABB)* initiative.
- **Support for Public Events** through garbage collection vehicles for marriage halls and large gatherings.
- **Mobile Bio-Toilets** adding sanitation facilities at public programs.



Waste collection and GVP elimination drive

By exceeding its revenue target and visibly improving services, the Chapar Municipal Board has set a strong example of how financial prudence and public service can go hand-in-hand. Its achievement stands as a model for other municipalities aiming for both fiscal stability and community well-being.

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

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