



**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 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

## NREGS works in 13,326 villages in A.P. to begin on October 14

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 29th, 2024)**  
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/nregs-works-in-13326-villages-in-ap-to-begin-on-october-14/article68697364.ece>

# ARUNACHAL PRADESH

## Ex-Warden of Arunachal school gets death for sex assault for 21 kids for 4 years



Yumken Bagra, a former hostel warden of Karo Govt Residential School at Monigong in Shi-Yomi district, accused of sexually assaulting eight boys and thirteen girls from 2019-2022 was sentenced to death by a special POCSO hearing on Thursday. As per proceedings, the victims were between the ages of 6-16 years. Four out of these victims also tried to commit suicide.

Bagra's partner convicts in the case, Hindi teacher Marbom Ngomdir Tapir and former headmaster Singtung Yorpen, were each given 20 years in prison. Six incidences of rape, nine instances of molestation, and six more cases of sexual harassment were discovered during the inquiry. This is one of the rare few cases where the death penalty has been given under the POSCO act, in a case such as this where no life has been lost.

**Link to the article: (September 27th, 2024)**  
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/ex-warden-of-arunachal-school-gets-death-for-sex-assault-on-21-kids-for-4-yrs/articleshow/113718465.cms>

# ASSAM

## Assam Police Foil 2 infiltration Bids in Two Days, Push Back 7 Bangladesh Nationals

In two occurrences the Assam Police have driven out seven foreign nationals as part of a stepped-up campaign against illegal infiltration from Bangladesh. The names of the unlawful infiltrators are Babil Shaikh, Nashrin Sheikh, and Anowar Hussain.

With this most recent occurrence, 72 Bangladeshi nationals have been detained while trying to enter Assam since the country's political unrest began, the majority of which were found in Karimganj district, followed by Bongaigaon, Dhubri, and Haflong GRP. The state administration has instructed the police to gather documents including Aadhaar, PAN cards, voter IDs, and passports of suspected foreign nationals in Assam due to growing reports of such individuals.



**Link to the article: (September 24th, 2024)**

[https://assamtribune.com/assam/assam-police-foil-2-infiltration-bids-in-two-days-pushes-back-7-bangladesh-nationals-1552453?utm\\_source=internal-artice&utm\\_medium=also-read](https://assamtribune.com/assam/assam-police-foil-2-infiltration-bids-in-two-days-pushes-back-7-bangladesh-nationals-1552453?utm_source=internal-artice&utm_medium=also-read)

# BIHAR

## Devastating Floods Turn Villages into Islands in North Bihar



Widespread flooding caused by excessive rainfall in Nepal's catchment areas has submerged multiple villages in North Bihar, particularly in West Champaran district. Villages like Madhopur and Guanaha are now isolated, leaving residents without access to food or transportation. With embankments breaching in several districts, farmers have lost their crops, and the need for government aid, including food and boats, is growing urgent. The devastation has left communities in dire straits, and urgent action is needed to restore normalcy.

**Link to the article: (September 30th, 2024)**

<https://bilkulonline.com/2024/09/30/devastating-floods-turn-villages-into-islands-in-north-bihar/>

# GUJARAT

## Why residents of Chandanki village in Gujarat don't cook at home: The unique tradition explained

Chandanki village in Gujarat has embraced a unique community dining tradition to support its aging population. Poonambhai Patel, the village sarpanch, introduced the initiative after noticing that elderly residents struggled with daily tasks due to the migration of younger generations. Each villager contributes ₹2,000 monthly, covering two nutritious meals prepared by professional cooks and enjoyed together in the solar-powered community hall. The hall also hosts social gatherings and festivals, strengthening the village's communal bonds. Chandanki's approach has inspired other villages to preserve their traditions, demonstrating the resilience of community life amidst societal changes.



**Link to the article: (September 24th, 2024)**

<https://www.cnbctv18.com/travel/food-and-drinks/why-residents-of-chandanki-village-in-gujarat-dont-cook-at-home-the-unique-tradition-explained-19481382.html>

# HIMACHAL PRADESH

## Water Meter Himachal: Water meters will also be installed in private institutions in rural areas of the state, know the rates



**Link to the article: (September 28th, 2024)**

<https://www.amarujala.com/himachal-pradesh/water-meters-will-also-be-installed-in-private-institutions-in-rural-areas-of-himachal-2024-09-27>

The Himachal Pradesh government has now stopped the free water scheme for the rural areas in the state. The more water the institution uses, the higher the bill will be. For this, the department will start the process of installing meters in government and private institutions established in rural areas. In this free water scheme that the previous government provided, institutions were using this water as per their wish without conserving it. Now the installation of meters for recording water consumption will directly charge institutions based on the water usage and this money will be deposited in the government treasury.

# JAMMU & KASHMIR

## Pencak Silat Fuels Confidence and Discipline Among Rural J&K Girls

Pencak Silat, a traditional Indonesian martial art, is gaining popularity in rural Jammu & Kashmir, particularly among girls. This sport is empowering young women, offering them confidence, self-defense skills, and improved physical and mental well-being. In regions where girls' participation in physical activities has been limited due to social and economic challenges, Pencak Silat is breaking barriers. With support from Khelo India centers, the Pencak Silat Sports Association, and the J&K Sports Council, rural girls are excelling in national and international tournaments, inspiring others and promoting gender equality in sports across the region



**Link to the article: (September 23rd, 2024)**  
<https://risingkashmir.com/pencak-silat-fuels-confidence-and-discipline-among-rural-jk-girls/#:~:text=For%20rural%20children%2C%20especially%20girls,physical%20and%20mental%20well%2Dbeing.>

# JHARKHAND

## Jharkhand Approves Free Housing Scheme for 800k Rural Poor Families

The Jharkhand government has approved a new housing scheme aimed at providing free homes to over 800,000 poor families across rural areas. The scheme is part of a broader effort to address housing shortages and improve living conditions in the state's underserved regions. It will primarily benefit those in rural areas who lack proper housing, supporting the state's commitment to social welfare and infrastructure development.



**Link to the article: (September 27th, 2024)**  
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/ranchi-news/jharkhand-cabinet-approves-free-housing-scheme-for-800k-poor-families-101697646010023.html>

## KERALA

### Renovation of rural roads a priority: DDC



**Link to the article: (September 29th, 2024)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/renovation-of-rural-roads-a-priority-ddc/article68698036.ece/amp/>

The District Development Committee (DDC) has decided to make the renovation of rural roads that have been battered by recent rains a priority. The decision was taken at the DDC meeting chaired by the District Collector on Saturday. The works of various roads coming under district panchayat and grama panchayats will start shortly. The committee assessed that progress has been made in completing the necessary measures to make the offices, educational institutions, and water sources in the district garbage free. District panchayat president P.K. Gopan, Subcollector Nishant Sihara, ADM G. Nirmal Kumar, Punalur RDO G. Sureshbabu, district level officials, and others attended the meeting.

## MAHARASHTRA

### IFAD and Govt. of Maharashtra join hands to empower 1 million rural women

The UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Maharashtra in India launched the Nav Tejaswini programme this week. The project, which aims to socially and economically empower women in 1 million households across the state, will support rural women across Maharashtra's 34 rural districts to improve their livelihoods by helping them start and expand competitive businesses. The project will also address micronutrient deficiencies among rural people in Maharashtra, particularly women and girls, by promoting crops and products with high nutritional value. The launch was attended by Maharashtra's Minister of Women and Child Development, Yashomati Thakur.



**Link to the article: (September 29th, 2024)**

<https://www.ifad.org/en/w/news/ifad-and-govt.-of-maharashtra-join-hands-to-empower-1-million-rural-women>

# MANIPUR

## Lamlai villagers unshaken by Kuki militant threat



**Link to the article: (September 26th, 2024)**  
<https://www.ifp.co.in/manipur/manipur-lamlai-villagers-unshaken-by-kuki-militant-threat>

Amid reports of 900 militants infiltrating from Burma, villagers of Lamlai AC in Imphal East, Manipur, remain resolute in defending their communities, accusing the government of failing to protect them. Political activist Sapamcha Kangleipal visited the villages of Sanasabi, Thamnapokpi, and Yaingangpokpi, where locals have been defending their land for over a year against Kuki militants. Despite the looming threat, including a rumored attack on September 26 or 28, the villagers expressed no fear. Kangleipal praised their unwavering courage, stating, "If we are Indian, India should protect us, but they failed."

# ODISHA

## FRA implementation: Mankidia community becomes 6th PVTG to get habitat rights over forests in Odisha

The Mankidia community in Odisha has officially received habitat rights over local forests, becoming the sixth Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) to do so under the Forest Rights Act of 2006. This recognition, granted on September 22, enables the Mankidia to legally access and utilize forest resources essential for their traditional livelihoods and cultural practices. The ceremony was attended by state ministers, highlighting Odisha's leadership in granting habitat rights to PVTGs. Previously, the Mankidia faced restrictions on forest use despite their historical dependence on these lands for survival and rituals.



**Link to the article: (September 24th, 2024)**  
<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/forests/fra-implementation-mankidia-community-becomes-6th-pvtg-to-get-habitat-rights-over-forests-in-odisha>



# PUNJAB

## Panchayat polls in Punjab to be held on Oct 15



**Link to the article: (September 26th, 2024)**

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2024/Sep/26/panchayat-polls-in-punjab-to-be-held-on-oct-15>

Punjab will hold elections for 13,327 panchayats on October 15, as announced by State Election Commissioner Raj Kamal Chaudhary. Nominations can be submitted from September 27 to October 4, with scrutiny on October 5 and withdrawal of nominations by October 7. There will be 19,110 polling booths, with expenditure limits set at Rs 40,000 for sarpanches and Rs 30,000 for panches. The total number of voters is 1,33,97,932, and the elections will utilize ballot boxes, with a NOTA option available. Vote counting will occur on the same day. Approximately 96,000 personnel will oversee the elections, supported by 23 IAS/PCS officers as observers.

# SIKKIM

## Continuous rain devastate Tokchi village in Pakyong district, residents ask for CM's help

Continuous heavy rainfall has severely impacted Tokchi village in the Pakyong district of Sikkim, leading to extensive damage to homes and infrastructure. Residents are facing challenges such as landslides and road blockages, prompting them to seek assistance from the Chief Minister. The community is urging for immediate relief measures to address the destruction and restore normalcy. Local authorities are assessing the situation, but the ongoing rains continue to pose risks to safety and accessibility in the area.



**Link to the article: (September 27th, 2024)**

<https://www.indiatodayne.in/sikkim/story/sikkim-continuous-rain-devastate-tokchi-village-in-pakyong-district-residents-ask-for-cms-help-1099273-2024-09-28>

# TELANGANA

## Nirmal and Somasila Villages in Telangana Honored as India's Top Tourism Destinations for 2024

Nirmal village, renowned for its cultural heritage in crafts, particularly "Nirmal paintings" and wooden toys, has been recognized in the "Crafts" category by the Ministry of Tourism. Located 220 kilometers from Hyderabad, Nirmal boasts an artistic tradition dating back to the Mughal era. Additionally, Somasila village in Nagarkurnool district received an award in the "Spiritual – Wellness" category for its picturesque landscapes and the revered Somasila Temple. These accolades are part of the Ministry's "Best Tourism Villages 2024" initiative, which saw 991 applications from across India, ultimately recognizing 36 villages in eight categories to promote rural tourism.



**Link to the article: (September 27th, 2024)**  
<https://munsifdaily.com/nirmal-and-somasila-villages-in-telangana-honored-as-indias-top-tourism-destinations-for-2024/>

# UTTAR PRADESH

## Uttar Pradesh unveils plan to boost rural tourism with 93 village homestays

The Uttar Pradesh government has introduced a "Rural Tourism Development Strategy" to enhance rural tourism, focusing initially on 93 villages. This plan includes developing tourism infrastructure, such as homestays, and training tour guides and operators, with improvements planned for the Manyavar Kanshiram Institute of Tourism Management in Lucknow. Under the state's tourism policy 2022, 12 circuits have been identified, including the Ramayana and Sufi-Kabir Circuits. The initiative targets five divisions, with 19 villages in Ayodhya selected for rural tourism. Additional villages will be identified in Sultanpur, Varanasi, and Lucknow. Local guides and artists will be deployed to enrich the visitor experience.



**Link to the article: (September 26th, 2024)**  
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/utt-ar-pradesh-unveils-plan-to-boost-rural-tourism-with-93-village-homestays/articleshow/113701950.cms>

## UTTRAKHAND

### Uttarakhand: Chamoli's Mana village selected for Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan



**Link to the article: (September 24th, 2024)**

<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/uttarakhand-chamolis-mana-village-selected-for-pradhan-mantri-janjatiya-unnat-gram-abhiyan20240924083321/>

In the Chamoli district in Uttarakhand, Mana village has been selected for the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan, which is a scheme to improve the socioeconomic condition of tribal communities. Under this scheme, Niti and Mana villages have been selected with a total budget allocated for around Rs.79,156 crore. This program will provide better infrastructure, healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities across India implemented in 548 districts and union territories. This will be handled by 17 ministries and will be funded under the developmental action plan for scheduled tribes. The development will also involve the creation of home stays, residential schools, and other necessary facilities.

## WEST BENGAL

### Indian, but fenced off on no-man's land: Nine districts along Bangladesh border at BSF's mercy

Deepak Sardar, a resident of Bayra village in North 24-Parganas, was allegedly assaulted by BSF personnel after failing to provide information about an individual. Sardar is among over 65,000 families trapped inside the barbed wire fencing along the Bangladesh border. Kiriti Roy of the NGO Masum highlighted their plight, noting that the border gates are opened only for limited hours, restricting access to their own country. The fencing, meant to prevent smuggling, cuts off residents from essential services. Human rights groups argue that the fencing denies these citizens their constitutional rights and basic necessities like healthcare and education.



**Link to the article: (September 29th, 2024)**

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/indian-but-fenced-off-on-no-mans-land-nine-districts-along-bangladesh-border-at-bsfs-mercy/cid/2051606>

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