



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, or 1210.2 million of the population, or 69% of the populace, lived in rural areas in around 6.4 lakh villages. 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 every week and brings the newsletter to you.

We believe that having a focus on rural affairs in educational settings can have ar-reaching effects on 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

Diarrhoea outbreak: Gurla village turns into a political war zone between the A.P. govt. and Opposition

Gurla village in Andhra Pradesh has become a political battleground following a diarrhoea outbreak that reportedly caused around 16 deaths and hospitalized 140 people. While the government claims only one death was due to the disease, opposition party YSRCP alleges negligence, citing inadequate medical facilities during the outbreak. Officials initially prioritized local festivals over the crisis, leading to poor patient care. The situation has prompted a government inquiry led by IAS officer K. Vijayanand to investigate water contamination and sanitation failures. The opposition is using this incident to criticize the ruling party, highlighting systemic issues in public health management.



[Link to the article: \(22nd October, 2024\):](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/diarrhoea-outbreak-gurla-village-turns-into-a-political-war-zone-between-the-ap-govt-and-opposition/article68780899.ece)
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/diarrhoea-outbreak-gurla-village-turns-into-a-political-war-zone-between-the-ap-govt-and-opposition/article68780899.ece>

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

New species of 'Begonia' discovered in Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley



[Link to the article: \(25th October, 2024\)](https://nenews.in/arunachal-pradesh/new-species-of-begonia-discovered-in-arunachal-pradeshs-dibang-valley/15149/)
<https://nenews.in/arunachal-pradesh/new-species-of-begonia-discovered-in-arunachal-pradeshs-dibang-valley/15149/>

A new species of the flowering plant "Begonia" was discovered by the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) in the remote Dibang valley of the state. Along with Bipankar Hajong and Dr. Pankaj Bharali from CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST), Dr. Nazir Ahmad Bhat from USTM discovered the new species, *Begonia neisti*. *Begonia neisti* is a species with variegated leaves that include dark brownish-red patches close to vein joints and white-silver circular dots. Its big leaves and prominent white stripes distinguish it from the *Begonia* genus. The plant blooms from November to January and grows well on the damp, high slopes that border the roads between Hunli and Anini. In addition to advancing scientific knowledge, this discovery highlights the necessity of further research in areas like Arunachal Pradesh.

ASSAM

2 Technicians Electrocuted at Assam IAF Station

On Sunday, two workers were electrocuted while fixing an 11KV transmission line at the Chabua Air Force Station in Dibrugarh, Assam. Probin Urang, 37, and Sujoy Munda, 35, both died while working as casual employees of Kavita Electronics, a private electrical company. According to police, the cause of the deaths is unknown because no one was present when the tragedy occurred. Probin was taken to Tata's Referral Hospital and Research Centre in Chabua, where he passed away on Monday from his wounds, while Sujoy was declared dead at the scene. Their families wanted an investigation and Rs 30 lakh in compensation, claiming Kavita Electronics was negligent and lacked necessary safety equipment.



[Link to the article: \(22nd October, 2024\)](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/2-technicians-electrocuted-at-assam-iaf-station/articleshow/114442457.cms)
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/2-technicians-electrocuted-at-assam-iaf-station/articleshow/114442457.cms>

BIHAR

Lack of Administrative Support for Chhath Festival Ghats in Rural Bihar



In rural Bihar, preparations for the Chhath festival have been hampered by inadequate administrative support. Residents report poorly maintained ghats (riverbanks) and insufficient arrangements for safety and sanitation despite the festival's significant cultural and religious importance. Villagers in areas like Saharsa call on the administration for immediate action to ensure a safe and respectful environment for devotees. The lack of proper facilities raises concerns among locals, who urged officials to address these issues before the upcoming celebrations. *(Translated from Hindi to English)*

[Link to the article: \(24th October, 2024\)](https://www.livehindustan.com/bihar/saharsa/story-lack-of-administrative-support-for-chhath-festival-ghats-in-rural-bihar-201729712099687.html)
<https://www.livehindustan.com/bihar/saharsa/story-lack-of-administrative-support-for-chhath-festival-ghats-in-rural-bihar-201729712099687.html>

CHHATTISGARH

In Chhattisgarh, High Levels Of Uranium, Used For Nuclear Plants, In Water

Tests of drinking water samples from Chhattisgarh's Durg, Rajnandgaon, Kanker, Bemetara, Balod, and Kawardha found uranium levels over 100 micrograms per litre, with levels far exceeding that of the WHO's limit of 15 mg per litre. This significantly increases the risk of skin and kidney diseases as well as cancers and pulmonary diseases. However, a study conducted by scientists at BIT University, led by Poonam Deshmukh, might indicate a solution. It is observed that uranium can be filtered by the bark of a gooseberry (amla) tree.



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

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/uranium-in-drinking-water-in-india-chhattisgarh-red-flag-as-uranium-in-drinking-water-is-3-4-times-above-limit-6845521>

GUJARAT

6.5 crore rural families involved in dairying need to be brought under cooperative sector: Shah



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

<https://thenorthlines.com/6-5-crore-rural-families-involved-in-dairying-need-to-be-brought-under-cooperative-sector-shah/>

Union Minister Amit Shah criticized the exclusion of 6.5 crore rural families from the cooperative dairy sector, highlighting their exploitation due to unfair pricing. While praising the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and Amul's founder, Tribhuvandas Patel, for empowering farmers, especially women, Shah called for expanding cooperative inclusion to all 8 crore milk-producing families. His remarks spotlight the persistent gaps in India's cooperative movement despite its success with Amul. The challenge lies in NDDB's ability to scale cooperative frameworks nationwide, ensuring equitable access for all farmers while addressing structural barriers that still disadvantage a majority of rural producers.

HARYANA

A Netflix for the village - India's start-ups go rural

STAGE is a startup which creates content for marginalised regional audiences. The content features the local tastes, quirks, and dialects. STAGE has recognized about 18 dialects which are largely spoken out of 19,500 dialects in India. Tiny, rural villages of Haryana have been in the spotlight recently with hamlets around Rohtak in demand for the film industry. The app currently features content in Haryanvi and Rajasthani dialects with vision to expand further with inclusion of Maithali and Konkani dialects.



[Link to the article: \(22nd October, 2024\)](#)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c62gpp3dn15o>

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Himachal Pradesh Starts Maize Procurement from Natural Farming



Under the Prakritik Kheti Khushal Kisan Yojana the process of procuring maize from natural farming has started. Deputy Director of Prakritik Kheti Khushal Kisan Yojana Mohindra Singh Bhavani said that in the first phase, 508 metric tonnes of maize will be purchased from the farmers, and on the first day, 528 quintals of maize were purchased. With this Himachal Pradesh is the first state to start a minimum support price for naturally grown crops.

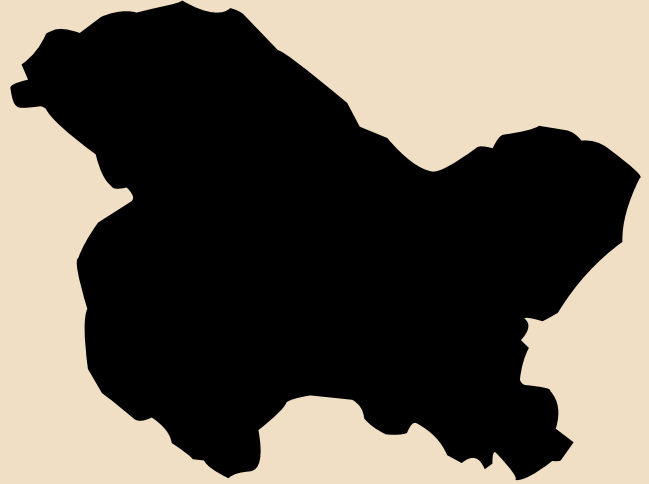
[Link to the article: \(26th October, 2024\):](#)

<https://money.rediff.com/news/market/himachal-pradesh-starts-maize-procurement-from-natural-farming/17678920241026>

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Agriculture our backbone, will ensure check on unplanned Agri-land conversion in J&K: Minister Javaid Dar

Jammu and Kashmir's Agriculture Minister, Javaid Dar, emphasized his priority to raise mass awareness about Central schemes, especially the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), to boost production and benefit stakeholders. In an exclusive interview, he highlighted the need to preserve agricultural land from unplanned conversions and ensure the effective use of funds for farmers' welfare. Dar also vowed to address issues like the intrusion of fake pesticides, while focusing on crops like apples, saffron, and walnuts. He aims to ensure sustainability and enhance J&K's agricultural economy, benefiting 70% of the region's population involved in agriculture.



Link to the article: (23rd October, 2024)
<https://kashmirdespatch.com/agriculture-our-backbone-will-ensure-check-on-unplanned-agri-land-conversion-in-jk-minister-javaid-dar/>

JHARKHAND

Jharkhand to Implement Village Courts for Swift Justice in All Blocks



The Jharkhand government has announced plans to establish village courts, or Gram Nyayalayas, across all blocks in the state. This initiative aims to provide accessible and swift justice to rural communities, reducing the burden on higher courts. Village courts will address local disputes, particularly those related to land and family issues, directly within the community. By enhancing legal access and efficiency, the program strives to empower villagers and streamline the justice delivery system at the grassroots level.

(Translated from Hindi to English)

Link to the article: (25th October 2024)

<https://www.livehindustan.com/jharkhand/dhanbad/story-jharkhand-to-implement-village-courts-for-swift-justice-in-all-blocks-201729804033418.html>

KARNATAKA

Karnataka govt set to launch Gruha Arogya Yojana on October 24

Gruha Arogya Yojana is an initiative by the Government of Karnataka which aims at controlling NCDs (non-communicable diseases) and improving healthcare in the rural areas. The initiative will start in the Kolar district and will be further implemented throughout the state within the course of next year. The rural population of Karnataka suffers from ailments like high blood pressure, diabetes, oral cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer. Karnataka Health Minister, Dinesh Gundu Rao has emphasized that recognizing the early signs of such conditions can prevent severe complications later on. Furthermore, to tackle and track these health issues, health officials and ASHA workers will perform home visits to check blood pressure and diabetes levels for every individual over 30 years of age.



[Link to the article: \(24th October 2024\)](#)

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2024/Oct/24/karnataka-govt-set-to-launch-gruha-arogyayojana-on-october-24>

KERALA

KSRTC to buy diesel buses; minibuses on rural routes; incentives for green autos



[Link to the article: \(23rd October 2024\)](#)

<https://keralakaumudi.com/en/news/news.php?id=1408731&u=ksrtc-to-buy-diesel-buses-minibuses-on-rural-routes-incentives-for-green-autos>

Addressing a press conference yesterday, Minister Ganesh Kumar said that all buses that the KSRTC will purchase would be diesel buses - a response to the horrible accidents on rural routes due to the ageing of the buses. A total of 370 new buses, including 220 minibuses and 150 fast and super-fast buses, will be procured. The minister added that the buses will be on the roads as soon as the funds are available.

Mini buses with 40-42 seats will be used for rural routes and new services will be started from Nedumbassery airport to Kottarakkara and Kozhikode. It has also been decided to purchase 30 AC sleeper and semi-sleeper buses.

MAHARASHTRA

BharatPe, Nasscom Foundation Collaborate To Empower Rural Women Entrepreneurs In Maharashtra

BharatPe Group has partnered with Nasscom foundation to empower women entrepreneurs across Maharashtra as a CSR initiative. Under the 'Formal Registration and Digital Market Linkage Program for Women Entrepreneurs', 1,500 rural women from six districts of Ahmednagar, Beed, Buldhana, Latur, Sindhudurg, and Kolhapur have been provided with the tools to formalize and scale their businesses, facilitating their integration into the formal economy. They also conducted training sessions for rural women entrepreneurs and are expected to provide continuous support to enable their business growth.



[Link to the article: \(22nd October 2024\)](https://theCSRUniverse.com/articles/bharatpe-nasscom-foundation-collaborate-to-empower-rural-women-entrepreneurs-in-maharashtra)
<https://theCSRUniverse.com/articles/bharatpe-nasscom-foundation-collaborate-to-empower-rural-women-entrepreneurs-in-maharashtra>

MANIPUR

Refugees outnumbering border villages' population

Bordering villages in Manipur's Tengenoupal district face significant challenges from the influx of refugees from Myanmar, especially after the state's recent clashes and Myanmar's ongoing crisis. In Nongkham Satang village, refugees now equal the village's population of around 150. Village Authority Chairman Dangshawa Mopham noted that although refugees are compliant, their growing numbers remain a concern, prompting Assam Rifles intervention. In Choktong village, refugees (690) surpass local residents (350), with only 290 refugees verified biometrically. Chairman Peter highlighted that government intervention is crucial, as local authority struggles to manage the situation and enforce customary laws amidst rising population pressures.



[Link to the article: \(26th October, 2024\)
https://www.ifp.co.in/manipur/refugees-outnumbering-border-villages-population](https://www.ifp.co.in/manipur/refugees-outnumbering-border-villages-population)

ODISHA

Cyclone Dana makes landfall highlights: Over 6 lakh evacuated in West Bengal and Odisha



[Link to the article: \(25th October, 2024\)
https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/odisha/cyclone-dana-odisha-west-bengal-weather-live-updates-october-24-2024/article68789843.ece](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/odisha/cyclone-dana-odisha-west-bengal-weather-live-updates-october-24-2024/article68789843.ece)

Cyclone Dana is expected to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm as it approaches Odisha's coast, with landfall anticipated between the night of October 24 and the morning of October 25. The Odisha government plans to evacuate 1 million people, mostly fishermen living in informal settlements near the sea, to cyclone shelters equipped with necessary services. All marine activities have been suspended, and fishermen have returned to shore. In preparation, the state has cancelled numerous train services and suspended operations at the Orissa High Court, Biju Patnaik International Airport, and educational institutions to ensure public safety amid heavy rainfall and strong winds.

PUNJAB

Parent-teacher meetings played an important role in the improvement of government schools in Punjab: Harjot Singh Bains

In rural Punjab, government schools are witnessing significant improvements due to increased parental involvement, highlighted Punjab Cabinet Minister Harjot Singh Bains at a Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) in Nangal. Under Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, the Punjab government has prioritized education, introducing Mega PTMs that have boosted participation in rural districts like Sri Muktsar Sahib, Malerkotla, and Fazilka. Teachers noted the meetings' success in enhancing students' academic performance and personal growth, with parents and teachers collaborating to address student needs. Parents also expressed interest in the Business Blaster scheme, designed to promote entrepreneurship among students, reflecting rural communities' active role in shaping education.

(Translated from Punjabi to English)



[Link to the article: \(22nd October, 2024\)](https://punjab.news18.com/news/punjab/parent-teacher-meetings-played-an-important-role-in-the-improvement-of-government-schools-in-punjab-harjot-singh-bains-ak-676517.html)

<https://punjab.news18.com/news/punjab/parent-teacher-meetings-played-an-important-role-in-the-improvement-of-government-schools-in-punjab-harjot-singh-bains-ak-676517.html>

SIKKIM

Sikkim Forest Officials Join Bhutan, Nepal in High Altitude Tiger Conservation Talks



[Link to the article: \(25th October, 2024\)](https://northeastlivetv.com/topnews/sikkim-forest-officials-join-bhutan-nepal-in-high-altitude-tiger-conservation-talks/)

<https://northeastlivetv.com/topnews/sikkim-forest-officials-join-bhutan-nepal-in-high-altitude-tiger-conservation-talks/>

Sikkim forest officials participated in high-altitude tiger conservation talks alongside representatives from Bhutan and Nepal. The discussions focused on collaborative efforts to protect and conserve the tiger population in the region, emphasizing the importance of cross-border cooperation. Officials highlighted strategies for habitat preservation, anti-poaching measures, and community involvement in conservation efforts. The meeting aims to strengthen partnerships among the three countries, ensuring a unified approach to safeguarding these majestic animals and their ecosystems in the Eastern Himalayas. This initiative reflects a commitment to biodiversity and sustainable wildlife management.

TELANGANA

Protest against land acquisition for 'pharma village' in Telangana

In Vikarabad district, Telangana, residents opposed to land acquisition for a proposed 'pharma village' attempted to attack a local leader on Friday, prompting police intervention. Revenue officials visited to address concerns, but tensions escalated as protesters expressed frustration with the leader's stance. He was temporarily sheltered for safety, and police dispersed the crowd to prevent violence. District officials plan to assure villagers that their grievances will be communicated to higher authorities. The project aims to establish pharmaceutical units in the area, but local opposition remains strong due to fears of losing their livelihoods.



[Link to the article: \(25th October, 2024\)](https://www.deccanchronicle.com/southern-states/tehangana/protest-against-land-acquisition-for-pharma-village-in-tehangana-1832927)
<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/southern-states/tehangana/protest-against-land-acquisition-for-pharma-village-in-tehangana-1832927>

UTTAR PRADESH

In 4 years, 2.4 lakh houses to new age biogas plants



The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a pilot project to install 2,250 household-based biogas plants in villages to reduce indoor air pollution and improve air quality. These plants, which will be set up in Ayodhya, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, and Gonda, are part of a larger plan to reach 2.5 lakh households over four years. The new technology allows for the installation of biogas plants in individual homes, requiring families to have at least three livestock for fuel. The cost per household has been reduced from Rs 39,300 to Rs 3,990, with central financial assistance and carbon credits covering the rest. Additionally, biomanure produced by the plants can be used or sold for extra income.

[Link to the article: \(21st October, 2024\)](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/tranforming-rural-india-25-lakh-biogas-plants-to-combat-air-pollution/articleshow/114436362.cms)
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/tranforming-rural-india-25-lakh-biogas-plants-to-combat-air-pollution/articleshow/114436362.cms>

UTTARAKHAND

CM solar self-employment scheme takes off in Uttarakhand

The chief minister of Uttarakhand said that the solar employment scheme is said to create job opportunities, thereby preventing migration and boosting the economy. The ideal weather in Uttarakhand makes solar power generation better. Eligible persons can install solar plants of 20-200 kilowatts capacity under which the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limit will purchase the entire electricity. Permanent residents will also be provided with loans by cooperative banks. Even businesses will gain benefit from this scheme.



Link to the article: (26th October, 2024)

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/cm-solar-self-employment-scheme-takes-off-in-uttarakhand/114606779>

WEST BENGAL

Haunted Village of Bengal- Harhim events! All the villagers disappear in one night, go to ghost chaturdashi or this haunted village?



Link to the article: (21st October 2024)

<https://www.anandabazar.com/ananda-utsav/travel-guide/explore-the-haunting-mystery-of-asansols-benagram-the-ghostly-village-of-west-bengal-photogallery/cid/1554625?slide=8>

Benagram, near Asansol in West Bengal, shares an eerie resemblance to Rajasthan's abandoned Kuldhara village. One night around 20 years ago, Benagram's villagers suddenly deserted their homes, and it remains an empty, haunted place today, attracting curious tourists. Various theories attempt to explain the exodus: some believe villagers fled due to criminal activities nearby, while others point to a lack of basic amenities. Despite government efforts to revitalize the area, it remains abandoned, though there are discussions to establish it as a dark tourism site, which locals hope could bring employment and opportunities to the region.

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