



Harrowing happenings at Halflong: Flash floods wreak havoc

By Ponaxi Nunisa and Sanlee Ligung Singpho

Assam is a state that has always been witnessing the bitter havoc of floods. Among many, Haflong, the headquarter of Dima Hasao district and the only hill station of Assam, is prone to widespread wreckage. In the month of May, heavy rainfall rattled the region and greatly affected the town's peaceful ambience. A great amount of unmanageable water has caused flooding, which affected not only the main town but also several other villages of Dima Hasao. The mudslides shattered the railway tracks of Haflong into pieces, wrecked several houses, roads, and school. The region also faced a complete electricity and internet connectivity shutdown which left them stranded for a considerable period of time. Several highways and roads were also destroyed by extreme rainfall and has made transportation by road an impossible task. As a result, in case of emergencies, the only mode to rescue the locals is by air. "We are living in terror that our house maybe the next target of the havoc. Every neighbour is helping out each other and this is how we are battling the mishap" states a local girl of haflong. As per reports in the Indian Express, the heavy rainfall has affected about 25000 people



and has caused several deaths. About 1,245 passengers from the 15616 Silchar-Guwahati passenger train who were stranded at Ditokcherra were evacuated. Many crossed a damaged bridge on foot and were sent by another train to Silchar. And about 200 passengers who were not in a position to cross the bridge on foot were airlifted by Indian Air Force helicopters as informed by Sabyasachi De, CPRO, Northeastern Frontier Railway (NFR). Road communication between Halflong and Ditokcherra was disrupted. And efforts are underway to repair roads and clear the landslides but heavy rainfall is affecting work," stated Rikki B Phukan, district di-

saster management officer, Dima Hasao. "One of the biggest reasons for this scale of destruction was haphazard construction work for the broad gauge and highways, which resulted in damage to the environment," stated Mr Dering Thaosen, Advisor of the Blue Hills Society, a local NGO. "The economy/ of the district collapsed due to the shutdown of road and rail communication. It has vast opportunities in the tourism sector and the government should give emphasis on proper drainage systems, as most of the landslides happened due to improper drainage," said Samal Nandi, a Haflong-based businessman in a statement released by NDTV.

Editorial

By Dr. Manoj Deori

Floods: A natural or a man-made disaster?

Floods are not new to Assam; the people of Assam have lived with floods for centuries and have always been able to deal with floods using indigenous knowledge for disaster management. The farming community is aware of the benefits and drawbacks of the annual flooding which takes place across the riverine plains of Assam. However, this year we have also seen artificial floods create havoc in urban areas throwing life out of gear in the whole state. Moreover, release of excess water from reservoirs of hydro-electric power projects, built to meet the power needs of the population, has also resulted in extreme flooding in several districts of the state. We've learned a few things from the Covid-19 pandemic, and the best thing we can do now is live a minimalist life with all the options we have before we are left with none.

Walding through water: Surviving the deluge

By Binita Chetry And Pratibha Devi

Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts of Assam have once again been affected by flood. Around 50 villages have been inundated by continuous rainfall over 15 days since 1st week of May. As per Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) reports, several roads, bridges, and irrigation canals have been damaged as the Jiadhal river of Dhemaji district and Subansiri, Ranganadi of Lakhimpur district continues to flow above the danger level. "We face insurmountable odds and are plagued with severe losses" says some locals of the region. "We cannot cultivate crops, our domestic animals die because of various diseases and lack of fodder" they add. They stated that the Gaonbudha and Mandal had not visited their villages to take stock of the situation. In some places such as Jonai, students are using boats to reach their schools. In Naoboicha of Lakhimpur district, over 500 families are affected. "We have not been able to eat since 2-3 days" stated some victims of the flood. They have also laid allegations of indifference and ignorance on their local MLA. One of them says that "I saw him only before the elections when he had come



to ask for votes. We have been looking for our MLA but he is nowhere to be seen". Each year, places like Ghilamara, Dhakuakhana and Bordoibam come under water on monsoons and the denizens reel under the wet barrage.

In the month of May, Hojai was one of the worst affected districts of Assam. Due to the heavy rainfall and surging water from the the river Kopili, many areas of Ho-



jai were submerged. Over 80 villages including Jamunamukh, Kathkotia Gaon, Kumargaon, Lakhimigaon, Kahargaon, Changjurai Gaon, Potiapam, Komargaon railway station road under Doboka Revenue circle in Hojai are the most affected areas over a couple of days. Minister of Health, Government of Assam Keshab Mahanta along with MLA of Hojai Ram Krishna Ghosh and MLA of Lumding Sibum Misra visited Hojai on 18th of May to know

the situation of the flooded villages. District headquarters of Hojai and West Karbi Anglong remained closed for couple of days because of the flood situation. Residents of the flood affected area say it is not only due to the heavy rainfall but the sudden release of water from dams of NEEPCO has exacerbated the situation. Locals blame NEEPCO's actions washed away the roads which link the two districts.

North India battles scorching heat wave- while NE India faces extreme rainfall



By Mihin Napee and Priyanka Rajkumari

Climate change is a major issue plaguing the world and a formidable challenge in a developing country like India. According to the global climate risk index 2021 report, India is ranked 7th in the list of countries most affected by climate change. . Because of the changing climate, heat waves have run rampant in India. Extreme heat waves hit North India this summer season. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD),after 72 years, Delhi recorded the second hottest April with 49.2C (120.5F), and March 2022 was the hottest India has ever recorded in 122 years since 1901.Many other parts of India like Uttarkhand, Punjab, Bihar, Haryana and even Himachal Pradesh, which is known for its pleasant weather, also reports a rise in mercury. The intense heat has affected many lives and as well as the livelihood of the people. The intense heat has had an adverse effect to the yield of wheat in Punjab (the lowest yield in five years) and UP. As stated by Mr. Singh, general secretary of Bhartiya Kisan Union, in April alone, 21 farmers in the state killed themselves because of low yield and mounting debts. According to the Punjab Government, average wheat yield has fallen to 43 quintals/ hectares this year vs 48.68 quintals/ hectares last year. It mostly affects the labourer who has to work long hours in the scorching heat. Schools and Anganwadi centres have also shut down due to the rise in temperature. The temperature has been rising rapidly in India in the last couple of years. An

acute lack of rainfall and changing rainfall patterns can be cited as a major reason for the excessive heat. On the other hand, incessant rainfall has brought about a multitude of problems in Northeast India. As a result of climate change,Northeast India has borne witness to an altered pattern of rainfall. The region has a monsoon climate with heavy to very heavy rains, confined to four summer months from June to September. And it seems that the continuation of relentless rainfall around Northeast India has given birth to a host of problems. Northeast India has been under prolonged periods of rainfall causing massive destruction to life and property. Under the influence of Cyclone Asani, by the third week of May, extremely heavy rainfall was reported from parts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya with Assam reporting the most severe precipitation. Several areas in Assam were flooded which led to the loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure. The floods in Assam have affected nearly seven lakh people across 29 districts. The Dima Hasao district has been hit with heavy rains causing the New Haflong Railway Station to be engulfed in mud. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), nearly 3,250 villages were partially or fully submerged. The drastic change in climate has affected not only the lives and livelihood of the people but also the environment and these change are likely to be the result of greenhouse gas emissions. Many researchers have sounded the warning gong and stated that in the coming years ‘record breaking heat to become more common’ .

Natural Calamities : Preparations and Precautions



By Manisha Bhowmick

As floodwaters entered new areas of Assam, the number of affected people more than doubled. Landslides caused by heavy rain cut rail and road connections to Assam’s Barak Valley and Dima Hasao districts, as well as the neighbouring states of Tripura, Mizoram, and Manipur.

Landslides are one of the most common natural disasters in the world, causing significant economic and human losses. Their global impact is growing as a result of rapid development, deforestation, and urbanization.

Landslides wreaked havoc in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya, disrupting road connectivity in many areas. Natural disasters have plagued humanity since the first homo sapiens evolved 200,000 years ago. Swathes of land destroyed, thousands killed; natural disasters strike unannounced, causing untold damage to life and property.

The ways you prepare for these disasters differ slightly. For example, you would not necessarily move fragile items to the floor in preparation for a hurricane, as you would in preparation for an earthquake. However, there are some fundamentals for preparing for any natural disaster as listed below:

PREPARE CANNED GOODS FOOD, WATER, AND MEDICINE.

Collect enough supplies to last at least a week. Fill plastic bottles with water and stock up on canned foods that can be opened without the use of an electric can opener. You’ll also need bread, biscuits, and other snacks. Don’t forget about prescription medications.

KEEP IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS, SUCH AS PASSPORTS AND SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS, IN A WATERPROOF CONTAINER.

Losing these vital documents could exacerbate an already dire situation, but they’re easy to overlook in an emergency. If you are evacuating, make sure you bring them with you to your new location.

PREPARE A FIRST-AID KIT

Aspirin, bandages in various sizes, antibiotic creams, gauze, hand sanitizer, latex gloves, an emergency blanket, bug spray, thermometers, tweezers,

and other items are included. It is impossible to be overly prepared.

KEEP AWAY FROM BOTH STANDING AND FLOWING WATER.

Mosquitoes that thrive in standing water increase the spread of virus in the affected areas. Floodwater can carry disease, be contaminated with sewage, or conceal dangerous objects.

MAKE YOUR HOME READY.

Depending on the nature of the natural disaster, this could range from boarding up windows (for hurricanes and tornadoes) to cleaning your roof and gutters (for wildfires). Water heaters and gas appliances should be bolted and braced for earthquakes, and gas valves should be turned off.

ANIMALS SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED.

During natural disasters, pets, farm animals, and wild animals may be displaced. Make sure your pets have identification tags so that you can be reunited if they become separated.

PREPARE TO SWIM.

Keep inflatable life jackets on hand if massive flooding is a possibility. Make sure everyone in the family, as well as your pets, has one. They are small, light, and portable, and will keep you afloat in an emergency until help arrives.

CONSERVE DRINKING WATER.

If you plan to ride out the storm, please evacuate if ordered to do so. Fill gallon freezer bags with drinking water. Simply fill them with filtered tap water from your sink beforehand and store them in a secure location.

DISCONNECT

If you suspect flooding, unplug all electrical devices and relocate them to the highest floor of your home. These are but some steps that will assist you in tackling a natural disaster. Even though the exact circumstances arising in the advent of a disaster is difficult to predict, it is imperative that certain precautionary measures are taken. These measures would go a long way in ensuring your safety in the face of a calamity.

Awards & Achievements

1. Tezpur University is selected as a Participating Institute under Ministry of IT’s Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Project for the period 2015-20.
2. A High Performance Computing Centre is being established at Department of CSE, Tezpur University, in June 2015 to provide high end computing facility to the scientific researchers of North-East region.
3. Department of Computer Science and Engineering is selected for UGC SAP DRS-II in the area of Big Data Ana-

- lytics- Bioinformatics, Network Security and Robotics for the period 2015-2020.
4. Department of Computer Science and Engineering is awarded DST-UKIERI Project on ‘BCI as an Intelligent Sensor: BCI Integrated Collaborative Control of a Cognitively Enhanced Smart Wheelchair’ in collaboration with University of Essex, United Kingdom, for the period 2014-2016.

5. The Department is nominated by UGC as a Participant of BRICS Network University.

Monsoon wash of the Jiya Bharali

By Mondeep Bordoloi

According to the Assam State Disaster management authority (ASDMA), around 7.2 lakh inhabitants across 22 districts have been affected by the monsoon flood in Assam since start of the season this year. Every year over 80% of the state remains submerged in water during the Monsoon. Flood and bank erosion by the Brahmaputra and it's tributaries are regular phenomena during this season which also affects the socio-economic and ecological life of the people due to human displacement and loss of farmland, agricultural land and livestock among others.

Apart from the temporary loss due to flood, river bank erosion causes long term and permanent damage to the surrounding livelihood. Many villages under Tezpur subdivision are affected by flood and river erosion during the rainy season. These include Samdhara, Garchinga Bihia, Tengabasti, Alichinga Uriumguri, Karaiani Nepali Gaon, Uriam Guri, Jorgarhgaon and Rajbharal Gaon of Panchmile area. The most important factor behind the deluge occurring in these villages is the Jiya Bharali river which is a right bank tributary of the Brahmaputra. Due to continuous erosion on its bank, there is a shift of the river channel towards northwest at the lower course of this river near the outlet of Brahmaputra. This migration of Jiya Bharali river towards the west bank near the Panchmile area of Tezpur town before mingling with the river Brahmaputra has been a phenomena of five decades. In April-May, 2020, the river almost reached upto the Mora Bharali (dead old channel of the Jia bharali) creating a threat of massive channel shift and creating havoc in the areas of Tezpur Town. Moreover it also poses serious threats in the eastern part of Tezpur and the Panchmile area near Tezpur University because of this geomorphic shift.

According to a field survey report by a joint committee of Cotton University and Darrang college, the Jiya Bharali

Bank erosion has been concurring since 1970 and every year it is responsible for loss of valleys, livestock, households and cultivable land. Around 20-25 small villages in the Panchmile area got washed out in flood in the last 35 years. It may be mentioned here that most flood victims of the area move to a nearby land or village for shelter but usually live in poor conditions due to loss of their livelihood pattern. The new localities also pose new challenges to the victims as they are often not accepted.

Moreover frequently occurring flood also creates an unhealthy and unhygienic environment spreading harmful diseases in the locality. Many people are forced to evacuate the places due to the inhabitable conditions. Crores of money has already been sanctioned for the area but due to a lack of implementation of proper measures for flood control, the denizens continue to face sleepless nights during the rainy season. Local communities hold the authorities responsible and have clamoured against the decades-old corruption in this bank erosion issue. Every year, adequate funds are sanctioned for prevention of such calamities in the area but due to massive inappropriation of funds, and the local administration's harsh attitude towards the inhabitants, the problem still prevails. The whole Panchmile area connects major places of Tezpur town including Tezpur University and the SSB Training Centre of the Northern Frontier. Large parts of the Panchmile region have already been eroded due to lack of attention from the government. Some flood protective measures have been taken including the 'Porcupine method' but it is not adequate enough to fully address the issue. No permanent solution for the problem has been found till date. Though further research on the area is required to determine the exact course of migration of Jiya Bharali but according to prior studies, if the migration remains on the current course, it could pose serious threats to the landscape of Tezpur Town and surrounding areas.

Gyanvapi: A site of contest and conflict

By Prahuryya Patgiri

The spectre of 1992 looms large. The dark clouds of communalism has gathered in the horizon, and I, for one, wait with bated breath for the storm to follow. Headlines in recent days abound with mentions of the Gyanvapi case, a news story that is eerily reminiscent of the Babri masjid injustice that rattled the country back in 1992. The story goes that the Gyanvapi masjid has been built upon the deliberately destroyed ruins of the Vishweshwara temple by Aurangzeb in 1669. And now, the Hindu fanatics of the nation seem bent to execute a new injustice, to destroy the mosque and build a temple in its stead, with a misplaced sense of religious responsibility and fanatical zeal.

The 1991 Place of Worship Act states that the present religious character of every religious place should be left undisturbed. But to except Hindutva zealots to pay heed to constitutional legislation would be a farce. In 1991, the first petition in the case was filed in Varanasi court by Swayambhu Jyotirlinga Bhagwan Vishweshwar. The petitioner had sought permission to worship in Gyanvapi complex. He had placed three demands before the court including that the court should declare the entire Gyanvapi complex as a part of the Kashi temple. Besides, he also sought eviction of Muslims from the complex area and the mosque to be demolished. The petitioner had also pleaded before the court that Hindus should be given permission to rebuild the temple. In 2019, a person named Rastogi filed a plea on behalf of Swayambhu Jyotirlinga Bhagwan Vishweshwar in Varanasi district court. The petitioner demanded that an archaeological survey of the entire Gyanvapi mosque complex should be carried out. In 2020, Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee opposed the petition seeking ASI survey of the entire Gyanvapi complex. Now, the court is hearing a petition by five Hindu women seeking daily prayers before the idols on the mosque's outer wall. Following the survey and the reported finding of a shivling inside the complex, the court has now ordered the spot in the complex to be sealed.

"doubtful whether the people talked of themselves as Hindus before the colonial phase of our history." A 'Hindu' consciousness apparently found its first expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the empire of Shivaji, and then in the Maratha confederacy. But the conquests of the Marathas in the direction of the Gangetic plain 'did not imply the existence of a sense of the religious war based on ethnic or communal consciousness'; (C.A. Bayly).

Hindu nationalism crystallized as an ideology as a response to the "Gandhianisation" of Indian politics and subsequently grew into a mass movement. An alternative political discourse that emphasized on "Hinduness" was developed that ran parallel to the dominant political stream, and this treatise rejected both non-violence as a legitimate and effective modus operandi against the British as well as the Gandhian conception of the Indian nation. The doctrine that was to become known by the name 'Hindutva' fulfilled the criteria of ethnic nationalism as asserted by Thomas Jaffrelot. The development of Hindu nationalism is therefore a modern phenomenon that traces its genesis to different strategies of responding to the colonial verbosity. Hindu nationalism materialized in reaction to a threat subjectively felt if not concretely articulated and experienced. This time the threatening Other was neither Christian missionaries nor colonial bureaucrats, but Muslims. Thus, the genesis of "Hindutva" is rooted in the tumultuous period of Indian colonial history where different ideologies emerged in response to the colonial experience and rhetoric.

At stake is the ethos imbibed in the Indian constitution, ethos of secularism and equality that have come under considerable threat as India ventures in the 21st century. Majoritarian and communal ideologies are becoming prevalent and legitimate in the modern Indian political discourse. Religion has been politicized and weaponized with the sights firmly set upon the Muslim minority in the country. In aiming to "right the wrong" perpetuated around 4 centuries ago, the zealots are striving to re-assert the glory of their belief and to avenge history. But in their quest for "justice" and vengeance, innocents, not affiliated to the original wrong, will undergo traumatic experiences that will undeniably shaken their belief in the institution of the Indian nation. To destroy the mosque and replace it with a temple would tantamount not to undoing an ancient injustice but to perpetrating a new one. The plurality of the nation is at threat. An "Indian" identity is being constructed that is exclusive, painted in broad strokes of "historical precedence" and corrosive to the principles on which this great nation has been built. And in doing so, they are simultaneously betraying the very religion they claim to espouse, a religion that embodies tolerance and plurality. "The tragedy in India is that even those who know history seem condemned to repeat it," writes Shashi Tharoor, a telling indictment of the evolving issue. The spectre of 1992 looms large. I sincerely hope we do not bear witness to the authoring of another dark page in the storied annals of Indian history.

Employment Offers

Project Engineer-I

The Bharat Electronics Limited, Panchkula is looking for dynamic candidates on a temporary basis for its Project Sites in Rajasthan and Gujarat. As per the latest notification, BEL Panchkula Project Engineer Jobs 2022 is announced for 21 posts. Candidates who are interested in the BEL Panchkula Jobs 2022 should submit their online applications for the respective region on or before 29th June 2022. So, after verifying each & every piece of information related to BEL Panchkula Project Engineer Vacancies kindly proceed to submit your applications before final date is closed.

Superintendent Job

LGBRIMH Recruitment 2022 Apply Online @lgbrimh.gov.in. Candidates can check the latest LGBRIMH Recruitment 2022 Superintendent, Accountant Vacancy 2022 details and apply online at lgbrimh.gov.in recruitment 2022 page. Candidates can apply at LGBRIMH official website lgbrimh.gov.in Company Name :LGBRIMH Post Name :Superintendent, Accountant No of Posts:2 Posts Job Location:Tezpur Jobs Last Date to Apply:01/07/2022

Asking “Ashroy”: On the scourge of Assam

Assam has always been a flood prone area and the current flood situation in Assam is quite grave. It not only disrupts the day-to-day activities of the citizens but also threatens their lives in innumerable ways, not to mention, breaks connectivity between places and isolates threatened regions. In May, 2022, life-threatening floods hit Assam which resulted in the evacuation of a few lakhs people from their area of living and around 30 people have been reportedly killed. The bus routes and the train tracks are flooded. Reaching out to people for help under such circumstances becomes quite a challenging job. One question that comes to our mind is how can a rescue team reach a region that has been isolated by a broken bridge due to a massive landslide? To answer similar questions, I have spoken to Shruti Tater, the Vice-President of Progotixil an NGO that has been reaching out to the needy ones since 2019. She looks after the day-to-day operations of the team as of now. She has been serving with the team for around 2 years. She has lead the team as the content coordinator earlier along with several other projects, both in online and offline formats. Shruti said that Progotixil believes in people for people. Thus, they have been spreading the message of unity and humanity through their work. Their projects range from educating the children of the tea garden works to fundraising for flood victims to visiting the child care home and old age homes to donation drives, etc. When asked about

their current staff and/or employees, Shruti said that they don't have any permanent staff as of now. What they have is a team of around 30 volunteers who share the same values as the organisation. She also mentioned that most of the volunteers are either students or workers due to which the number of volunteers has been frequently fluctuating. In the recent Assam Floods, 2022, Progotixil conducted projects with Aashroy, which is another NGO that works towards the betterment of flood affected people, and several other organizations. In one of the projects, Progotixil raised funds through online mode. They have also collected clothes for flood affected victims, thereby planning for a donation drive. But they couldn't donate the clothes due to poor road connectivity and transport issues. In order to make up for it, they sold the clothes and sent them the money that they raised, which was around 15,000 rupees. The amount was directly sent to Aashroy who then distributed the money to the families along with some essential materials and food items. Almost 120 families were helped in that way. Lastly Progotixil said that they are currently working on an offline music event and a fundraiser to help an old age home that is scheduled in the month of July, 2022. We wish them the very best and hope the project turns out to be a successful one.

Tell us briefly about your NGO, Progotixil and your role in it. Progotixil is a non registered NGO

working for the society since July 2019. We're stepping into the 4th Year soon. We've done several projects online and offline. Our projects have been from educating the children of the tea garden works to fundraisers for flood victims to visiting the child care home and old age homes to donation drives, etc. I'm Shruti Tater the vice president of the board 2021-22. I look after the day to day operations of the team as of now. I've been serving with the team for around 2 years now. I've lead the team as the content Co-ordinator earlier along with several other projects online and offline.

Tell us about the staff there, the volunteers and permanent employees. Basically, we don't have staff, as such. Right now we have volunteers and not permanent employees and we have around 30 volunteers with the team. Right now the members have been fluctuating since the beginning because we have shifted our operations offline to online then again to offline and basically all our volunteers are students while some are students while working part time. So the volunteers being students have to look after their academics as well thus sometimes it becomes difficult for them to manage between the working of the team and also the academics. So many of our volunteers are on leave right now.

Can you tell us about your work during the recent Assam flood?

Basically in the recent assam flood, that is, assam flood 2022, we did a project with Aashroy and several other organizations. In one of the projects we raised fund through online mode and we have also collected clothes for flood affected victims. But we couldn't sent them the clothes due to poor road connectivity. So we sold the clothes and send them the money that we raised. We raised around 15000 rupees. and the amount was sent to Aashroy who then distributed the money to the families along with some essential materials and food items. Almost 120 families were helped in such a way.

Has there even been any duty casualty? Since no one from the team was on ground as a volunteer there were no duty casualties.

How do you integrate your values into your work? Progotixil belives in people for people. Thus, we've been spreading the message of unity and humanity through our work always.

Is staff properly trained? Yes. Each volunteer is given a training course once they sign up for the organization.

What is Progotixil currently working on? We're currently working on an offline music event and a fundraiser to help an old age home that is scheduled in the month of July, 2022.

SNAPSHOT



“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it.”



Braving the scorching heat, a sip of water at a time



Submerged in misery: flooding in Raha



Cracks that lead to fissures: the road not taken