

Record flood in Silchar, Assam¹

July 26, 2022



Silchar submerged

Silchar had more than 80% of its area submerged in the last week of June, 2022. Silchar residents have faced periodic flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall in the past, but the intensity and abruptness of this flood caught most people by a surprise. It caused a massive loss of life and property as reported²

When the water level started increasing on June 21, nobody in Silchar had even imagined what was to follow. On June 22, almost the entire city was inundated. While the rainwater from neighboring hilly states like Manipur and Mizoram added to the flooding, breaching the Bethukandi dyke on Barak river was primarily responsible for Silchar's fate.

Silchar's residents have questioned the government for the lack of timely intervention.



¹ By Subijoy Dutta, P.E., Founding Director, Rivers of the World Foundation <https://rowfoundation.org>

² Report by Nabarun Guha, June 30, 2022, <https://india.mongabay.com/2022/06/unprecedented-flood-cripples-assam-massive-loss-of-life-and-property-reported/>

About 80 percent of Silchar was submerged - last week of June 2022. Photo by Subhadeep Dutta.

Local people claim that despite having information, the government didn't repair that embankment.

ROW Visit to the Bethukandi area

On December 29th, 2021, ROW team - Late Dilip Nath, Silchar and Subijoy Dutta, Maryland, USA visited the Bethukandi area to look at the current practice of the villagers towards use of Agri-chemicals and fertilizers. The local farmers changed their practice as the ROW team suggested 10 years ago about using cow manure and composts rather than Indofil M-45 a toxic chemical they were using indiscriminately in that area.

We were happy to hear from the local farmers about their current practices involving use of natural manure and pest control methods. ROW team also observed 28 dead animals dumped on the river in a stretch of 40 Kms (as reported in <https://rowfoundation.org/content/row/Barak-Report-May-2011.pdf>). The farmers indicated that they stopped the practice of dumping dead animal in the river and followed ground burial of dead animals as we suggested.

While returning from the farm area along the bank of the Barak River, we noticed a highly eroded embankment that was about to collapse. See picture and location of the area below.



Bethukandi Dike along the Barak River on Dec 29, 2022 (Photo by Subijoy Dutta)



Highly eroded Dike area is visible on the right, ~50 meter from late Dilip Nath, ROW team member (Photo by Subijoy Dutta)

ROW team have not visited this site during or after the flood, but we believe that must have been the weakest point of the dike and highest point of thrust of the Barak River as it was flowing from the northeast towards the South and making a critical turn to the west from this point. A second picture above reaffirms the vulnerability. There were a few trucks transporting soil and filling some area of the dike but the effort must have been very feeble.

ROW Foundation's Response

After hearing about the Silchar flood, we discussed with Dr. Kumar Kanti Das, Executive Director, Kalyani Hospital, Silchar, a ROW team leader, about their immediate need.

Per Dr. Das's suggestion, we arranged to ship 10,000 chlorine tablets to Dr. Das in Ramnagar, Silchar from New Delhi by our ROW team member Suresh Soman. These tablets are being deployed to various NGOs and localities by Dr. Das and his local assistants for treating available water to disinfect them and provide drinkable/potable water to the flood victims. Thanks to Suresh for taking an urgent step to ship the 10,000 chlorine tablets, which reached Dr. Das around July 15th.



Rivers of the World

FOUNDATION

<https://rowfoundation.org>

**FROM THE SUPPORT OF
ROW FLOOD RESPONSE TEAM**



Chlorine tablets – 1 pack of 1000 Tablets, wt. ~ 600 gms – 10 packs sent.

Distribution of the Chlorine Tablets –

Thanks to all the volunteers and NGOs who took prompt steps to distribute the Chlorine tablets. A few pictures of the Chlorine tablet distribution to the needy families of the flood victims were sent to us recently by Dr. K.K. Das as shown below.



3.0 Concluding Remarks

We express our deepest sympathy for the flood victims of Silchar and nearby areas. A hearty thanks to the ROW team members including Suresh Soman and Dr. K.K. Das for arranging the shipping and distribution of the chlorine tablets. Our homage to late Mr. Dilip Nath, a dedicated ROW team-member, who went to the Barak River sites regularly and interacted with local farmers and residents during our visits. We will deeply miss him.

We look forward to receiving any questions and/or Comments either through comment box at the bottom of our webpage or by sending an email to rowfoundation@gmail.com.