Citizens’ convention on Sivasagar floods to demand compensation, probe into mining

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SK Hasan 12 September 2026 Updated 12 Sept 1177 views

NAZIRA, September 12, 2026 — The devastating floods that struck Assam’s Sivasagar, Charaideo and Jorhat districts on July 19 have shocked people across the state and beyond. A tsunami-like surge of water reportedly came down the Dikhow River from the hills of Nagaland, inundating Bihubar, Nepalikuthi, Nazira, Santak, Simaluguri and vast areas of the three districts within a short span of time. More than a hundred people were reportedly swept away, while the homes, property, livestock, shops and essential documents of lakhs of residents were destroyed.

Many people survived by taking shelter in trees or on the roofs of elevated houses. The silt carried by the flood reportedly buried homes, farmland and other properties under three to four feet of sediment. Bodies were also recovered from beneath the silt. Hundreds of villages across the three districts were devastated, leaving residents without their belongings and essential documents.

Although various non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups, political parties and members of the public promptly came forward with relief materials, residents alleged that government agencies and district administrations were largely absent during the first six to seven days of the crisis. Local residents said their immediate response helped save many lives. The experience, they said, once again raised questions about the government’s preparedness and disaster-response mechanism.

There are several instances in the country where the armed forces have been deployed for rescue and relief operations during major natural disasters. Questions have therefore been raised over why similar measures were not taken during the July 19 crisis.

Concerned citizens of Upper Assam have long alleged that hills are being cut and coal mined illegally or without adequate regulation, while stone and sand extraction continues in the Dikhow River. They have also alleged the involvement or tacit support of sections of ruling-party leaders and ministers, as well as illegal syndicates operating along the Assam-Nagaland border.

Despite repeated warnings, the government has allegedly failed to take adequate action, with critics accusing the authorities of indirectly enabling such activities through various justifications.

The floods have left many residents psychologically traumatised. Several people witnessed the sudden deaths of loved ones and the destruction of their life savings and property. Many are now reportedly facing severe insecurity and mental distress.

Against this backdrop, a citizens' convention has called for adequate government assistance and planned initiatives to restore normal life in the affected areas. It has demanded sufficient compensation for affected families and a special plan for the socio-economic development of the flood-hit areas.

The convention has also called for a scientific study into unregulated hill-cutting and river mining, which organisers and concerned citizens believe may have contributed to the severity of the disaster. It has further sought alternative livelihood opportunities for people dependent on river mining.

The organisers said sustained public opinion on these issues is necessary to ensure that the demands of affected people are addressed and to build public resistance against illegal mining and other environmentally destructive activities.

With this objective, a citizens' convention will be held at the auditorium of Nazira MC Club at 12 noon on September 14. The convention preparation committee has appealed to the public to attend and extend their support.

The appeal was issued by conveners Professor Tridib Gogoi, retired principal Dilip Phukan, Dilip Kumar Dutta, Jog Gogoi, Lal Ali, Pankaj Bora, Kalpana Arandhara, Farid Hazarika, Dipak Dutta and Hemanta Pande.

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