

Sudden Dam Water Release Submerges 243 Villages in Lakhimpur, Thousands Displaced Overnight



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Lakhimpur: In the early hours of Saturday, around 1 a.m., the water level of the Ranganadi River began to overflow following the release of dam water from the Panyor Hydroelectric Project by the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO), located upstream at Yazali in Arunachal Pradesh. The sudden release of water, without any prior warning, submerged vast areas of Assam's Lakhimpur district, leaving thousands of people in distress.

Many residents were caught unaware in their sleep as the floodwaters entered their homes. People fled with only the clothes they were wearing, leaving behind all belongings. The floodwaters swept through 243 villages across the Ranganadi and Naoboicha Legislative Assembly constituencies, affecting 24,330 families. Homes were submerged, valuable household items destroyed, and livestock washed away. Food supplies and school materials were lost, leaving people in tears and despair.

In several places, farmers lost their harvested paddy stored in the fields. The flood also submerged the National Highway 15 at Majgaon in Pahumora, leading to massive traffic jams. While many people remained trapped inside their homes, others were forced to set up temporary shelters by the roadside. A major landslide also occurred near the Subansiri hydropower dam in Sowanashiri, where a large portion of a hill collapsed, causing further panic.

Meanwhile, the Karbi Langpi Hydroelectric Project in Karbi Anglong also released water through five gates, which inundated villages like Borchali, Inghin Gaon, Amdubi, and Khergaon in Karbi Anglong and Nagaon districts. Floodwater gushed over the road connecting Baithalangso and Borchali, cutting off road communication completely.

Victims expressed strong resentment against NEEPCO, accusing the authority of releasing water without any prior warning or emergency announcement. Every year, such unplanned releases endanger thousands of lives, yet no corrective measures are taken. Locals are furious that despite the recurring damage caused by dam water releases, the government continues to support the construction of large dams like the one over the Subansiri River.

Flood-affected residents have criticized the state government's failure to address Assam's flood crisis as a national issue. Several political parties and organizations have long demanded that the annual flooding in Assam be declared a national problem. However, due to the lack of political will, no effective solution has been implemented. Some politicians and bureaucrats treat Assam's flood problem as routine and fail to grasp the devastating reality faced by the people.

As of now, thousands of people remain displaced, sheltering in makeshift tents with no access to food or clean water. Children have lost their schoolbooks, and entire communities are left with nothing. The repeated destruction caused by the Ranganadi dam's water release each year continues to be a nightmare for Lakhimpur's people, who are now demanding accountability, action, and a permanent solution.

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