

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.”

— Kofi Annan



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Livestock Support Transforms Lives of 112 SHG Women in Nadia

In the villages of Nadia district, where many women once depended entirely on irregular daily wages or the earnings of male family members, a quiet transformation is now visible. Under the Gram Seva Program supported by SBI Foundation, 112 women from Self-Help Groups are steadily moving from financial uncertainty toward self-reliance.

Earlier, limited income opportunities meant constant financial stress and little control over household decisions. Today, goats grazing in courtyards, hens clucking in small sheds, and ducks swimming in village ponds tell a different story. These livestock assets are not just animals — they are dependable sources of income. For many of the women, this is the first time they are earning independently and contributing directly to their family's expenses.

Along with the livestock, the women received practical training in animal care and management, enabling them to improve productivity and reduce risks. Regular home visits by field teams ensure proper monitoring, timely guidance, and continued technical support. This consistent handholding has built both competence and confidence among the beneficiaries.

What began as modest asset support has gradually evolved into a pathway toward dignity and economic empowerment. From financial vulnerability to growing stability, these women are now shaping stronger households and more resilient rural communities across Nadia district.



German Consulate Delegation Visits Sagar Euro Bakery, Applauds Community-Led Development Initiatives



Sagar Island witnessed a moment of international engagement and community pride as the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Kolkata, visited the Sagar EURO Bakery, a women-led enterprise that has become a symbol of local resilience and empowerment in the Sundarbans.

The delegation was accompanied by Dr. Amal Mukhopadhyay, Chairman of the Hanseatic India Forum, and Mr. Ansuman Das, Director of Sabuj Sangha. Their visit marked an important step in strengthening dialogue around sustainable livelihoods and inclusive development in one of India's most climate-vulnerable regions.

At the Sagar EURO Bakery, the delegation interacted with local women entrepreneurs who have transformed the initiative into a thriving example of community-driven enterprise. The bakery stands

as a strong example of how skill development, collective effort, and institutional support can create sustainable income opportunities while promoting dignity and self-reliance among rural women.

Beyond the bakery, the delegation toured multiple Sabuj Sangha intervention sites across Sagar Island. These visits offered firsthand insights into integrated development efforts focused on livelihood enhancement, resilience-building, and community ownership. From women-led microenterprises to grassroots initiatives aimed at strengthening economic security, the projects reflect a model rooted in local participation and long-term sustainability.

Observers noted that the visit underscored the importance of global partnerships in addressing local challenges. The exchange of perspectives highlighted how international cooperation, when aligned with community leadership, can amplify impact and foster inclusive growth. The engagement concluded on a note of optimism, reaffirming a shared commitment to strengthening resilience and supporting locally rooted development models in the Sundarbans.

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220 Solar Lights Illuminate Remote Corners of Alipurduar

In a significant move to enhance safety and strengthen rural infrastructure, 220 solar lights have been installed across various vulnerable locations in Alipurduar district under the Focused Rural Development Program (FRDP) supported by HDFC Bank.

The initiative has brought much-needed illumination to remote communities where darkness after sunset often restricts mobility and raises safety concerns. In areas with limited access to reliable electricity, the introduction of solar lighting is already making a visible difference in everyday life.

At Amarpur Tea Garden, located along a traditional elephant movement corridor, residents frequently face the challenge of human-wildlife interaction. Sudden encounters between villagers and elephants have long been a source of anxiety. Recognizing the risk, a solar light has been installed at a key entry point commonly used by elephants. The improved visibility during night hours is expected to help residents remain alert, reducing the likelihood of accidental confrontations and supporting safer coexistence between people and wildlife.



A similar transformation can be seen in Paschim Chengmari village, where a once-dark stretch of road posed daily difficulties for villagers returning home after dusk. Women, children, and elderly residents were particularly affected by the absence of proper lighting. With the installation of a solar light, the road now remains illuminated after sunset, improving mobility and restoring a sense of confidence among community members.

Officials associated with the program describe the initiative as more than a basic infrastructure upgrade. By integrating renewable energy solutions into rural development efforts, the project seeks to promote safety, sustainability, and dignity for communities living in vulnerable conditions. For many residents of Alipurduar, the simple glow of a solar light now represents greater security and a step toward a more resilient future.

Cross-Learning Workshop Strengthens Digital Sakhis



A three-day Cross-Learning Workshop under the Digital Sakhi Project, supported by L&T Finance, has significantly strengthened the impact and outreach of digital and financial literacy initiatives across multiple states. The workshop brought together Digital Sakhi teams from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to engage with the Karnataka unit and closely observe field-level implementation. The exposure visit focused on understanding how digital literacy and financial inclusion activities are transforming the lives of women at the grassroots level.

Through direct interaction with community members and field facilitators, participants witnessed how structured training modules, doorstep guidance, and continuous mentoring have enabled women to confidently use digital tools, access banking services, and participate in financial decision-making processes. In several cases, women beneficiaries have begun managing online transactions independently, accessing government schemes, and supporting their families

through improved financial planning. The cross-state exchange created a strong ripple effect. Teams from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh identified replicable best practices in community mobilization, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring systems that can further enhance program effectiveness in their respective regions. By adapting successful strategies from Karnataka, the project is expected to expand its depth of impact across states. Importantly, the workshop reinforced the role of Digital Sakhis as change-makers within their communities. Strengthened capacity, improved coordination, and shared learning are likely to accelerate progress toward sustainable digital and financial inclusion for women.

Such collaborative initiatives ensure that impactful models do not remain confined to one geography but are refined and scaled across regions. The workshop concluded with a collective commitment to implement the learnings on the ground, thereby deepening community-level impact and contributing to long-term women-led development.

Nayantara Program Empowers Adolescent Girls Through a Ten-Day Winter Camp

A 10-day winter residential camp for adolescent girls under the Nayantara Kishori Bahini Program was successfully organized at Nandakumarpur in the Sundarbans. A total of 38 adolescent girls participated in the camp, which aimed to promote sports, education, computer literacy, and girls' empowerment.

Each day of the camp began with a morning warm-up session at a nearby school ground, followed by football coaching, spoken English classes, and computer training. The day concluded with additional field practice sessions and a cultural program in the evening, providing the girls with opportunities to showcase their talents and build confidence.

The football coaching sessions were conducted, while teachers facilitated the academic and skill-development sessions. The initiative emphasized holistic development, fostering confidence, discipline, teamwork, and essential life skills among adolescent girls through a structured and integrated approach combining sports and education.

