

PRESS RELEASE



Historic Catchment Protection MoUs Signed for Ganol and Umiew;

₹ 28 Crore FOCUS Plus Assistance Released

Tura, September 22, 2026: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma today said that the state's catchment area protection law, enacted more than 35 years ago, has for the first time been enforced in letter and spirit, with the signing of MoU with communities for protection of Ganol and Umiew catchment area.

Addressing a gathering at Integrated Partners' Support and Engagement Programme at Tura, the Chief Minister stated that although the catchment protection legislation dates back decades, it required the understanding and permission of local communities to take effect, a threshold that had never been met since 1990.



“Today's MoU signing marks a historic breakthrough, with communities formally coming forward to partner with the Government in protecting vital catchment areas”, he said, while terming the signing of the MOU as critical to Meghalaya's fight against

climate change, given the state records nearly 50% of the country's highest rainfall and is already witnessing visible climate impacts.

The MoU is anchored in the MegARISE programme, which places conservation responsibility directly in the hands of communities. It is an externally aided project funded by KfW German Development Bank with a total cost of ₹ 344.4 crore, including external assistance of ₹ 277.2 crore and State share of ₹ 67.2 crore.

It commenced in November 2022 and runs till November 2029. The project covers two catchments of strategic importance, the Umiew catchment which is the principal source of Shillong's water supply, and the Ganol catchment which underpins water security for Tura.

The total project area is 52,198 hectares across 77 micro watersheds and 226 villages. The Ganol catchment alone covers 39,714 hectares across 64 micro watersheds and 132 villages, accounting for 76 percent of the total project area, spread over four blocks – Rongram and Selsella in West Garo Hills, Rerapara in South West Garo Hills and Samanda in East Garo Hills.

He linked the intervention to Tura's water security, noting that protection of the Ganol catchment underwrites the ₹ 398 crore Greater Tura Water Supply Scheme.

The Chief Minister described MegARISE and FOCUS Plus as addressing the same farming family from two directions: FOCUS Plus raises seasonal income, while MegARISE protects the water, soil and forest cover that income depends on.

During the programme, the Chief Minister also released the first installment of 2026 FOCUS Plus, transferring ₹ 2,500 each to 1,14,000 beneficiaries statewide, a total of ₹ 28 crore. This covers 1,04,000 existing beneficiaries and 10,000 newly registered families.

Registration remains open on a continuous basis, with the Government's goal of ensuring one member from every eligible family receives FOCUS Plus benefits.



The Chief Minister also handed over MegArise Community Awards, and flagged off the AGEY vehicles for SHGs under MSRLS.



Under FOCUS Plus, an annual untied grant of ₹ 5,000 per farming household is credited directly to the beneficiary's bank account in two tranches of ₹ 2,500. The amount can be used by the household for any farming or production related activity, seed, feed, planting material or equipment, at the point in the season when it matters.



Today, ₹ 2,500 per family, amounting to ₹ 28 crore, was transferred to 1,14,400 beneficiaries across the State. Of these, 93,285 are existing beneficiaries, 12,045 are beneficiaries whose applications were processed and disbursed in March 2026, and 9,070 are new beneficiaries added this year.