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EDITORIAL TEAM:

Coordinator :

Mr. K. Hukato Chishi, IFS
Member Secretary NPCB

Programme Officer :

Ms. Khriehunuo Rutsa

Information Officer :

Mrs. Lashikali Chishi

IT Officer :

Mr. Nannenlo Semy

Data Entry Operator :

Mr. Ithika A Swu

Editorial

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 mark a significant step towards strengthening scientific, systematic and sustainable management of solid waste in the country. The Rules emphasise waste segregation at source, resource recovery, recycling, accountability and the principles of a circular economy, thereby shifting the approach from waste disposal to sustainable resource management.

A key provision of the Rules is the segregation of waste into **four streams—wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste and special care waste**. Effective segregation at source is essential for ensuring appropriate processing, recycling and recovery, while reducing the quantity of waste reaching landfills.

The Rules further reinforce the responsibilities of local authorities, waste generators, bulk waste generators, institutions and other stakeholders, promoting greater accountability and compliance. The emphasis on digital monitoring and the Polluter Pays Principle further strengthens the framework for effective implementation.

In the context of Nagaland, sustainable solid waste management assumes particular importance due to the State's hilly terrain, growing urban centres and environmentally sensitive landscapes. Strengthening source segregation, decentralised waste processing, composting, recycling and community participation can contribute significantly towards improving waste management practices across the State.

The successful implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 requires collective responsibility and sustained public participation. Every stakeholder has a role in reducing waste generation, segregating waste at source and ensuring its proper recovery and disposal.

This issue focuses on the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, highlighting their key provisions, salient features and the responsibilities of various stakeholders in ensuring effective and sustainable solid waste management. It also aims to create awareness among households, institutions, schools, commercial establishments, bulk waste generators and the general public regarding their duties as waste generators. It also highlights the Montreal Protocol Success and the Transition to Energy-Efficient Cooling with regard to Ozone layer protection.

Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026: Towards Responsible and Sustainable Waste Management

Effective solid waste management is essential for protecting public health, conserving natural resources and maintaining a clean and sustainable environment. With increasing urbanisation, consumption and waste generation, there is a growing need for a robust framework that ensures waste is managed scientifically from the point of generation to its final treatment and disposal.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) notified the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, on 27th January 2026, superseding the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 Notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (w.e.f., April 1, 2026) which is a binding statutory mandate. A binding statutory mandate refers to a legal requirement established under legislation or rules that must be complied with by the concerned individuals, institutions, authorities and other stakeholders. In the context of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, waste management is not merely a matter of voluntary good practice or public awareness; it is governed by legally enforceable responsibilities and obligations. The Rules establish clear duties for waste generators, local authorities, bulk waste generators and other stakeholders, including proper segregation, handling, collection and management of waste. Compliance with these provisions is therefore mandatory, and failure to fulfil the prescribed responsibilities may attract appropriate regulatory action or environmental compensation, as applicable.

Thus, the Rules seek to transform solid waste management from a voluntary environmental practice into a legally accountable and systematic responsibility, ensuring that every stakeholder contributes to the proper management of waste and protection of the environment. The Rules, provide an updated and strengthened regulatory framework for the management of solid waste. The Rules emphasise segregation at source, scientific processing, recycling, resource recovery, accountability and the principles of a circular economy, while placing defined responsibilities on waste generators and other stakeholders.

A significant focus of the Rules is the four-way segregation of waste at source into wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste and special care waste. Proper segregation is the foundation of an efficient waste management system, as it facilitates appropriate treatment and recovery while reducing the quantity of waste requiring disposal.

The Rules also reinforce the role of citizens, institutions, commercial establishments, bulk waste generators and local authorities in ensuring responsible waste management. By clearly defining duties and strengthening monitoring and compliance mechanisms, the Rules seek to promote greater accountability and environmentally sound practices. For Nagaland, the effective implementation of these provisions presents an important opportunity to strengthen sustainable waste management practices through community participation, environmental education, decentralised processing, composting, recycling and resource recovery.

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, shall apply to every urban body as well as rural local body, including all entities within their jurisdictions whether being controlled and managed by the government; private sector or in Public Private Partnership; special notified areas; notified industrial areas or townships; special economic zones; food parks; areas under the control of Indian Railways including railway stations, railway tracks and land parcels adjacent to railway tracks; airports; airbases; harbours and ports including dry ports; defence establishments; public and private establishments; State and Central Government organisations; places of pilgrim, religious and historical importance and all land owners public or private, individual or body corporate in possession of land parcels, and to every domestic, institutional, commercial and any other non-residential solid waste generator. The rule does not cover industrial waste, hazardous waste, hazardous chemicals, biomedical waste, e-waste, battery waste and radio-active waste, that are covered under separate rules framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Solid waste means and includes solid or semi-solid domestic waste, sanitary waste, commercial waste, institutional waste, catering and market waste and other non-residential waste, street sweepings, silt removed or collected from the surface drains, horticulture waste, agriculture and dairy waste, treated bio-medical waste excluding industrial waste, bio-medical waste and e-waste, battery waste, radio-active waste generated in the area under the local authorities.

SALIENT FEATURES OF SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT RULES 2026:

**Mandatory
Four-Stream
Segregation of
Solid Waste
at Source**

**Clear
Responsibilities
for Bulk Waste
Generators**

**Environmental
Compensation for
Violations Based
on Polluter Pays
Principle**

**Online Tracking
and Monitoring of
Complete SWM
Process**

**Responsibility
of land allocation
for Waste
Processing
facilities fixed**

**Material Recovery
Facilities (MRFs)
have been
recognized as
facilities for sorting
of solid waste**

**Local bodies have
been encouraged
to generate carbon
credits**

**Use of Refuse
Derived Fuel (RDF)
by Industries
(6% initially,
10% after 3 years,
15% after 6 years)**

**Restrictions on
Landfilling and
Remediation of
Legacy Waste
Dumpsites**

**Special
provision for
SWM in Hilly
Areas and Islands**

FOUR STREAM WASTE SEGREGATION



Who is a Waste Generator?

Under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, a “waste generator” means any person or group of persons, residential premises, or non-residential establishment that generates solid waste. This includes households, institutions, commercial establishments, Indian Railways, defence establishments, offices, schools, hospitals, markets, hotels and other premises where solid waste is generated.

The definition emphasises that every individual and establishment that generates waste has a responsibility towards its proper management. Waste generators are expected to ensure that the waste generated by them is segregated at source and responsibly handed over or managed in accordance with the provisions of the Rules.

Under **Rule 5 of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026**, the duties of **waste generators**, explained in simple terms, are as follows:

- 1) Every waste generator shall:
 - a) prevent or **REDUCE** environmental pollution caused by solid waste.
 - b) **SEGREGATE** and store the waste generated by them viz wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste and special care waste.
 - c) wrap securely the used **SANITARY WASTE** like diapers, sanitary pads etc.
 - d) store separately **CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WASTE**, as and when generated, in their own premises;
 - e) store horticulture waste or **GARDEN WASTE** generated from their premises or land separately in their own premises and dispose of as per the directions of local bodies;

- f) Should **NOT THROW, BURN OR BURY** the solid waste generated by them, on streets, open public spaces outside his premises or dispose in the drain or water bodies;
- g) **PAY SUCH USER FEE** for solid waste management;
- h) **KEEP SUITABLE CONTAINERS** for storage of segregated solid waste viz. wet waste, dry waste, special care waste and sanitary waste segregated waste;
- i) **SHALL NOT MIX BIOMEDICAL WASTE** covered under Biomedical Waste Management Rules, 2016 with solid waste, provided it is identified as an occupier under Biomedical Waste Management Rules, 2016.

Ideal waste management strategy is ***"REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE"***

- 2) Gated communities, institutions over **5,000 sq. m.**, Resident Welfare Associations, markets, hotels and restaurants must:
- **Segregate waste at source** and ensure separate collection.
 - **Send recyclables** to authorised waste pickers/recyclers.
 - **Treat biodegradable waste on-site** through composting or bio-methanation, wherever possible.
 - **Hand over residual waste** to the local body's authorised waste collector.
 - Comply with these requirements **within one year of notification of the Rules.**

Who is a Bulk Waste Generator?

Under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, a Bulk Waste Generator (BWG) refers to an entity that meets at **least one** of the following criteria:

- **Building floor area:** 20,000 sq. m. or more; OR
- **Water consumption:** 40,000 litres or more per day; OR
- **Solid waste generation:** 100 kg or more per day.

These criteria apply to eligible institutional, commercial and residential establishments, such as government offices, educational institutions, hospitals, hotels, malls, industries, markets, residential societies and other large establishments.

The Bulk Waste Generators are namely;

Institutional users include buildings and premises occupied by:

- Central and State Government departments and undertakings;
- Local bodies;
- Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and private companies;
- Schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions; and
- Community places and similar establishments.

Commercial users include:

- Commercial establishments such as railway stations, bus stations or depots, airports and ports;
- Industrial units and industrial areas;

- Malls and multiplexes;
- Hotels;
- Hospitals and nursing homes;
- Hostels;
- Wholesale markets, including *mandis*, dealing with agricultural and horticultural produce, fish and meat;
- Stadiums and sports complexes;
- Community halls, convention halls and auditoriums;
- Marriage and banquet halls;
- Conference centres, Expo centres and exhibition areas; and
- Tourist spots.

The Rules also cover **residential societies**, recognising the important role of organised residential communities in ensuring proper segregation, collection and management of waste generated by households.

Why This Matters?

The broad coverage of these categories reflects the principle that solid waste management is a shared responsibility. Institutions, businesses, residential societies and other establishments are expected to manage the waste generated on their premises responsibly and comply with the requirements prescribed under the Rules.

“From schools and offices to markets, hotels and residential societies—every premises that generates waste has a role in managing it responsibly.

BULK WASTE GENERATORS – EXAMPLES

Bulk Waste Generators are non-household waste generators who generate more than the notified quantity of solid waste.



Government Offices & Public Institutions



Schools, Colleges & Educational Institutions



Hospitals & Nursing Homes



Hotels & Resorts



Malls & Multiplexes



Wholesale Markets (Mandis)



Industries & Industrial Areas



Bus Stations, Railway Stations, Airports, Ports



Stadiums & Sports Complexes



Marriage Halls, Convention Halls & Auditoriums



Conference Centres & Expo Centres



Exhibition Areas & Trade Centres



Hostels & Accommodation Facilities



Community Halls & Community Places



Tourist Spots & Recreational Places



Proper waste segregation, storage, collection and treatment by bulk waste generators is essential for a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.



Under Rule 6 of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, the duties of bulk waste generators, explained in simple terms, are as follows:

- a) Waste generators must register with the concerned local body through the centralised online portal. The registration certificate will mention the conditions they must follow. If any information or registration conditions change, they must inform the local body.
- b) Arrange for the collection and proper handover of dry waste, sanitary waste and special care waste to the local body or its authorised agency.
- c) If applicable, arrange for the separate collection and local processing of wet waste and garden/horticulture waste through composting, bio methanation or other approved methods.
- d) All new bulk waste generators must set up and operate a wet waste processing facility with enough capacity to process all the wet waste they generate, including horticulture waste. Existing bulk waste generators who cannot do this may seek exemption from the local body and must obtain Extended Bulk Waste Generator Responsibility (EBWGR) certificates for the amount of wet waste generated.
- e) Fulfil their Extended Bulk Waste Generator Responsibility (EBWGR) by:
 - Processing their wet waste; and
 - Ensuring environmentally safe management of dry, sanitary and special care waste.
- e) If wet waste is not processed by the bulk waste generator, they must obtain EBWGR certificates from the local body for the proper collection, transportation and environmentally safe processing/treatment of all waste.
- g) Do not engage or hand over waste to any person or organisation that is not registered as required under these rules.
- h) Submit an annual return by 30 June every year through the centralised online portal, including details of EBWGR obligations and certificates obtained. The information will also be submitted to the local body and made publicly available on its website.
- i) Hand over residual waste or inert material left after decentralised waste processing to authorised waste collectors, the local body, or its authorised agency.
- j) For new construction projects, immediately clean and remove waste generated during construction and ensure that it is managed according to these rules.
- k) Ensure that waste is not littered during transportation. Waste generated during journeys and at bus and railway stations must be properly managed according to these rules.
- l) Organisations involved in construction, infrastructure development or management of public facilities such as roads, airports, bus stops, railway stations and shopping malls must provide and operate suitable facilities for the collection, processing and disposal of different types of solid waste.
- m) Do not mix biomedical waste with regular solid waste if the organisation is covered under the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016. Such biomedical waste generators must separately report the quantity of biomedical waste generated and handed over to authorised biomedical waste treatment and disposal facilities in their annual returns.

Rule 39 of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 outlines the duties of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) through 54 subsections. Some of the key duties, explained in simple terms, are as follows:

1. All local bodies are responsible for undertaking solid waste management as provided under these rules in order to protect and improve quality of environment in the area under their jurisdiction.
2. Shall prepare solid waste action plan covering the following elements:
 - i) Total waste generation in the area under jurisdiction with ward wise break up;
 - ii) Ward-wise collection (including for special care waste) and transportation plan;
 - iii) Ward-wise mapping of market places, community service infrastructure such as bus stands, railway stations, places of religious significance;
 - iv) Plan for collection and transportation of waste from garbage vulnerable points and hot spots for littering;
 - v) Mapping of solid waste ingress points in water bodies and plan for stopping ingress of solid waste in water bodies through placement of appropriate barriers;
 - vi) Schedule for cleaning surface water bodies and drains from floating solid waste;
 - vii) Schedule for street sweeping and placement of waste bins as per prescribed norms;
 - viii) Plan for collection and environmentally sound management of Special care waste;
 - ix) Requirement for solid waste management infrastructure including for collection, transportation, segregation, storage, as required including for Special care waste and sanitary waste, before processing and recycling.
 - x) Responsibility to develop and set up infrastructure for segregation, collection, storage, transportation, processing and disposal of the solid waste.
- 9) Shall take measures for 100% coverage of solid waste management within their jurisdiction.
- 10) Shall undertake assessment of solid waste generated, including legacy solid waste, in a year by the 30th June of next financial year and also develop projection of quantity of waste to be generated in accordance with the guidelines issued by CPCB.
- 11) Shall assess the solid waste management infrastructure available for collection, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal and report it on the centralised portal by 30th June every year and also display the same on their website.
- 12) All ULBs shall ensure that the waste from daily sweeping of streets, lanes and by-lanes daily is collected separately, regularly in a periodic manner depending on the density of population, commercial activity and local situation
- 13) All ULBs shall ensure that solid waste is transported in an environmentally sound manner.
- 14) All ULBs shall set up covered secondary storage facility for temporary storage of street sweepings and silt removed from surface drains in cases where direct collection of such waste into transport vehicles is not convenient.

- 15) All Urban Local bodies shall prepare and submit annual report in Form IV on or before the 30th June of the succeeding year on the centralised online portal.
- 16) All Urban Local bodies shall prescribe criteria for levying of spot fine for violation of provisions of these rules.
- 17) All Urban Local bodies shall create public awareness through information, education and communication campaign and educate the waste generators.
- 18) Urban Local bodies shall identify bulk waste generator through detailed survey.
- 19) Local bodies shall integrate waste pickers or informal waste collectors by establishing a system to recognize them or organisations representing them, promoting their participation in solid waste management including door to door collection of waste, reflecting it on the centralised portal.
- 32) All Urban Local bodies shall create public awareness through information, education and communication campaign and educate the waste generators on the following, namely: -
 - a) not to litter;
 - b) minimise generation of waste;
 - c) reuse the waste to the extent possible;
 - d) practice segregation of waste into wet, dry (recyclable, non-recyclable), sanitary waste and special care waste;
 - e) practice home composting, vermi-composting, bio-gas generation or community level composting;
 - f) wrap used sanitary waste securely as and when generated, in the pouches provided by the brand owners or a suitable wrapping as prescribed by the local body;
 - g) store of segregated waste at the source in different bins;
 - h) hand over the segregated waste to waste pickers, waste collectors, recyclers or waste collection agencies; and
 - i) pay monthly user fee or charges to waste collectors or local bodies or any other person authorised by the local body for sustainability of solid waste management.

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 highlight the duties and responsibilities of key stakeholders involved in solid waste management. The roles of Waste Generators, Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs), and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have been explained in simple terms to help stakeholders better understand their responsibilities and contribute effectively to proper waste management.

The key emphasis is on segregation of waste at source, proper storage and handover of segregated waste, decentralised processing of biodegradable waste, scientific collection and transportation, and responsible disposal of residual waste. Clear understanding of these duties can encourage greater public participation and ensure effective implementation of the Rules at the local level.

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 provide a strengthened framework for scientific, sustainable and accountable solid waste management in India. The mandatory four-stream segregation at source, improved collection and processing systems, defined responsibilities for waste generators and Bulk Waste Generators, digital monitoring, and the Polluter Pays Principle aim to reduce waste sent to landfills and promote recycling and resource recovery. Successful implementation, however, depends on the active participation of citizens, institutions, local bodies, businesses and waste management agencies. By adopting responsible waste-generation and segregation practices and promoting a circular economy, the Rules can contribute significantly towards cleaner communities, environmental protection and a healthier, more sustainable future.

Environmental Compensation:

Environmental Compensation will be imposed based on **POLLUTER PAYS PRINCIPLE ON PERSON**, who are not complying with the provisions of these rules. The SPCB shall levied the Environmental compensation for the non-compliances of responsibilities and obligations set out under these rules, as per the guidelines prepared by the Central Pollution Control Board.

Montreal Protocol Success and the Transition to Energy-Efficient Cooling:

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is a landmark multilateral environmental agreement that regulates the production and consumption of nearly 100 man-made chemicals known as ozone-depleting substances (ODS). When released into the atmosphere, these substances damage the stratospheric ozone layer, which acts as Earth's protective shield against harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the Sun.

Adopted on 16 September 1987, the Montreal Protocol is one of the most successful environmental treaties in history and is among the rare international agreements to have achieved universal ratification.

The Montreal Protocol phases down the production and consumption of various ozone-depleting substances (ODS) in a step-by-step manner, with different phase-out schedules for developed and developing countries, the latter being referred to as "Article 5 Parties." Article 5 Parties are developing countries recognised under the Montreal Protocol as having specific additional time and support to meet their obligations for the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances. Examples include India, China, Brazil, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and many countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

Under the Protocol, all Parties have specific responsibilities, including the phase-out of ODS, control of ODS trade, annual reporting of data, and establishment of national licensing systems to regulate ODS imports and exports, among other obligations.

The Protocol follows the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, recognising the different circumstances of developed and developing countries. Nevertheless, both groups are subject to legally binding, time-bound and measurable commitments to protect the ozone layer.

The Montreal Protocol establishes a comprehensive framework for protecting the ozone layer through legally binding measures and international cooperation. Its key provisions include control measures (Article 2), calculation of control levels (Article 3), control of trade with non-Parties (Article 4), special provisions for developing countries (Article 5), reporting of

data (Article 7), non-compliance procedures (Article 8), and technical and financial assistance (Article 10).

The ozone-depleting and climate-warming substances regulated under the Protocol are grouped into different Annexes. Annex A covers chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons; Annex B covers other fully halogenated CFCs, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform; Annex C covers hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs); Annex E covers methyl bromide; and Annex F covers hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which were brought under the Protocol through the Kigali Amendment.

Through these provisions and successive amendments, the Montreal Protocol has enabled countries to progressively phase out or phase down controlled substances while providing developing countries with appropriate timelines, technical assistance and financial support. This framework has played a crucial role in the global recovery of the ozone layer and continues to support the transition towards ozone-safe, energy-efficient and climate-friendly cooling technologies.

Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are gases commonly used in refrigerators, air-conditioners and the production of foam. Although they are less harmful to the ozone layer than the CFCs they replaced, HCFCs still damage the ozone layer and also contribute to climate change. Some commonly used HCFCs can have a global warming impact nearly 2,000 times greater than carbon dioxide (CO₂).

To protect both the ozone layer and the climate, countries under the Montreal Protocol agreed in 2007 to speed up the phase-out of HCFCs. Developed countries completed their phase-out of HCFC consumption by 2020. Developing countries, known as Article 5 Parties, began reducing their HCFC use in 2013 and are working towards completing the phase-out by 2030, with limited use allowed for servicing existing equipment. The phase-out of HCFCs is helping countries move towards safer, more climate-friendly and energy-efficient alternatives for refrigeration and air-conditioning.

In developing countries (Article 5 Parties), the phase-out of HCFCs is progressing with support from the Multilateral Fund. The Multilateral Fund is an international financial mechanism that helps developing countries phase out ozone-depleting substances by providing funding, technical assistance, training and support for adopting safer alternatives. Countries are carrying out HCFC Phase-out Management Plans (HPMPs) in stages, along with projects and training programmes to help industries and technicians move towards safer alternatives.

As part of this transition, countries are encouraged to choose alternatives that are better for the environment, climate and human health, while also being safe and affordable. When selecting alternatives, factors such as their impact on global warming and energy use are also considered.

In the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector, this includes choosing suitable refrigerants, using energy-efficient equipment, following proper servicing practices, and ensuring that refrigerants are recovered, recycled and safely disposed of when equipment reaches the end of its useful life.

The Montreal Protocol has played a major role in protecting the ozone layer. With continued implementation of the Protocol, the ozone layer is expected to return to its 1980 levels by the middle of this century. Without the Montreal Protocol, the damage to the ozone layer could have been much greater, leading to millions of additional cases of skin cancer, other cancers

and cataracts caused by increased exposure to harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

The Protocol has therefore provided significant benefits to human health and the environment. It is estimated that by 2030, the Montreal Protocol will help prevent around two million cases of skin cancer every year, demonstrating the importance and success of global cooperation in protecting the ozone layer.

Since 1990, countries under the Montreal Protocol have phased out about 98% of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) globally. As many ODS are also powerful greenhouse gases, reducing their use has made a significant contribution to climate protection. Between 1990 and 2010, the Montreal Protocol is estimated to have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by about 135 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent, making a significant contribution to global climate protection.

The Kigali Amendment, adopted in 2016, strengthened the Montreal Protocol by introducing measures to reduce the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are powerful greenhouse gases. By phasing down HFCs, the Amendment is expected to prevent up to 420 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions by 2100.

This reduction could help avoid up to 0.5°C of global warming by 2100, making the Kigali Amendment an important contribution to global climate action. Its goals complement the Paris Agreement, which seeks to keep the increase in global average temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

Together, the Kigali Amendment and the Paris Agreement demonstrate the importance of international cooperation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change. The transition to energy-efficient, low-GWP and climate-friendly cooling technologies is an important part of these efforts, while continuing to protect the ozone layer.

The Montreal Protocol also contributes significantly to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By protecting the ozone layer, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting safer and more energy-efficient technologies, the Protocol supports health and well-being, clean energy, responsible consumption and production, climate action, and the protection of life on land and in water. Its success shows how international environmental agreements can contribute to several sustainable development goals while protecting both people and the planet.

All queries and feedback regarding this newsletter can be sent to:

MR. K. HUKATO CHISHI, IFS
*Member Secretary & EIACP Coordinator,
Nagaland Pollution Control Board*

Address: NAGALAND POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, Signal Point-797112
Email : envisnagaland@gmail.com



@eiACP_nagaland



@EiacpNagaland



EIACP Nagaland



EIACP_Hub Nagaland