

### **Mission Paani: Tribal man leads UN project to preserve Meghalayan forest in East Khasi hills**

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As the green cover of Meghalaya comes under threat from commercialization and deforestation, one man is determined to protect the sacred land and its natural vegetation. Bah-Tambor-Lyngdoh the Chief of Mawphlang village is leading India's first United Nations Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation ([REDD+](#)) project in the East Khasi Hills to save the scenic sacred groves of country's wettest catchment area. The community-led project will be restoring 27,000 hectares of cloud forest along with preserving groves and watersheds of the region.

The area is significant for Lyngdoh and Blah tribes of the region whose ancient beliefs that value nature and wildlife have stood as protection for these lush yet vulnerable Meghalayan forests. According to [The Better India](#), Bah Tambor started this project in Mawphlang in 2007 in order to revive the dense forest cover and to check that its produce is not harmed by human interference.

At the time, the Mawphlang village was facing a depletion of the sacred groves and forests and was also being ignored by the organisations that were coming to Shillong to fund conservation efforts in the state. Bah Tambor told The Better India that the village people who had seen better times talked about how the region was covered with dense forests and rich biodiversity over the hills. With rampant deforestation and plans of development in his village, natives who were deeply connected to nature through their ancient tribes, were concerned for the depleting natural resources like water. Deforestation in the region also meant that animals and bird species were facing the looming threat of habitat loss.

These reasons motivated Bah Tambor to start the UN REDD+ funded charitable organisation registered under the name of 'Ka Synjuk Ki Hima Arliang Wah Umiam-Mawphlang Welfare Society'. It is a [federation](#) of Indigenous Traditional Institutions on River Umiam Sub-Watershed Welfare Society. The federation includes ten traditional indigenous that work to acquire funds to help protect the forests and the catchment areas in around 62 villages of Khasi Hills while also providing technological and financial support to the preservation of forests. The project has also uplifted the participating villages from poverty as they provide microfinances to villagers who work on diversification of animal husbandry and farming.

Source: <https://www.news18.com/news/buzz/mission-paani-tribal-man-leads-un-project-to-preserve-meghalayan-forest-in-east-khasi-hills-3316511.html>