

Road traffic remains disrupted in west

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KUSHHANGLEEWANG

GEYZING, July 10: West Sikkim has been receiving continuous rainfall since July 7, and landslides and mudslides have become a continuous phenomenon leading to frequent traffic snarls at various sites. The landslides triggered by incessant rains have disrupted road connectivity at various places in the district.

The road connecting district headquarters Geyzing with Dentam remains closed at Som regularly as mudslides keeps occurring at frequent intervals. The machinery engaged by the Roads & Bridges department at the site has to go through a hectic schedule to keep the road clear. Travelling through that particular stretch of road at Som is extremely risky as the road created at a steep cliff is narrow, muddy and slushy due to frequent mudslides. The road was opened for light vehicles till Thursday morning and closed again due to mudslides. It is expected that the road will be reopened shortly. The alternate road



connecting Geyzing with Dentam has also become inaccessible due to mudslides.

The commuters travelling to Dentam, Bermiok, Kakuk, Rinchenpong and other places in west Sikkim from Geyzing will now have to rely on the longer Geyzing-Jorethang route if Geyzing-Dentam roads remain closed

for more days.

Similarly, the State highway connecting Pelling and Yuksam with Tashiding is also blocked since two days due to landslides at two different places. The fallen boulders and mud have blocked the road at Labing, near Gerethang, disrupting the vehicular movement completely and a major portion of the road has been swept away by flashflood near Tashiding. The people of the constituency are relying on Tashiding-Legship road via south Sikkim. If Tashiding-Legship road connectivity gets disrupted as it happens frequently during monsoon season, then Tashiding will remain completely isolated from rest of the world. Last year due to landslides at various places, Yuksam-Tashiding constituency was marooned

for many days. People of the constituency have requested the concerned department to restore the road connectivity at the earliest.

The Road & Bridges department's assistant engineer (Geyzing Division), D.B. Gurung informed that the concerned department is working continuously to maintain the traffic movement and the workforce has been deployed by the department at the landslide-affected sites.

He maintained that the restoration of Yuksam-Tashiding road may take time considering the graveness of the damages caused by landslides. He added that due to landslides at various places, restoration of road connectivity cannot not be assumed as permanent unless the rainy season ceases. "When we are engaged

on transmission and on holds fifth meeting



Series of slides disrupt road connectivity across West Sikkim

Geyzing, July 11 (SR): The landslides triggered by incessant rain have disrupted the road connectivity at various places in West Sikkim. The western region of the state has been receiving massive and continuous rainfall since 7th July and landslides and mudslides have become continuous phenomenon at various spots along national and state highways leading to frequent traffic snarls.

The road connecting district headquarters Geyzing and Maneybung - Dentam constituency remains closed at a place named Som frequently following persisting mudslides. The machineries engaged by the Road and Bridges Department at the said site are having harrowing time keeping the road clear and trafficable. Travelling through this particular stretch at Som is extremely risky as the road created at a steep cliff is narrow, muddy and slushy due to frequent mudslides. The road at Som that was opened for the light vehicles till Thursday morning has been



reported to be closed due to mudslides. However, restoration of vehicular movement is expected soon as the workforce has been working on a war footing level.

Another road via Lumjik that also connects Geyzing with Dentam has become inaccessible as the road has been blocked at a place just below Som due to landslides. These two routes act as a short cut network between Geyzing and rest of the constituencies of West

Sikkim. The commuters desirable to travel to Dentam, Bermiok, Kakuk, Rinchenpong, Soreng and other places of West Sikkim from Geyzing must rely on longer route via Geyzing - Jorethang route if Geyzing - Dentam roads remain closed for more days.

The business community and the common people have to suffer a lot if Geyzing - Dentam roads remain closed for longer period.

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Monsoon Calamity . . . *Sikkim Reporter*

Similarly, Pelling - Tashiding state highway is also blocked due to landslides at two different places since last two days. The fallen boulders and mud have blocked the road at Labing near Gerethang disrupting the vehicular movement completely and a major portion of road has been swept away by flash flood at a place called Smriti Ban near Tashiding Bazaar. The people of the constituency are relying on Tashiding - Legship road via South Sikkim to make their way to West district. If Tashiding - Legship road connectivity gets disrupted as it happens frequently during monsoon season, then Tashiding will remain completely isolated from rest of the constituencies of West Sikkim. Last year due to landslides at various places Yuksam - Tashiding constituency was marooned for many days. People of the constituency have requested the concerned department to restore the road connectivity at the earliest. The Road and Bridges Department's Assistant Engineer (Geyzing Division), D.B Gurung informed that the department is working continuously to maintain the traffic movement and the workforce has been deployed by the department at the landslides affected sites. He maintained that restoration of Pelling - Tashiding road may take time considering the graveness of damages caused by landslides. However, he asserted that restoration of road would be initiated as far as possible. He added incessant rain has caused landslides at various places, restoration of road connectivity could not be assumed as permanent unless the rainy season ceases. "When we clear the roads at some places and we are informed that roads are blocked at other places too. Landslides and traffic obstruction have been just rampant

due to excessive rainfall. The concerned department has been working hard to maintain smooth flow of traffic so that people do not have to suffer", he said.

SDM (Yuksam) Sonam Rinchen Lepcha on Wednesday also visited the landslides affected places (Pelling - Tashiding road) and directed the concerned department to restore the traffic movement at the earliest.

Legship - Jorethang national highway considered a life - line of West Sikkim also remains closed frequently as a result of landslides at various places. Sometimes the passengers have to wait for hours on the road anticipating the early traffic clearance. However the concerned department has provided machinery at landslides prone stretches of Legship - Jorethang road to avoid any disruption in vehicular movement. As the back cutting for road expansion purpose was in progress until a month ago, the shooting boulders and mud from freshly excavated road side walls pose great threat to people while travelling through Legship - Jorethang highway. The drivers who ply through that particular route have to make precarious journey especially during rainy days.

Disruption in movement of vehicles due to traffic snarls take its toll on business community of West Sikkim and common people as taking a longer route to reach desired destinations is time consuming and they have to pay more fare as well.

People opine that if rain continues for a week and more in West Sikkim then occurrence of more natural forces triggered disasters cannot be ruled out. They say the concerned departments must remain alert to fight back the consequences of natural calamity.