## Major landslide breaks out at Sokpay, 18 families evacuated, NS highway disrupted

## **DICHEN ONGMU**

GANGTOK, March 26: A massive landslide broke out at Sokpay village under Dikchu-Jang GPU on the wee hours of Sunday. Fortunately no human casualties were reported but about four houses were damaged while 18 families were evacuated to safer locations by the concerned authorities.

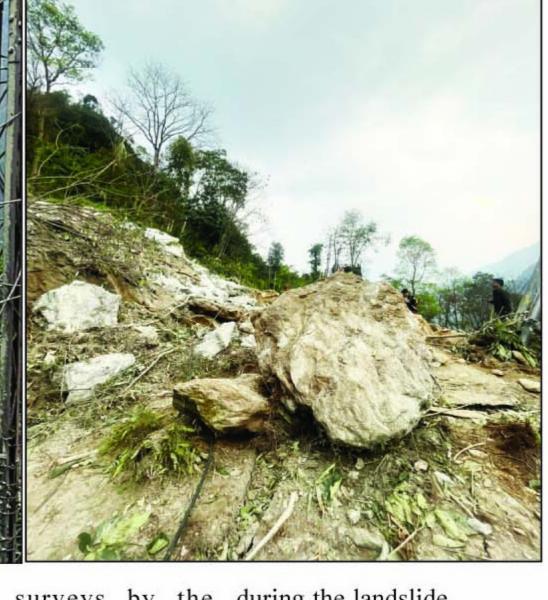
Agricultural lands, standing crops, properties and livestock have also been extensively damaged when the almost two kilometre slide ran through the village. Drinking water supply and power lines along with the area's tourism spot 'Selfie Dara' were also washed away by the slide.

The national highway connecting North Sikkim has also been cut-off following the slide.

Nikhare reached the spot and surveyed the slide along with other concerned district administration officials.

Balaram Adhikari and his damage caused by the slide. He informed that immediate





lakh were provided to the two Adhikari. families who have lost their amount of Rs. 40,500 was Gangtok DC Tushar handed over to a cow owner while Rs. 25,000 was provided as relief to a tenant.

"There would have been major human casualties had Gangtok zilla adhyaksha the landslide occurred during the day since there is a good team also took stock of the flow of vehicles along highway plus tourists also often stop at Selfie Dara to relief packages of Rs. 1.30 take the pictures", said

homes in the slide. Relief reasons of the landslide, Adhikari mentioned that local residents are blaming the NHPC dam at the base of the hill and the powerline tower situated at the hill top.

> "We cannot simply blame the projects situated here as the core reason behind the villages for their safety. slide is still unknown. However, the directions are Sharma shared that such given to the Mines & Geology department who will conduct well in the area followed by

the study and research about several surveys by the Asked about the possible the root cause of the officials with suggestions of Gangtok zilla adhyaksha.

complete Assuring assistance from the Adhikari government, informed that the affected families were evacuated to the nearby guest houses and

Local villager Manju slides have occurred earlier as

devastation," said the evacuating everyone, which never really developed into the execution stage. "Every monsoon we have to evacuate and stay somewhere else. The authorities tell us that we will be shifted but it never happens. We feel that the government can give us an us there", she shared.

shop and house at Selfie Dara government.

during the landslide.

"I do not own this property but I have invested all my savings in this shop to run my family. As per the authorities, only the land owners will be compensated and not the tenants like us and this is worrisome for us. All I had was this shop and three pigs which I lost to the slide. area, set up a colony and shift I have no means of earnings now", lamented Subba Sunita Subba lost her seeking help from the