

N.H. 10 caves in near Kalimpong following heavy rains

EOI CORRESPONDENT

DARJEELING, SEP 13/-/ Incessant rain over the past two days caused a major landslide in the 29th Mile area between

Teesta and Gale Khola as officials of the Kalimpong district



The spot where N.H. 10 caved in -- Pranab Chhetri

Teesta and Gale Khola on National Highway-10 in Kalimpong district, affecting traffic flow.

A 20 to 25 feet long stretch of the NH-10 at 29th Mile that connects Sikkim with the mainland caved in due to the heavy rainfall at around 11.30 in the morning on Thursday. The stretch of the road falls in Kalimpong district also connects Darjeeling and the plains of Siliguri.

administration, police and NH-10 division reached the spot to monitor the situation.

District Magistrate Kalimpong Dr. Vishwanath said, "We have managed to restore one way traffic, as the area is quite vulnerable and any heavy movement could cause more cave-ins. Restoration work of the damaged stretch is also in progress. We are closely monitoring the situation."



Teaj festival in Darjeeling Chowrasta -- Pranab Chhetri

Wild dogs in the high altitudes of Sikkim are difficult to control

SUJAL PRADHAN

GANGTOK, SEP 13/-/ Efforts of the Sikkim Anti-Rabies and Animal Health (SARAH) Division notwithstanding, reports of livestock losses, especially calves of yaks and sheep due to attacks by wild dogs, is going up in the high altitude areas of the State, according to the Department of Veterinary Services website.

Wildlife conservation through control of feral dogs is a priority of SARAH. The setting up of high altitude Animal Birth Control (ABC) camps have been resumed in North Sikkim and East Sikkim at the request of people of these areas as well as the army. Dogs have been operated upon under difficult circumstances. The activities of ABC camps had been hampered earlier because of adverse weather conditions.



Since 2006, the SARAH Division has been working to eliminate rabies from Sikkim. Between 2006 and March 2016, till which the website is updated, there has been no human deaths from rabies in Sikkim. There have been 5,487 animal birth control surgeries during this period and 24,571 doses of rabies vaccine. In a State-wide annual rabies vaccination campaign in 2015, 17,526 animals were vaccinated. There was rapid response to three cases of possible canine rabies near the inter-state border with West Bengal.

Yet the wild dogs moving in packs in high altitude areas of Sikkim are a problem as the controls of their population is difficult, say experts. Dogs have multiplied because camp dogs of security forces and also of the local shepherds have multiplied in numbers and moved out. The unplanned dumping of garbage in the fringes of forest areas has also helped these dogs to grow, offering them food. The Forest Department has been trying to generate awareness against dumping of wastes in the open.

The wild dogs in the high altitudes are having a negative impact not only on Himalayan blue sheep, Himalayan thar and Tibetan wild ass, but even the elusive red panda, says a SARAH report on achievements and proposals. They are even competing with snow leopards and wolves for scarce food; being hunters in packs, they have an advantage. Carrying out ABC programmes in these areas required co-operation from the army and the forestry as these are often restricted areas.

Modernization plans of air force, army fuel political controversy

EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, SEP 13/-/ Modernization plans of the air force and the army have fuelled a political controversy, opposition parties accusing the Centre of compromising national security.

Following a plea for modernization of the air force by Air Chief Marshal B. S. Dhanoa, senior politicians have accused the NDA government of using men in uniform to defend the Rafale deal. They also referred to recent comments of Vice Chief of Indian Air Force Air Marshal S B Deo on Rafale. The suggestion of the army for a cutback in the number of troops as a part of its modernization drive has been viewed by Congress as a move to compromise national security, say PTI reports from New Delhi.

The air chief said on Wednesday China had been significantly ramping up its air power including deploying new jets in Tibet and India must match the capabilities of its "adversaries". India was facing a unique situation of having two nuclear armed neighbours - China and Pakistan - on its borders and the intentions of the adversaries could change overnight, he said. Delivering a lecture on IAF's force structure, he said the capability of the force needed to be enhanced in sync with security challenges

facing the nation.

"China has approximately 1,700 fighter aircraft of which 600 are fourth generation jets. A large number of these can be expected to be brought against us in the Tibet Autonomous Region in case of compromising national security seminar."

The IAF chief said though India was facing a grave security threat, its combat squadron had come down to 61 from sanctioned strength of 42 which is a matter of concern. Each fighter squadron has 16-18 aircraft.

Former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie and lawyer-activist Prashant Bhusan argued in a news conference on Tuesday that national security had been compromised by reducing the number of the Rafale jets to 36 from the original proposal of 126 aircraft. Referring to Vice Chief of Indian Air Force Air Marshal S B Deo's recent comments on Rafale, they said after being "totally exposed", the government is now using the senior military brass to defend the deal.

The opposition led by the Congress has been alleging massive irregularities in the deal, claiming that the government was procuring each aircraft at a cost of over Rs 1,600 crore as against Rs 526 crore finalized by the UPA government. The government has rejected the charges.

Noting that senior Air Force

officials had made statements as to how Rafale was a "beautiful aircraft", Shourie, Sinha and Bhusan said they agreed with the number of aircraft had been reduced from 126 to just 36, "disregarding IAF's strategic needs."

Congress has accused the Centre of compromising national security by proposing to reduce the strength of the army by 150,000 troops. The top brass of the Army Wednesday gave an in-principle approval to carry out extensive reforms in the second largest standing Army in the world with an aim to enhance its war-fighting capabilities, official sources said. The decision was taken at a two-day brainstorming meeting of top commanders of the Army which was chaired by Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat.

The sources said the reform may include making various formations as well as divisions "leaner and meaner", transforming the procurement process into a seamless exercise, restructuring of various establishments of the force and possible downsizing of the troops if required.

There have been indications that the Army may cut over 100,000 troops over the next five years as part of restructuring process. The current strength of the force is around 1.3 million personnel.

The commanders also reviewed the modernisation process of the

Army and emphasised on the need to equip the force with new platforms and weapons, the sources said. The Defence Ministry has already announced a series of reform measures for the Army which included redeployment of nearly 57,000 officers and other ranks as well as ensuring better utilisation of resources. Under the cadre review, the Army is also looking at abolishing the rank of brigadier, they said.

The Congress, on the other hand, accused the Modi government of compromising national security and displaying insensitivity on the issue of joblessness, following reports that there were plans to cut the strength of the Army by 150,000 personnel. Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said on Wednesday the party was concerned about various reports in this regard and questioned why the Modi government was "not providing adequate funds" to the Army.

The opposition party's reaction came even as the government stated that there was no immediate plan to cut the strength of the Army. Singhvi said if the reports were true, "then isn't the Modi Government guilty of destroying more jobs in the country? 1.5 lakh families will be severely affected by this decision."

(Compiled from PTI reports from New Delhi)

LTVC to approach all political parties on L-T seat reservation

SUJAL PRADHAN

GANGTOK, SEP 13/-/ The Limbuo Tamang Voluntary Council has decided to take the initiative in uniting all political parties and organizations of Sikkim on the issue of reservation of seats for the Limbuo-Tamang communities in the Sikkim Assembly and protection of article 371F of the Constitution. LTVC president Yehang Tsong said on Wednesday, "Time has come for us to unite and come up with a joint decision and steps for the welfare of Limbuo-Tamang communities and Sikkim. Today, we are suffering tomorrow it may be others," said Yehang.

Yehang said on August 10 he received a letter from the Union Home Ministry, North East Division, under the RTI on the latest status of the L-T seat reservation issue. Contd to Page-3

Toy train picks up steam again

EOI CORRESPONDENT

DARJEELING, SEP 13/-/ Coal loaders of the DHR ended their two-day flash strike and resumed loading work from Thursday, giving the toy train enough steam to operate the 16-km to and fro joy ride, from Darjeeling to Ghoom.

Six contractual workers in the Darjeeling railway station had stopped lifting coal for the steam engine from Tuesday because their salary for the month of August was not paid. As a result, the daily joy ride service on the narrow gauge in trains hauled by steam engines which is more popular with the tourists but heavy on the purse at Rs 1,310 had to be discontinued temporarily for two days.

With no option available, tourists were forced to take the joy ride on the cheaper diesel locomotives arranged by the DHR. The diesel ride costs Rs. 805 per person. However, the ride on diesel engines does not evoke the surreal feeling of a steam loco.

The issue was resolved after the contractor entrusted to supply coal paid the workers their salary on Thursday morning. "We did not want to do what we did. We know it caused problems and dissatisfaction among tourists. But, we were compelled to take this step," said Kishore Sunam, one of the contractual workers. Contd to Page-3

SKM asks for revenue generation details of Sikkim Government

SUJAL PRADHAN

GANGTOK, SEP 13/-/ In view of the announcement of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling that the Fifth Pay Committee arrears would be paid to government employees in instalments, the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has asked the Sikkim Government for details of revenue generation from hydro, electricity projects, online lotteries, casinos, State-owned hotels and motor vehicle taxes and their utilization.

Demanding that the arrears should be disbursed in a single instalment, SKM spokesman Jacob Khaling



SKM leaders in a news conference -- Shekhar Khawas

said on Thursday that Hudco to pay dues of contractors and suppliers. The payment of arrears would cost the exchequer Rs 354 crore, the Chief Minister had announced. Contd to Page-3

Passion for life

NEW FEATURE-LOADED RANGE

Renault KWID

Buy and stand a chance to win exciting prizes from 1st to 24th September*

CELEBRATING

5,00,000

RENAULT CARS

7.99% LOW RATE OF INTEREST* + **INSURANCE AT ₹1 ON SELECT STOCK****

For further details, visit www.renault.co.in

DESIGN

NEW HAZARD-LED CHROME FRONT GRILLE

TECHNOLOGY

NEW FIRST-IN-CLASS REVERSE PARKING CAMERA
FIRST-IN-CLASS AMT DIAL WITH TRAFFIC ASSIST
FIRST-IN-CLASS TOUCHSCREEN MEDIANAVI

GO ANYWHERE

HIGH GROUND CLEARANCE OF 180 mm
BEST-IN-CLASS BOOT SPACE OF 300 Litres

For a test drive, SMS 'KWID' to 53300 or call on 1800 300 4444 (Open from Monday to Sunday between 7:00 am to 11:00 pm). Also available in CSD. Special offers for Defence Personnel, Government, PSU and Corporate employees. Terms and conditions apply. *MSD consumer offers are valid on bookings accompanied by the delivery in September 2018 only. Offers may vary across variants and cities. Benefits may vary based on the variant and year of manufacturing and are applicable only for stocks list. **Insurance at ₹1 scheme is only applicable for insurance under Renault Assured program for the 1st year. 7.99% interest rate scheme is available from Renault Finance and loan is at the sole discretion of Renault Finance. **Warranty of 2 Years or 50,000 km + Extended Warranty of 2 Years or 50,000 km. If not detailed offers, visit www.renault.co.in. Accessories, features, colours shown may not be part of the standard offer and will differ variant wise. The figures listed in the ad are from stock images and have been used for representation purpose only. Renault India Pvt. Ltd. reserves the right to change or cancel the mentioned schemes and conditions without prior notice. Renault India Pvt. Ltd. shall not be liable for any loss or damage arising from your failure to comply or understand the offer details. In the event of any dispute, all matters shall be governed by all applicable laws of India and Court of Jurisdiction shall have the jurisdiction. For detailed terms and conditions, please visit www.renault.co.in.

SHOWROOM: WEST BENGAL: KOLKATA: RENUALT Kolkata South (Alipore) Mob: +91 8527240425, RENUALT Kolkata Central (AJC Bose Road) Mob: +91 8527240370, BARASAT: RENUALT Barasat Mob: +91 8527235175, ASANSOL: RENUALT Asansol Mob: +91 8527240471, DURGAPUR: RENUALT Durgapur Mob: +91 8527240447, BERTHAMPORE: RENUALT Berhampore Mob: +91 8527235410, HALDIA: RENUALT Haldia Mob: +91 8527234164, KHARAGPUR: RENUALT Kharagpur Mob: +91 8527240555, KRISHNANAGAR: RENUALT Krishnanagar Mob: +91 8448488211, MALDA: RENUALT Malda Mob: +91 8527236841, SURI: RENUALT Suri Mob: +91 8577905404.