

NEWS

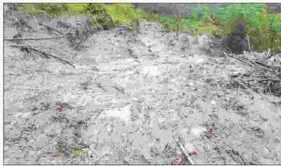
Rain-induced landslides in Maneybung-Dentam

KUSH HANG LEEWANG

GEYZING, July 8: The landslides triggered by incessant rain of Wednesday night have caused severe damages in Maneybung-Dentam constituency. Some farmers of Lingey-Kunabar ward, near Uttarey lost their maize and cardamom fields and other standing crops in the slides. Likewise, three sheep owned by Dharma Raj Rai were killed when the landslide swept away the cattle shed.

A local resident informed that as many as 12 families lost their standing crops and their farmland have suffered severe damages.

Similarly, a massive landslide occurred near Sopakha secondary school snapping road connectivity at various places. Some household located



below the under-construction road around Lingey-Kunabar stretch are reported to be endangered considering the risk of a sudden landslide in the area. Continuous landslides and the losses incurred by the locals in the natural calamity are being reported from Lingey Kunabar ward on regular basis. Local people said that under construction road and lack of poor drainage system

On Thursday, Dentam SDM Nanda Kumar Karki, concerned BDO and the officials from Land Revenue department visited the affected site and took stock of the damages. The affected families were assured necessary aid from the concerned department after a proper evaluation of the losses suffered.

Similarly, the road that connects Jogidara with Singshore bridge via Nabrung has been completely damaged at Begha khola. Some villagers residing at higher reaches of Dharbani Khola where massive landslide has occurred are living in fear of being severely affected if the landslides below occur continuously.

The people have demanded the concerned authority for initiatives against landslide menace in the affected areas of the constituency.

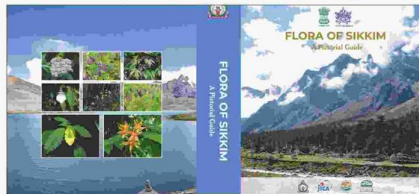
CM releases 'Flora of Sikkim – a pictorial guide'

SE Report

GANGTOK, July 8: Chief Minister P. S. Golyal released a book 'Flora of Sikkim – A Pictorial Guide' at Dentam, West Sikkim on July 7, informs a press release.

The pictorial guide was a joint collaboration of by Botanical Survey of India (BSI), an apex research organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carrying out taxonomic and floristic studies on wild plant resources of the country and JICA-assisted Sikkim Biodiversity Conservation & Forest Management Project, Forest & Environment department.

The book release function also had the presence of Forest minister Karma Loday Bhutia along with Forest, &



Environment ACS - cum-PCCF M. L. Srivastava. This book is the outcome of the taxonomic research in the region since J.D. Hooker in 1849 and more specifically by the Botanical Survey of India since its inception in Sikkim from 1979. The book contains an exhaustive checklist of 5068 taxa

(including 152 cultivated taxa), belonging to 1491 genera and 209 angiosperm families that are occurring in Sikkim with updated nomenclature and distribution.

The book details the geography, ecology, vegetation pattern and forest types of Sikkim. The book contains about 2000 plus coloured

photographs of about 1350+ species from Sikkim Himalaya. The book will be a boon to foresters, scientists, academicians, conservationists and other stakeholders to identify, cherish and protect Sikkim's magnificent and unique biodiversity and further promotion of tourism in the region, the release mentions.

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Sikkim blossoms: State home to 27% of India's flowering plants

Botanical Survey of India publication lists 4,912 naturally occurring species

SHREY SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Sikkim, the smallest State with less than 1% of India's landmass, is home to 27% of all flowering plants found in the country, reveals a recent publication by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI). *Flora of Sikkim - A Pictorial Guide*, released earlier this week, lists 4,912 naturally occurring flowering plants in the tiny Himalayan State.

"The total number of naturally occurring flowering plants in the country is about 18,004 species, and with 4,912 species, the diversity of flowering plants in Sikkim, spread over an area of 7,096 sq. km, is very unique,"

Rajib Gogoi, Scientist and Regional Head, BSI, Gangtok, and the lead author of the publication, said.

Dr. Gogoi said the publication provides details of 5,068 taxa (including 152 cultivated taxa) belonging to 1,491 genera and 209 angiosperm families which are naturally occurring flowering plants, along with geography, ecology, vegetation pattern and forest types of Sikkim.

The other authors of the publication include Norbu Sherpa, J.H. Franklin Benjamin, D.K. Agrawala, S.K. Rai and S.S. Dash. In the 582-page publication, the authors have included more

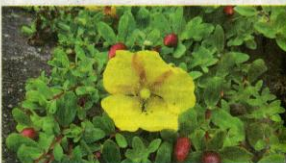


Flower power: Rhododendron aeruginosum and Hypericum reptans in Sikkim. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

than 2,000 photographs of about 1,350 plant species from the State.

Kanchenjuga biosphere The State, which is a part of the Kanchenjuga biosphere landscape, has different altitudinal ecosystems, which provide opportunity for herbs and trees to grow and thrive.

"From subalpine vegetation to the temperate to the tropical, the State has different kinds of vegetation, and that is the reason for such a diversity of flora. The elevation also varies between 300 to 8,598 metres above mean sea level, the apex being the top of Mt. Kanchenjuga (8,586 metres)," Ashiho A. Mao,



Director of BSI, said. Dr. Mao emphasised the need to have updated checklist of flora of every State, and active cooperation with the State government is needed in this regard.

Sikkim's Minister of Forest and Environment Karma Loday Bhutia, who was present at the launch of the publication, said that along

with unique geographical features, the people of Sikkim have a unique bond with nature and trees. The Minister referred to the notification titled Sikkim Forest Tree (Amity & Reverence) Rules, 2017 which state that the, "State government shall allow any person to associate with trees standing on his or her private land or on any public land by entering into a Mith/Mit or Mitti relationship." The notification encouraged people to adopt a tree "as if it was his or her own child in which case the tree shall be called an adopted tree".

Mr. Bhutia, however, expressed concern that certain activities in the mountain State were being carried out without considering their impact on the environment and biodiversity. "The widening of roads to Nathu La, which is of strategic interest to us (bordering China), and the hydel power plants in north Sikkim, should also take into account the environmental concerns of locals. We are not against such activities, but it should not come at the cost of our biodiversity," the

Minister said. The publication details 532 species of wild orchids (which is more than 40% of all orchid species found in India), 36 species of rhododendron and 20 species of oak, and more than 30 species of high value medicinal plants, among other species.

Mr. Gogoi said that the founding fathers of botany were always interested in the flora of Sikkim. Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, one of the pioneers of modern botany, conducted the first survey of Sikkim in 1848 and published *Rhododendrons of Sikkim*.

In 1898, two British botanists, Sir George King and Robert Pantling, published their monumental work, *The Orchids of Sikkim-Himalayas*.