

Floods and landslides disrupt life in north

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Siliguri: Incessant rainfall over the past 24 hours disrupted normal life across the hills of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Sikkim, and in districts in the plains like Alipurduar, with floods and landslides severing key links and damaging homes.

The swollen Teesta river submerged a stretch of SH12 at Teesta Bazar on Monday morning, temporarily cutting off the link between Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The route reopened around 12.30pm after floodwater receded.

A fresh landslide at SNT Dara near the Coronation Bridge in Sevoke later blocked NH10, the lifeline connecting Sikkim and Kalimpong with the plains. Large boulders and debris crashed onto the highway on Monday afternoon, bringing traffic to a halt. Restoration work is on.

Administrative sources said Kalimpong received heavy rainfall from Sunday evening through Monday morning, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) recording 97mm. The rain triggered a landslide near Rockvale Academy in ward 20 of Kalimpong town, damaging houses.

Many locations of the Darjeeling hills witnessed minor landslides, blocking roads. At Peshok, a large tree fell across a PWD road and was removed by evening, restoring traffic.

As the Teesta continued to swell, the Darjeeling district administration issued alerts through public address systems across vulnerable areas, including Kalijhora and Sevoke, urging residents near the riverbank to move to safer locations.

In Alipurduar, downpour over the past 24 hours threw life out of gear. Hasimara recorded 215.4mm rain.

IMD forecast continued heavy rain across Sikkim and north Bengal, especially Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts, over the next 48 hours.