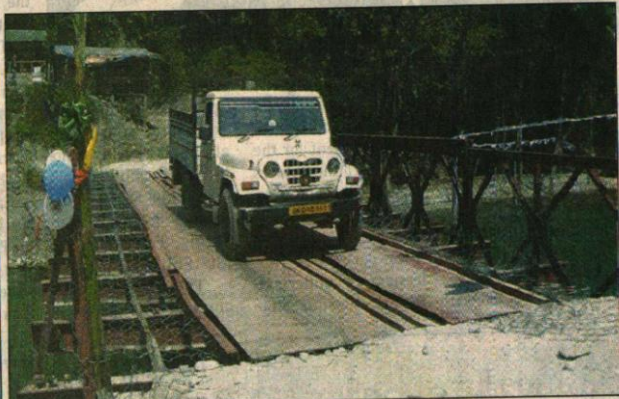


# Sliding bridge inaugurated at Mantam



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA  
MANGAN, 14 MAR:**

Vehicles have started plying towards the cut off areas of Sakyong-Pentong and Tingvong GPUs after the inauguration of a new sliding bridge over Mantam Lake today almost two years after a landslide occurred at Syok Bhir in Upper Dzongu, North Sikkim.

It may be recalled that the Syok Bhir landslide on 13 Aug 2016 had formed an artificial lake, now called Mantam Lake, and submerged 14 houses of 4th Mile, Mantam village, along with the bridge connecting Tingvong and Sakyong-Pentong GPUs to the rest of the state.

The 22m-long bridge with a lifting capacity of 10 tonnes

has been constructed by Land & Revenue Department and executed by Roads & Bridges Department.

It was inaugurated today by Deputy Speaker SLA cum Dongu MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha, in the presence of Secretary of Land & Revenue Department, Chairperson of Sikkim Nationalised Transport,

District Collector [North], Special Secretary [LRD] Panchayat members and officials from various departments.

Area MLA, Mr Lepcha stated that the bridge had made it possible to provide relief to 11 villages of the two GPUs on the left bank of Rengyong River. He further added that this was just a temporary bridge and

the permanent bridge will be up at the earliest.

He also expressed gratitude to all who put their efforts into the construction of the bridge.

The concerned engineer from Roads & Bridges Department explained about the sliding system of the bridge that can be placed at one side when the water level rises.

## VEHICLES CROSS MANTAM LAKE ON 70 FT BRIDGE



### Upper Dzongu villages now firmly connected with rest of State

**BLJOY GURUNG**

**GANGTOK, March 14:** The eleven villages of Upper Dzongu, North Sikkim were finally linked with rest of Sikkim when a 70 ft long bailey bridge was commissioned on Wednesday across Mantam lake, 4th Mile by area MLA and deputy Speaker Sonam Gyatso Lepcha.

Villagers of Sakyong Pentong and Tingvom GPUs were left isolated since August 13, 2016 when a massive hillside avalanche choked the

Rongyong Chu. Subsequently, a lake emerged that swept away the motorable road and the suspension bridge leading to Upper Dzongu.

Since then, the stranded villagers were making use of motor rafts and later, bamboo bridge to cross the lake which has shrunk considerably due to heavy siltation. However, no vehicular connection existed till the bridge was installed by Roads & Bridges department and north district administration.

The sliding bridge, with a 10 ton load capacity, has been

designed in a manner that it can be manoeuvred to the left bank of the lake when the lake volume increases in coming monsoon. This protects the bridge from being submerged or washed away when the lake will be inevitably flooded in monsoon, it was informed by the Roads & Bridges engineers. It was constructed at a cost of around Rs. 26 lakh in a period of one month.

A foot suspension bridge, spanning 150 m, is also coming up across the lake and is expected to be completed by end of April.

Land Revenue & Disaster Management secretary Tsegyal Tashi, special secretary Rinzing Chewang, district collector (north) Karma R. Bonpo, district and sub-divisional officials, Roads & Bridges engineers, panchayats and local public were present at the inaugural function.

Addressing the gathering, the area MLA thanked the departments, district administration and others for providing relief to the public of the 11 Upper Dzongu

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villages. Now the villages are linked with rest of the State through this bridge, he said.

Lepcha opined that the Mantam Lake area has the potential to emerge as a tourism hotspot due to its unique feature as a river island. It has the potential to provide livelihood opportunities to the local youths, he observed adding that hardships faced by the people so far is leading to good days for them in future.

The State government, administration and area MLA have never overlooked the problems faced by the people of Upper Dzongu, asserted Lepcha.

Regarding the permanent two-lane bridge to come up in the area, Lepcha shared that no contractor from Sikkim has come forward to undertake the project costing around Rs. 50

crore. Hence, the permanent bridge project has not gathered pace and people of Upper Dzongu will not get permanent relief till that bridge project is completed, he said.

Land Revenue & Disaster Management secretary Tsegyl Tashi said the bridge inaugurated today may be a small step but is crucial towards restoration of permanent connectivity to Upper Dzongu as now vehicular movement is taking place. We have reached to this stage due to cooperation and coordination between government departments, local administration, engineers, panchayats and public under the guidance of the area MLA, he said.

He thanked the local villagers for their patience and

cooperation with the State government. He informed that the departments have received full support from Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for provide relief and restoration for the Upper Dzongu villages.

In his welcome address, SDM Dzongu T.D. Bhutia shared that the sliding bridge was successfully installed with total coordination and cooperation between government agencies and local people of Upper Dzongu. He requested the authorities concerned for stocking up food ration items in Upper Dzongu village beyond the Mantam lake before onset of monsoon. Construction of REDRH houses in Upper Dzongu will also take place smoothly now after the bridge has been installed, he said.