

## Landslide, mudslide attributed to deforestation

Source: The Sangai Express

**Imphal, June 17 2012:** The disastrous landslide and mudslide of July 14, 2004 at Gopibung which not only disconnected Imphal-Dimapur highway but also rendered the surrounding fields uncultivable because of falling rocks and trees was a result of unrestrained deforestation activities, claimed Prof N Dev of Geography Department, Manipur University. Prof Dev was speaking at the World Day to Combat Desertification observed at Kangla Hall today under the theme "Healthy Soil Sustains Your Life ! Let's go land degradation neutral" . The catastrophic event of Gopibung occurred on account of massive erosion caused by heavy rainfall on the tree-less, empty hill slopes. As a result of the mudslide, water of the nearby Kali river was mixed with dirt and mud and these pollutants could not settle to the bottom for many days. The soil of Manipur is so fertile that any seed sown on it never fails to grow, noted Prof Dev. However, the same soil is being degraded day by day and the State is losing five hectares of cultivable land every year due to soil degradation.



Large scale deforestation rendering a hill side barren

MU College Development Council Director Dr RK Ranjan said that the present phenomenon of frequent floods, which was not the case in the past, is a result of massive deforestation and disappearance of many natural wetlands and lakes. It is not only the Government's policy or its failure, practising double cropping system and excessive use of chemical fertilizers are equally responsible for soil degradation, he said. As the world population has already reached six billion, energy demand would rise by 40 per cent and food demand by 50 per cent in the next 20 years, he added. Addressing the gathering as chief guest, Special Secretary (Forest and Environment) AK Joshi said that one-fourth of the Earth's land mass has been slowly transforming into desert, and this problem is a big challenge for 100 countries. Directorate of Environment Director Dr M Homeshwar said that the World Day to Combat Desertification is being observed in the backdrop of the growing fear across the world about transformation of a large portion of the Earth's surface into desert. On the other hand, saplings of various indigenous tree species were planted at Langol hills in commemoration of the World Day to Combat Desertification today. Among others, the tree plantation campaign was participated by Additional Principal Chief

Conservator of Forest DC Karnatak, Central Circle Conservator of Forest L Muhindro and officials of Central Forest Division. Speaking at the occasion, DC Karnatak said that today's tree plantation drive would help in creating more awareness about the need to check felling of trees.