

Landslides in Nandi Hills: Bad planning putting hills in danger, say geologists

A proper drainage network and buffer zone between roads and footpaths is not just important to ensure there is no flooding in urban areas, but also to ensure there are no landslides.



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The landslide occurred at the 10th curve of Nandi Hills near Chikkaballapur on Tuesday night. The road has now been closed to tourists | Express

By Bosky Khanna

Express News Service

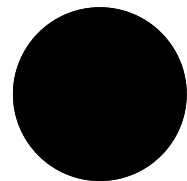
BENGALURU: The recent landslides in Nandi Hills and Devarayanadurga are a warning sign of what is to come, a pointer to the vulnerability of hills and hillocks in the Deccan Plateau, say geologists. They say this is linked to unprecedented rain and unplanned urbanisation, and could mean more rockfalls in not just the Western Ghats, but across Karnataka.

A proper drainage network and buffer zone between roads and footpaths is not just important to ensure there is no flooding in urban areas, but also to ensure there are no landslides. For the very first time, rockfall was reported in Devarayanadurga hillocks earlier this week, and a landslide in Nandi Hills in August. Geologists warn that more such incidents are in store if attention is not paid to urban planning.

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They point to hills and hillocks of Ramanagara, Tumakuru, Mandya, Chamarajanagara, Chitradurga and other locations growing increasingly vulnerable. This has also prompted teams from the Geological Survey of India to undertake a study.

A senior geologist and member of the expert committee on disaster management told The New Sunday Express: “What happened in Devarayanadurga was a rockslide and in Nandi Hills, it was a landslide. These incidents were not heard of in these regions, unlike landslides in the Ghat regions, and are a matter of concern. Boulders fall or mud on the hillock washes down or a portion of the hill collapses, all because of improper civil works.”

He said that unprecedented rainfall is just one cause. The soil becomes moist and loose because there is no break in the monsoon. “But a major reason is road cutting, and failing to leave space for a drain by the side. It is important that the angle and slope of hills are not altered. Also, proper step structures should be ensured. A gap between the road and drain should also be maintained, which engineers nowadays ignore while widening roads,” he added. Geologists, in a phased manner, are undertaking studies of such terrains. In the first phase, the Western Ghat regions are being assessed.

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