

BENGALURU

Heavy rain triggers landslide at Nandi Hills

Staff Reporter

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Visitors barred; restoration to take at least 20 days

Nandi Hills in Chickballapur district was hit by a landslide on Wednesday following heavy rain the previous night. No casualties were reported. The tourist destination, around 60 km from Bengaluru, will be out of bounds for visitors for at least 20 days.

Authorities trying to clear the road leading to Nandi Hills following a landslide on the night of August 24, 2021. Nandi Hills is about 60 km north of Bengaluru.

Gopal N., Special Officer, Nandi Hills, said around 20 feet of the road was damaged. He added that no one was injured. Chickballapur Deputy Commissioner Latha R. told The Hindu that the road repair work would take at least 20 days. “We have built a temporary road, but it is risky for tourists. So it will be closed for visitors,” she said.

Hotel guests shifted out

Ms. Latha said some guests of Mayura Pine Top Nandi Hills, a Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation property, were shifted out early Wednesday morning, and their vehicles were moved out later in the day. “The hotel will have to stop taking further bookings till the work is done,” she said.

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre said rainfall-induced mudslide occurred 100 meters from the check post. Heavy rain brought down one big boulder, taking with it the soil, plants and the road.

Rain report

According to the India Meteorological Department, the southwest monsoon was normal over interior Karnataka and weak over coastal Karnataka. Thondebhavi (Chickballapur district) recorded a heavy rainfall of 13 cm; Chickballapur 11 cm; Mulbagal (Kolar) 10 cm; and Sidlaghatta (Chickballapur) 8 cm.

‘Mismanagement of ecosystem’

T.V. Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, who was part of the expert committee that looked into landslips in the Western Ghats, said they are quite common in the terrain, which is mismanaged with activities such as blocking stream network (natural water flow path), land degradation through removal of vegetation and loss of trees resulting in the binding capability being lost, and road cuts.

“High-intensity rainfall indicates the changes in the temporal patterns of the rainfall due to changes in the climate. The problem at Nandi Hills is mismanagement of landscape coupled with the high-intensity rainfall. We

need to come up with the mitigation and adaptation strategies — decarbonisation is the best option,” he said.

With Nandi Hills among the places suffering from “over tourism”, Ms. Latha said the administration had already limited the capacity at the parking lot for visitors.

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Prof. Ramachandra said maintaining the landscape integrity considering geological and ecological factors would be the apt option. “Developmental activities can be taken up only after carrying capacity assessment of a landscape. Mushrooming tourism infrastructure / allowing largescale construction activities under the guise of ecotourism would certainly lead to largescale calamities. The terminology such as ‘ecotourism’ can only misguide the common man and not nature,” he said, adding that we need to enrich the region with the diverse native species to mitigate mudslides.

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