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News

Panel Forms Guidelines For Protection Of Western Ghats

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Henceforth, any land-use projects must be approved by Disaster Management Authority

Bengaluru: The Expert Committee appointed to study landslide-hit regions of Western Ghats submitted its final report 'Landslides in **Western Ghats** and Coastal Karnataka: Prevention and Mitigation Strategies' to Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa in Bengaluru on Thursday after conducting a detailed study on landslide prone areas.

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CM said.

The Committee comprises experts, scientists and senior officials from several Departments. Scientists from ISRO, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Geological Survey of India (GSI) as well as Heads from Forest & Disaster Management Departments are part of the Committee. The Committee's report is crucial as it provides guidelines for the protection of the vulnerable areas like Western Ghats.

As per the findings of the Committee, engineering errors were behind the landslides that occurred in the State in the last three to four years. It has provided guidelines for the protection of rivers and valleys in the vulnerable areas of Western Ghats and coastal region. It has also given several significant scientific suggestions and relief measures for the prevention of landslides.

The Committee has made numerous recommendations for reconstruction. The Committee is headed by Karnataka Biodiversity Board Chairman Anant Hegde Aashisara. The Committee visited Chikkamagalur, Shivamogga, Kodagu, Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada and Udupi from July to August to check ground situation and prepare report.

The Committee has pointed out in the report that over 23 taluks in districts of coastal and Malnad regions of the State are vulnerable to landslips. Based on Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) data, report said 23 taluks were prone to landslips during rainy season, causing damage to lives, properties, and movement of people. The report said heavy rain, mudslips, rock-falls, deforestation, and climate change were major reasons for landslips.

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The Committee stressed that henceforth, any land-use projects to be executed in the State, especially in the Western Ghats, must be approved by the Disaster Management Authority and they should prepare a disaster management plan. It has recommended strengthening of the district-level disaster management committee to contain landslips in the Western Ghats.

Prof. T.V. Ramachandra from Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, Bengaluru, who was also part of the landslips in Kodagu and Chikkamagalur could happen in other places where many tourism projects are coming up.

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