

Heavy rains and huge landslides hit India's Manipur

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This month, unprecedented rains have lashed India's northeastern states [File: Biju Boro/AFP]

New Delhi, June 30 (RHC)-- At least seven people have died and another 55 are feared to have been killed after a massive landslide hit a remote area of northeastern India's Manipur state, local officials said.

Rescue workers battled heavy rains and inclement weather to pull out 19 survivors from the rubble after the landslide occurred at Tupul railway construction site in Noney district in the early hours of Thursday.

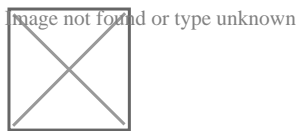
"In all, there were about 81 people. The chances of survival of the remaining 55 people are very thin considering the fact that the landslide occurred around 2 a.m.," Haulianlal Guite, district magistrate of Noney, where the accident occurred, told Reuters news agency by telephone.

This month, unprecedented rains lashed India's northeastern states and neighbouring Bangladesh, killing more than 150 people. Millions have been displaced by the catastrophic floods in recent weeks, and in some low-lying areas, houses have been submerged.

Army helicopters were waiting to assist in rescue operations at the site of the landslide, a statement from the Indian army said. "Army helicopters are on standby. The weather is very hostile and more landslides are hampering our rescue operations," the statement said.

In a statement, Manipur Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh said he has called an emergency meeting to assess the situation. "A search and rescue operation is already under way. Ambulances along with doctors have also been dispatched to assist in the operation," he said.

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