

Relentless rain in Mexico cause mudslides

TEZIUTLAN, Mexico (AP) — The scope of the death and damage caused by last week's mudslides has shocked Mexico and the world.

But where they occurred was no surprise: A zoning plan drawn up last year called for removing houses built helter-skelter in the ravines of this mountainside city.

There seemed to be no rush. Some of the houses had been there for decades, and officials lacked the funds or political might to force residents to less perilous locations.

But last week's pounding rains

caused huge slabs of hillside to break away, sending avalanches of mud rushing down on houses below.

By yesterday, the official death toll stood at 344 across southeastern Mexico, but it was expected to go much higher. Unofficial counts, based on accounts from local officials and witnesses, ran as high as 600.

More than 271,000 were forced from their homes.

On a visit to Teziutlan yesterday, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo announced a program to rebuild or repair houses destroyed by the disaster.

Under the plan, low-income families who lost their homes were to receive land, \$2,000 worth of construction material and 88 days' worth of wages. Those whose houses were damaged were to receive \$200 to \$600 worth of material.

Higher-income families were eligible for subsidized credits.

The flooding and mudslides were caused by more than a week of relentless rain, capped by a tropical depression in the Gulf of Mexico. Yesterday, forecasters were still predicting strong storms in nine states.



State death tolls as of Monday:

1	Puebla	232	5	Oaxaca	7
2	Veracruz	87	6	Chiapas	2
3	Hidalgo	8	7	Queretaro	1
4	Tabasco	7			
		Total:		344	

AP

Typhoon hits China

BEIJING (AP) — A typhoon that battered southeast China's Fujian province Saturday killed 30 people and caused \$240 million in damage, the official newspaper, *China Daily*, reported yesterday.

Saturday's storm, the worst to hit the city of Xiamen in 46 years, also injured more than 100 people. Its violent winds uprooted more than 17,000 trees, overturned buses and caused the collapse of an unspecified number of houses, the report said.

"It looked as if the winds would carry you away the minute you stepped outside," the newspaper quoted Jianmu, an official with the government in Zhangzhou, another Fujian city, as saying.

Seven people in Zhangzhou were killed by collapsing building walls. Another five died in Quanzhou and 18 were killed in the nearby Quanzhou.

Water, electricity and gas were off and 4,000 passengers were stranded because of the disruptions to rail and air traffic, the report said.

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