

Indonesia, Dec 13 (AP) - A mudslide set off by torrential rains rushed down hills into a village in central Indonesia and swept away scores of homes, killing at least 18 people and leaving 90 others missing, officials said Saturday. About 105 houses were swept away by the landslide late Friday in Jemblung village in Central Java province's Banjarnegara district, said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, a spokesman for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency. Hundreds of rescuers, including soldiers, police and residents, dug through the debris Saturday with their bare hands, shovels and hoes, while others used bamboo to carry black body bags containing corpses. About 420 residents were evacuated to temporary shelters. Crying relatives watched in horror as residents and rescuers pulled out mud-caked bodies from the village, while distraught women screamed at a hospital, MetroTV video showed. Nugroho said some rescuers heard what sounded like calls for help coming from the debris, but that a lack of equipment had prevented them reaching possible victims. "Mud, rugged terrain and bad weather hampered our rescue efforts," Nugroho said. Tractors and bulldozers were later brought in to help with the rescue effort. Eighteen bodies were pulled from the mud and the wreckage of crumpled homes, and rescuers were struggling to search for 90 people still missing, said Sutedjo Slamet Utomo, the district chief of Banjarnegara, located about 460 kilometers (285 miles) east of the capital, Jakarta. Eleven badly injured villagers were being hospitalized. Residents in Jemblung village described how they were horrified by the mound of red soil that suddenly cascaded down hills and hit houses. "It was like a nightmare. ... We suddenly heard a terrible roar and we were immediately fleeing from the rain of red soil," said Wahono, a resident who survived with his four family members. "Many failed and they were buried in the ground." Wahono, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, said he heard people screaming and pleading for help in the heavy rain and dark. But he said he was unable to do anything other than run with his family to safety. The landslide was the second in several days on densely populated Java island. Mud and rocks hit Central Java's Wonosobo district on Thursday, killing at least one villager. Seasonal rains and high tides in recent days have caused dozens of landslides and widespread flooding across much of Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains close to rivers.