

Ensure slope stability for roads in landslide-prone regions: RMSI

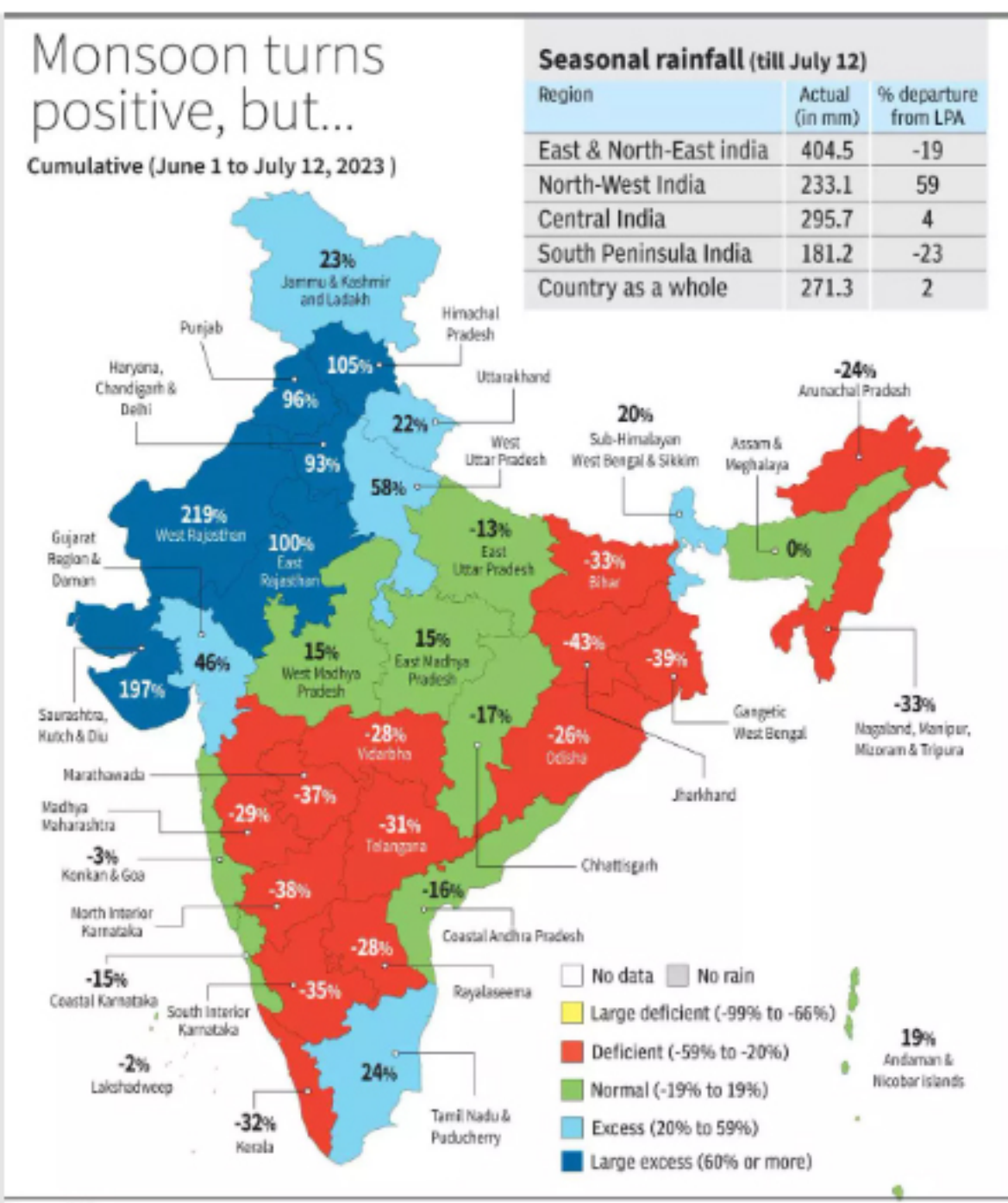
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Extreme rain and landslides pose serious threat to lives, livelihoods in hilly Uttarakhand

BY VINSON KURIAN

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Global disaster risk management firm RMSI says analysis of landslide potential in Uttarakhand makes it evident human activities, primarily road network development, loosen rocks due to blasts during construction and constant vibrations from heavy traffic. This leads to alteration of natural drainage patterns.

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Slope stability action

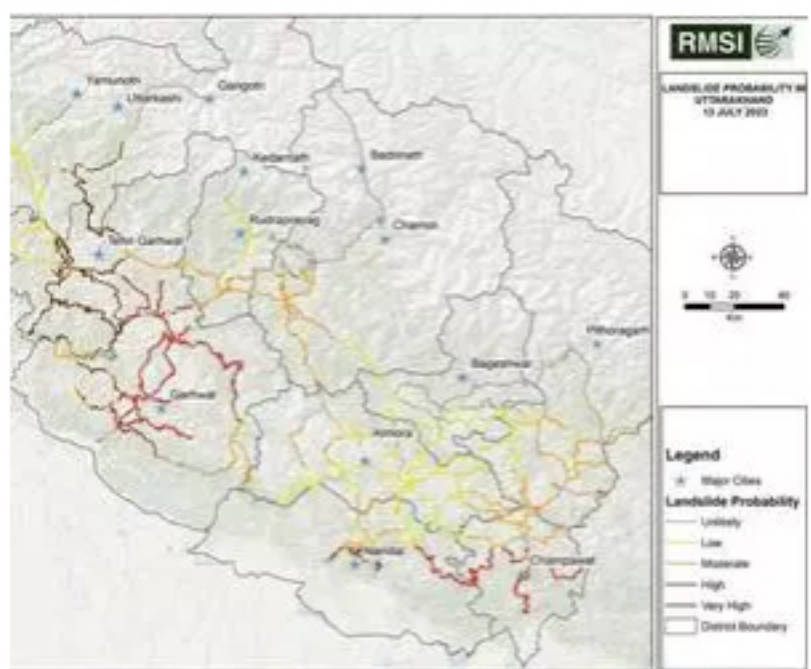


Figure 2: Landslide probability on Uttarakhand on July 13, 2023

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted moderate to fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall to continue over Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh on Thursday and isolated heavy thereafter. Uttarakhand has experienced intense rainfall in the past few days. RMSI says its topography is extremely prone to landslides since it is mainly a hilly terrain.

Road construction must be accompanied by slope stability actions and retaining structures, according to Pushpendra Johari, Senior Vice-President, Sustainability, at RMSI. "And this should not be a one-time exercise but a regular one. Similarly, building construction norms should also be enforced," Johari told *businessline*.

Risk to road network

RMSI has been closely monitoring the rainfall situation in Uttarakhand. "Our analysis shows that more than 5,500 km (about 10 per cent) of the road network is at risk from landslides due to heavy rainfall from Wednesday and expected to continue on Thursday. Some of the most vulnerable areas are in Champawat, Nainital, Pauri, and Devprayag districts. Landslides pose a serious threat to economic activities of the state as well as lives and livelihoods of the people living in these regions."

Table 1: Road Length at Probable Landslide Risk

S.No.	landslide Probability	Length Affected (Km)
1	Unlikely	1,200
2	Low	1,700
3	Moderate	1,200
4	High	650
5	Very High	750
	Total	5,500

Considering the recent constant increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, the need of the hour is to safeguard communities and infrastructure across naturally fragile locations in the country, notes Johari. The government has to make firm decisions on new construction

approvals, construction guidelines, and movement of vehicles and people into these fragile locations.