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Rebels behind Manipur strike survived Indian Army's Myanmar raid?

The army's daring June 9 cross-border Myanmar raid didn't kill any of the Naga rebels who had ambushed and killed 18 soldiers in Manipur five days earlier, latest intelligence inputs have revealed.

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Hindustan Times



The-army-didn-t-reveal-the-number-of-insurgents-killed-in-the-cross-border-raid-but-during-off-the-record-briefings-the-figures-varied-from-20-to-100-HT-Photo

The army's daring June 9 cross-border Myanmar raid didn't kill any of the Naga rebels who had ambushed and killed 18 soldiers in Manipur five days earlier, latest intelligence inputs have revealed.

After the rare intervention across the border, the defence ministry in a statement claimed to have inflicted "significant casualties" on the insurgents who carried out the worst attack on the army in almost 30 years. Top government officials, however, now say the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) rebels were not among the dead.

"The process of collating intelligence from human sources is a time consuming exercise given the terrain and topography along the border between the Northeast and Myanmar, but it is clear that NSCN (K) insurgents remain unscathed," an intelligence official said.

The army didn't reveal the number of insurgents killed but during off-the-record briefings the figures varied from 20 to 100.

Wireless intercepts and information gathered on the ground, however, point to the Naga insurgents surviving the overnight raid by the army's elite paratroopers.

Intercepts also indicate the fact that Niki Sumi, SS Khaplang's military adviser and self-styled lieutenant general, who is believed to have **masterminded** (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/manipur-attack-nsa-to-push-myanmar-for-action-against-militant-leader-khaplang/article1-1357639.aspx>) the June 4 attack is in touch with his troops.

In a briefing after the operation, the army had said it had "credible and specific intelligence that further attacks were being planned within our own territory" by the same group that had struck in Chandel, Manipur.

Soon after the raid, the NSCN (K), which abrogated ceasefire with the Indian government in March, had in a statement questioned the army's claim of inflicting "significant casualties", saying the group had not suffered any losses. Intelligence coming in from multiple agencies now seems to support the claim.

When reached for comments, a spokesperson for the ministry of defence said, "The aim was to give the insurgents a clear message that they can't mess with us."

Officials familiar with the counterattack said they knocked out a rebel camp and that it was not for them to count the bodies. "Those responsible for killing our soldiers will also get killed sometime soon," an officer said.

The army continues to be on an alert in the northeast. “We are watching the insurgents and their camps along the India-Myanmar border. Retaliatory strikes by the insurgents cannot be ruled out,” an official said.

The northeast has a number of rebel groups fighting for separate homelands.

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