Avalanche: Search and rescue operation called off

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GANGTOK, April 5: Gangtok collector Tushar Nikhare today announced the completion of search and rescue operation at avalanche site at 13th Mile on the Gangtok-Nathu La road.

"Until 3 pm, no further missing persons were identified and no one was expected to be buried under the slide as the police had already located all the people who were reported missing through the helpline number," the DC said.

The search and rescue operation was launched for second day today to ensure that no tourists were trapped in the snow slide. The search and rescue operation had started at 8 am by the rescue teams of Sikkim Police, NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, Army, BRO, DDMA and Tiranga Mountain Rescue team under the leadership of Gangok SP, the operation section chief, to account for missing person if any, the DC said in a press meet.

system which can detect objects buried 20 meters

A specialized radar



used. Nikhare informed that

while the rescue operation has been terminated, the helpline number will remain active. The DC also clarified that

the incident was not an avalanche but a snow slide, as per the experienced persons' assessment. He also mentioned that tourists would not be allowed to stop by the highway to take photographs or play with the snow. "Concerned authorities

and drivers have now been instructed to stop only in designated areas, where tourists could take photographs and enjoy the view," the DC added. The bodies of the four

to the next of kin today, while bodies of three other will be sent on Thursday. Tourism minister Bedu

Singh Panth accompanied by secretary Prakash Chettri and other senior officers of the department visited the site of the avalanche today to take stock of second day search and rescue operations. The minister and secretary also visited STNM Hospital to meet the injured tourists and their family members. The minister extended his deepest condolences to the tourists who lost their lives and extended all possible support of the department for treatment of injured tourists.

Army conducts rescue operation at avalanche spot **SE Report**

GANGTOK, April 5: The

rescue mission to look for any more survivors in the avalanche near MS 15 along Jawaharlal Nehru Marg in Sikkim resumed Wednesday morning. The efforts are being civil coordinated by

administration, assisted by troops of Trishakti Corps Indian Army, BRO, State Disaster Management Authority team and civil police, an Army press release informs. efforts The were suspended last evening after

another minor slide occurred. As per civil administration, all persons have been extracted, however the search is being continued to rule out any eventuality, the release informs.



resumed in the morning. A medical column along with two medical officers is also present at the spot. In addition, a team of Tiranga Mountain Rescue (TMR) deployed with

part of the rescue mission that

Trishakti Corps is on site and Project Swastik responds swiftly to JN Marg avalanche, rescue tourists & clears passage to Gangtok

rescue. Indian Army has a MoU with the TMR under which, persons qualified on avalanche rescue deployed at avalanche prone areas for imparting training and assistance in avalanche rescue missions, the release mentions.

SE Report **GANGTOK, April 5: BRO**

Project Swastik was one of the key agencies involved in

the operation to search and rescue tourists caught by the avalanche near Mile 13 along JN Marg leading to Tsomgo Lake and Nathu La on Tuesday. The sudden avalanche had swept away a group of tourists who were taking photographs at the spot.

A press release informs that BRO Project Swastik launched a swift rescue operation, wherein tourists were rescued including six victims from the deep valley down the road. The rescued tourists

were shifted to the nearest hospital.

One lady, buried under the snow, was rescued after toiling for about 90 minutes and sent to the STNM Hospital in BRO a

ambulance. In addition, 15 tourists who were partially

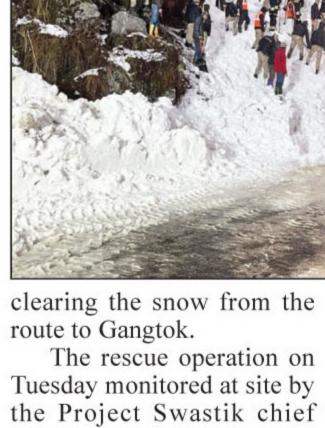
buried under snow were rescued and send to Gangtok after first aid. Apart from this, more than 350 stranded tourists and 80 vehicles which were

stuck at the avalanche site

evacuated

were

after



engineer along with his team

of officers and personnel were halted at around 5:45 pm due to heavy snowfall and zero visibility, the release The rescue operation commenced Wednesday

mentions. morning by the BRO, the release mentions.

Project Swastik has been in the forefront to rescue tourists who get stranded when roads are disrupted and blocked due to intense rains

Swastik men and machinery

and snowfall in higher altitudes of East Sikkim and North Sikkim. Particularly this season, the Project starting March. The BRO Project Swastik teams are located in various remote locations of East Sikkim and North Sikkim, and are the first

have rescued hundreds of

disrupted various routes

as

abnormal

conditions

BRO

tourists

weather

responders to such relief operations. In the month alone, March the Karmyogis of Project Swastik have assisted more than 10,000 tourists

and over 3000 vehicles stuck at various places in North Sikkim and East Sikkim which includes tourist popular destinations like Tsomgo

Lake, Nathu La, Dzuluk,

Lachen and Lachung.