Four dead from India avalanche, five still missing: army

AFP – At least four people died from their injuries in India after an avalanche hit a remote border area, officials said Saturday, as rescuers deployed helicopters to search for the remaining five missing.
A total of 55 workers were buried under snow and debris after the avalanche hit a construction camp on Friday near Mana village on the border with Tibet in the northern Himalayan state of Uttarakhand.

In a statement issued Saturday, the Indian army said 50 people were initially rescued, but among them four succumbed to their injuries.

“Unfortunately, four injured persons have been confirmed as fatal casualty,” they said.

Five workers were still missing, the army said, adding that six choppers had been deployed into rescue efforts as the “roads are blocked”.

Uttarakhand state chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said the rescue teams were “continuously engaged in relief efforts”.

“The government is fully committed to providing all possible assistance to those affected in this hour of crisis,” he said in a post on X.

Mana village, which shares a border with Tibet, was deserted after residents moved to lower altitudes to escape the extreme weather, The Indian Express newspaper reported.

Avalanches and landslides are common in the upper reaches of the Himalayas, especially during the winter season.

Scientists have said climate change was making weather events more severe, while the increased pace of development in the fragile Himalayan regions has also heightened fears about the fallout from deforestation and construction.

In 2021, nearly 100 people died in Uttarakhand after a huge glacier chunk fell into a river, triggering flash floods.

And devastating monsoon floods and landslides in 2013 killed 6,000 people and led to calls for a review of development projects in the state.

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