

Avalanche rescue efforts continue amid more snow

BY RAFIQ MAQBOOL
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VALTENGU, India — Bashir Malik wishes he had not lived to see this day, when he buried all 13 members of his family in a mass grave.

They and 109 others in a mountain village in Kashmir were killed when an avalanche struck Sunday, sweeping away their homes. Almost a quarter of the villagers were killed.

"How I survived is a miracle. But what good is life for me now?" Malik said Wednesday, his voice choking.

Malik, a 40-year-old teacher, lived with his wife, three children, two brothers and their wives and children. All 13 died. Malik said he survived because he had just stepped out of the house when the avalanche hit.

"There was a deafening rumbling. When I looked back everything was buried under snow," he said.

Avalanches and slides triggered by heavy snow struck across the Himalayan region over the weekend, killing nearly 300 people and leaving hundreds more missing.

Valtengu, 45 miles south of Srinagar, Indian Kashmir's main city, was hardest hit. Most bodies

were only recovered Tuesday when volunteers reached the village.

On Wednesday they dug pits for a mass burial because "there were so many dead bodies and it was impossible to bury them one by one," said Raj Wali, whose two daughters died.

"It was terrible. An ocean of snow swept everything away," said Wajid Ali, a 70-year-old herdsman who lost his two daughters.

The snow, the worst in Kashmir in 15 years, cut off the Himalayan region from the rest of India for days. Phone and power lines were snapped and roads remained blocked for days, slowing relief work.

In Valtengu, residents complained the government provided no help. Some 200 civilian volunteers were doing the rescue work, said Mohammed Latif, resident of a nearby village.

"I and other volunteers were the first to reach here. No government help has reached yet," he said.

Elsewhere in Kashmir, military helicopters dropped food, medicine and blankets to snow-covered villages. Soldiers and paramilitary troops trekked to remote villages in the Pir Panjal mountain range, rescuing more

than 100 people stranded in wooden houses covered by snow, said army Lt. Col. V.K. Batra.

Helicopters delivering aid to mountain villages could not land because of the heavy snow, and would not fly low for fear of triggering fresh avalanches, Batra said.

Forecasters said the worst of the weather appears to be over, but snow may continue falling for a few days. Officials said warmer temperatures increase the risk of avalanches.

The number of dead in Kashmir — split between India and Pakistan — climbed to 287 after rescue workers found 40 more bodies in avalanche-hit villages and three people who died in a remote forest after being stranded in a log hut for four days.

In India's portion of Kashmir, 229 people have been killed since Friday, with 150 others missing. On the Pakistan side, officials said at least 64 people have died in the past two weeks, most of them in avalanches.

Large parts of Pakistan have reported record precipitation, including the heaviest snow in southwestern Baluchistan in 13 years, with 346 people dying nationwide this season.

Education: Student and community groups lobby

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Higher Education Act.

Wu's plan contains financial aid improvements for students. The Pell Grant bill would increase the funding for the grants from \$4,050 to \$5,800. The Student Loan Interest Full Deductibility Act allows eligible taxpayers to deduct the full amount of student loan interest rather than the existing \$2,500. It would also eliminate the deduction's current \$50,000 per year income limit.

In addition, Wu's college textbook pricing bill would require the Government Accountability Office to investigate the price differentiation between textbooks sold in the United States and overseas. He promised to work on legislation taking the GAO's findings into account.

Members of the University community will also be lobbying for changes they want to see in the Higher Education Act.

"Reauthorization is an opportunity to improve and strengthen financial aid laws," University Federal Affairs Director Betsy Boyd said. "The value of the Pell Grant has in no way kept up with inflation or the cost of tuition."

Affordability and access for needy students are at the top of the University's priority list, Boyd said.

"The UO has a duty to make sure that the Oregon delegation know how it's affected by this law," she said. "We can provide local examples; we put the Oregon face on what these programs do to Oregonians."

Boyd said the state's delegation has been very supportive of higher education, especially Pell Grants.

"You'd be hard pressed to find a member of Congress who doesn't want constituents to have access to higher ed," she said.

The University works with organizations such as the Association of

American Universities and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges to ensure that its voice is heard in Washington.

It's important to have the full weight of many universities standing behind legislative issues, Boyd said.

There are some possibilities for the act the University would like to avoid.

If the federal government tried to change the accreditation process or increase oversight on the tuition pricing process, the act would put the University and other state colleges at a disadvantage, Boyd said.

"If you're going to get a reauthorization that undermines what was accomplished in previous years, that's a problem," she said.

The ASUO will be lobbying for student-friendly changes through the United States Student Association. ASUO Federal Affairs Coordinator Ashley Rees, a USSA representative, is optimistic the reauthorization will be passed in the current congressional session.

"We want to make sure student voices are heard in the prioritization of these programs," Rees said. Student leaders will be working with both of Oregon's senators and Rep. Peter DeFazio to push their priorities.

USSA's legislative priorities include the elimination of origination fees and insurance premiums on financial aid loans, expansion of loan forgiveness and strengthening grant support. The student organization also hopes to erase the act's provision that disqualifies students from receiving financial aid if they have been convicted for a drug violation.

"Mostly, our efforts are on preserving the programs that we have," Rees said.

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Architecture: Movie, guest speakers to come

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Prize of the field.

"She has been putting out some amazing stuff for a long time," Midthun said.

Midthun said SAWA is not limited to female students and is actively trying to recruit more men.

SAWA plans to bring in additional guest speakers and to network with groups outside the University, such as the National Association

of Women in Construction.

Events Coordinator Jenna Fribley said the group also intends to show the movie "My Architect," about the life of architect Louis Kahn, and invite University professor Gary Moye to speak at the event about his work with Kahn.

SAWA tries to have a general meeting once per month and has plans to sponsor a forum titled "Beyond the White Picket

Fence," at the Holistic Options for Planet Earth Sustainability conference April 8-10. The group is currently discussing the lack of high-quality, affordable housing in Eugene and plans to carry that theme into the HOPES conference.

The public is invited to attend tonight's free event, held at 767 Willamette St.

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Apparel: Researcher says sports bras should be accommodating

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manager and floor manager at Copeland's Sports in Eugene, said Nike Dri-Fit women's yoga separates are big sellers because they are both attractive and good at keeping people warm.

Currently, many athletic clothing companies also design lines of clothing that are gender-specific rather than unisex. Marisa Hastie, assistant fitness director at the Student Recreation Center, said many women benefit from athletic clothing that is designed specifically for female bodies.

"It does enhance your performance even if it's not a technological thing, just a comfort thing," she said.

Susan Verschuer, now a faculty member and certified athletic trainer in the University's human physiology department, did her masters research at the University about sports bras, an important aspect of exercise apparel for most women.

"I hate knowing that there are so many women out there who don't know what to look for and wind up getting frustrated and may choose not to participate in certain activities," she said.

Verschuer found that while

traditional elastic compression sports bras may work for small-breasted women, a better option for women whose breasts are C-cups or larger is an encapsulated design that looks more like a standard bra with cups and a clasp, but provides extra support with thick straps not made from elastic.

"The encapsulated design... was the best of both worlds, meaning it was most effective at reducing motion and more comfortable," she said.

Verschuer also noted that sports bras sized individually (e.g., 36C, 38D) provide better fit than sports bras sized small, medium, and large, and that straight straps provide better support than t-back bra designs.

Regardless of the technological advances, simply feeling good is a priority for many exercisers. Hastie, an aerobics instructor, said she encourages her students to wear whatever they are most comfortable in.

"I think a lot of people think that, to go to a gym, you need to wear the most 'in' clothes," she said. "I think being comfortable is more important."

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