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India avalanche traps hundreds

JAMMU, India — Five hundred motorists were stranded in a tunnel for a fourth night Thursday by a snowslide that swept cars and buses off a Himalayan mountain road, killing at least 125 people.

Heavy snow prevented rescue teams from searching for hundreds more people missing after Monday's avalanche on the main highway linking Jammu-Kashmir with the rest of India.

Indian air force helicopters flew 400 survivors to safety Wednesday and Thursday.

Information from the site has been sketchy because of poor communications.

Initially, police and state officials said 1,000 people were trapped

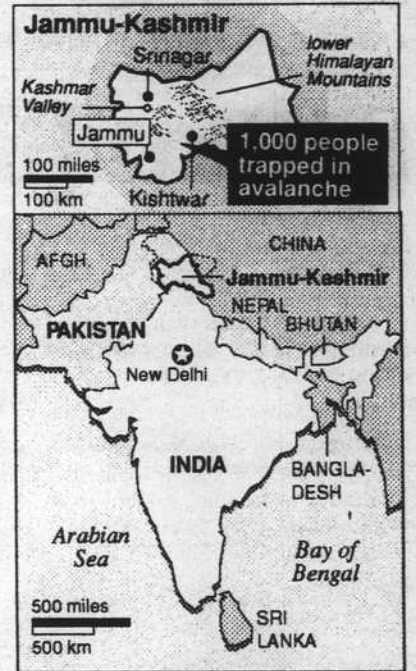
when the avalanche blocked the entrance and exit to the Jawahar tunnel in northern Jammu-Kashmir state.

But Thursday, police said they made contact with rescue workers and learned there were about 500 motorists inside the tunnel and that they were not trapped but had taken shelter there after the avalanche.

Police said the motorists in the tunnel were safe and that soldiers and villagers had brought them food and blankets.

A total of 125 bodies were recovered from buses knocked by the snow into a deep gorge three miles from the tunnel.

Officials have not been able to account for hundreds of people believed to have been inside other



vehicles and fear many of them have been swept away by the avalanche.

Judge questions Microsoft settlement

NEW YORK — The federal judge overseeing the antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. questioned the limited scope of the agreement Thursday, raising issues at the heart of the software giant's dominant role in the computer industry.

A day before Microsoft and the Justice Department were to seek final approval of the settlement, U.S. District Judge Stanley Sporkin in Washington said he will ask the two sides to explain why certain business practices were left out of the agreement.

Sporkin said he wanted to know why Microsoft wasn't required to establish a barrier between the development of operating software, which runs the basic functions of a personal computer, and applications software, which includes word processing and spreadsheet programs.

Microsoft critics said it gave its own applications programmers access to operating software improvements before sharing them with other

companies, a key advantage that helped Microsoft attain unparalleled strength.

Sporkin's ruling is not itself a sign that he will reject the agreement, but rather an agenda for winning his approval. It indicates the judge has taken into consideration many of the criticisms of the settlement, forged last July after a four-year government investigation of Microsoft.

Sporkin questioned why the Justice Department created no system to monitor Microsoft's compliance with the agreement, which requires changes in incentives Microsoft gave personal computer makers to install its software.

The judge said he also wanted to know why the settlement shouldn't have a provision that bans Microsoft from misleading statements about products in development, a marketing practice known as "vaporware" that tends to prevent potential competitors from entering a market.

Sporkin also wanted to know why

Microsoft wasn't required to disclose codes that give it an advantage over other software companies in creating word processing and other applications software.

Microsoft spokesman Greg Shaw said the company will be able to address the issues raised by Sporkin. "We're hopeful the judge will grant this," he said.

The Justice Department had no immediate comment.

If the settlement is rejected, Sporkin could order the Justice Department and Microsoft to try again. That raises the prospect of much harsher restrictions on Microsoft that could, in the extreme, include splitting it up like AT&T more than a decade ago.

Microsoft, based in the Seattle suburb of Redmond, Wash., makes the standard operating programs MS-DOS and Windows, which run the basic functions of nearly all PCs in the world today.

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SUNDAY Jan. 22 2 p.m.

Corporate Sponsor: **Cornhusker BANK**

\$2 - General admission

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FAX NUMBER 472-1761
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Tim Hedegaard, 436-9258.

Subscription price is \$50 for one year. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.
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Rebels leave palace, Russia raises flag

GROZNY, Russia — Troops hoisted Russia's flag today over Chechnya's presidential palace, the symbol of the republic's independence drive during five weeks of war with Moscow.

Earlier in the day, Chechen fighters had abandoned the palace which had been wrecked by weeks of Russian artillery and rocket fire. The rebels also withdrew from the railroad station.

The Chechen withdrawal gave the Russians effective control over most of Grozny's center. It was not immediately clear if the Chechens, who took up new positions in the capital, would continue to fight for control of the center or move to the countryside to wage what they have promised would be a guerrilla war against the Russians.

Rebels had stubbornly held off the Russians there since Moscow began its ground assault on Grozny, the Chechen capital, on New Year's Eve. The Chechen withdrawal gave the Russians effective control over most of central Grozny.

The rebels also withdrew from the railroad station, which was in Russian hands.

Rebels said they left the palace after a Russian bomb or shell pen-

etrated the demolished building to the basement on Wednesday night.

Rebel fighter Aindi Beksultanov said the rebels had no plans to try to retake the palace. "Why? It's just a skeleton," he said.

He said the last of the rebels withdrew at 3 a.m. today. They also evacuated an unknown number of Russian prisoners from the palace, he said.

Rebels moved to new positions in the city today, so they clearly intended to continue their battle in the capital. It was not clear whether they intended to try to retake positions in the city center.

Russian soldiers were circling the palace from about 300 yards away today, but at midday it was not clear whether they had taken over the building.

Grozny was relatively calm after a night of relentless artillery and rocket attacks. A pall of dark smoke hung over the city, amid intermittent artillery and rocket fire.

Thousands of people have been killed since Russian troops moved into the predominantly Muslim republic in the Caucasus Mountains on Dec. 11 to put down its drive for independence.