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(From right) German couple Tobias Groenen and Gudrun Ziermann, along with two Nepali support staff inside a chopper before being airlifted to Kathmandu after they were rescued along with 16 others, from Saribung Peak region, on Saturday. Photo

Courtesy: Manang CDO Bhimkanta Sharma

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Lamjung/Kathmandu, May 14

A special rescue helicopter piloted by Captain Bibek Khadka of Simrik Air today rescued 20 persons, including a German couple and a guide and support staff, from Mt Saribung area today.



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The rescue team had used Fu village of Manang as base for its operation.

The helicopter had been deployed to Manang for an emergency search and rescue operation yesterday after Simrik Air was called to rescue a German couple Gudrun Ziermann and Tobias Groenen, who were trapped in Mt Saribung area in a snowstorm at an altitude of 19,200 feet.

“Though we reached there yesterday itself, we could not locate and bring them to safety due to adverse weather conditions and had to return to Chame. We stayed in regular touch with them over phone and came to know there were altogether 20 persons,” recalled Captain Khadka.

The rescue operation became possible after the weather improved and the chopper refuelled from another chopper flown in from Kathmandu.

The rescue team spotted them in the Saribung region at around 6:00am today.

“We used a long-line rope to lift the German couple and 18 Nepalis one by one from the site to a safe altitude of 16,000 feet, said Captain Khadka.

Rescue expert Tshering Sherpa, who slid down the rope while the chopper was hovering, helped each stranded person safely adjust before they were rescued to safety.

Four persons, including the German couple, were flown to Kathmandu for medical attention.

According to Chief District Officer Bhimkanta Sharma, the German nationals and two Nepalis Aaite Tamang and Hom Tamang of Nuwakot, who showed health complications, have been sent to Kathmandu for treatment.

“As the condition of others was normal, they have gone to Chame from Fu village,” said CDO Sharma.

The mountain expedition team, including 18 Nepali nationals serving as cook, porters, and guides were stranded due to a snowstorm while returning to Manang after scaling the mountain in Mustang yesterday.

A version of this article appears in print on May 15, 2016 of The Himalayan Times.

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