

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:156

ANSWERED ON:08.03.2010

GULMARG AVALANCHE

Gandhi Shri Dilip Kumar Mansukhlal;Khaire Shri Chandrakant Bhaurao

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of personnel dead/reported missing in an avalanche occurred near Gulmarg recently;
- (b) the assistance provided to the injured and the families of the dead personnel;
- (c) whether the Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) had issued warning in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken to strengthen the forecasting mechanism so as to check recurrence of such incidents?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE(SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 156 FOR ANSWER ON 8.3.2010

While 17 Army personnel died in an avalanche at high altitude training area of High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) in J&K on 8th February 2010, no one is reported to be missing.

2. Next of Kin (NOK) of deceased Army personnel are paid pensionary and other benefits as under:-

- (a) Special Family Pension: Granted at the rate of 60% of the last pay drawn including Grade Pay, Military Service Pay, Group 'X' Pay and Classification Pay.
- (b) Death Gratuity: Depending upon the length of service, upto a maximum of Rs.10 Lakhs.
- (c) Ex-gratia: Rs.15 lakhs is payable due to death.

3. Injured Army personnel, if discharged from the service on the recommendation of Medical Board, are paid Disability Pension.

4. The Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) had issued avalanche warnings for areas of Gulmarg Sub Sector. However, the area where the incident occurred is a traditional training area of High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) and has no history of avalanches. SASE undertakes research to continuously improve the forecasting mechanism.