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Beas river tragedy: UAV, echosounder to help in search

Suresh Sharma, TNN | Jun 13, 2014, 04:17AM IST

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MANDI: As the team of divers and search experts from ITBP, SSB, Indian Army, NDRF and police has been able to recover only eight bodies of the engineering students from Hyderabad in four days, more advanced technology and Indian Navy were pressed into service on Thursday to search for the remaining victims who were washed away in river Beas.

Even as underwater cameras proved ineffective in tracing the missing students in the muddy waters of Beas, which contains high level of silt, seven divers from Navy who are experts in underwater exploration reached Pandoh dam on Thursday. An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) was also brought here to help provide real-time images of the entire surface of river between the accident site (Shalanala village) and Pandoh dam, sources said.

A multi-beam echosounder (sonar) is also on way to the site which is capable of producing detailed bathymetry and imagery data of the shape and nature of the riverbed. The equipment is expected to reach here by Friday morning, sources said.

Meanwhile, National Disaster Management Authority director general Dr Mahboob Alam has reached Mandi to take stock of the situation. A high-level committee formed for search operations met here on Thursday.

Telangana home minister Nayani Narasimha Reddy is also camping in Mandi along with about 50 parents and guardians of the missing students.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) head of operations, Commandant Jaideep Singh, said that seven divers from Navy, with modern equipment, reached Pandoh. "We have brought an UAV which will help us comb the river surface effectively. A multibeam sonar system is also expected to reach here soon," he said.

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