

## Beas tragedy: UAV fails to find missing students, hi-tech search from today

Mandi: An unmanned aerial vehicle(UAV) was pressed into service on Friday to trace 17 missing engineering students from Hyderabad but without any success and rescuers will now deploy for the first time a multibeam echosounder in Beas river (</tags/beas-river.html>) whose level will be also lowered to minimum.

"A special search operation will be launched tomorrow for tracing the missing students by lowering the water level to the minimum. 450 out of 600 jawans engaged in rescue operations will conduct special search operations in a 3-km stretch towards Pandoh Dam," Rural Development Minister Anil Sharma said.

The UAV was used for the first time today to trace the missing students, but did not succeed in its mission.

After reviewing the search operation, which continued for the fifth day today, he said divers and contingents from Army, state police, Navy, National Disaster Response Force and SSB would participate in the hi-tech operation in which "echo- sounder" for over-water and under-water search would be used for the first time.

He said Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh has taken a serious note of the tragedy and has directed the state government and district administration to provide all possible help to the agencies engaged in this operation.

"The HP government is constantly in touch with Telangana government as well as various rescue teams and is providing all possible help to parents of missing students," he said.

25 members of the group from VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology of Hyderabad, who were on an excursion to Manali, were swept away in the river after sudden release of water from the reservoir of the Larji hydro-power project near Thalot.

Sharma said so far eight bodies have been recovered but there was no progress today.

Telangana Home Minister Nayani Narasimha Reddy, who has been camping here following the mishap on Sunday, expressed satisfaction over the assistance extended by HP government.

"The rescue operations are tricky, risky and hazardous in the turbulent river. High discharge of water due to melting of snow and glaciers in higher reaches, huge boulders and abundance of silt have made the task more daunting," he said.

**Members of Parliament from Telangana Jithender Reddy and Vinod Kumar also visited the accident site and met the parents of missing students at a hotel at Pandoh.**

PTI