

Casualty due to avalanche on army training camp in Kashmir

625. SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:
SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that 17 defence personnel died and many seriously injured when they were trapped in an avalanche on a training camp at Khilanmarg in Kashmir;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the Chandigarh based Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) had warned of the impending catastrophe which was ignored by the army brass;
- (d) if so, whether any enquiry has been conducted into the allegation; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. 17 Army personnel died and equal number injured in an avalanche at high altitude training area of High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) in J&K.

(c) Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) had issued an avalanche warning on 6th February 2010 for areas of Gulmarg Sub Sector. However, the area of incident is a traditional training area of HAWS which has no history of any avalanche.

(d) and (e) An inquiry has been ordered to investigate into the incident.

Sainik Schools

626. SHRIMATI RENUBALA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Sainik Schools presently operating in the country, State-wise;
- (b) whether there is a proposal to open more such schools during the current and next plan period;
- (c) the yardsticks to open Sainik Schools; and
- (d) whether there is any plan to open one more Sainik School in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The State-wise location of the existing twenty four Sainik Schools is given in the Statement (See below).

(b) Proposals for new Sainik Schools had earlier been received from the State Governments of Mizoram, Sikkim, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh. Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have also recently sent proposals.

(c) Sainik Schools are established on receipt of a specific request from a State Government; it should agree to provide land alongwith funds for the creation and maintenance of