

Avalanche study centre had issued warning to army

CHANDIGARH: The Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) at Chandigarh had issued a 'Low Danger' warning to the army on February 2 regarding an avalanche in the general area of Siachen glacier. The avalanche eventually struck on February 3 and the 10 missing army personnel were declared dead by the army on Thursday. "Our warning was low danger level. It was meant for snow avalanche activity only. It, however, was an ice avalanche which is more difficult to predict," said SASE's director Ashwagosh Ganju. The SASE comes under the ministry of defence and was set up to combat the hazards of snow in order to help the armed forces stationed mountainous regions. "Sometimes high danger is involved when there are abnormal winds and snowfall coupled with other snow instability factors. There are cases when we are sure that an avalanche will trigger in an area. Then we issue a specific alert," Ganju added. When asked whether the army follows their advice as earlier too accidents had taken place despite SASE issuing a warning, he said, "I can't talk about the operational role of army. I deal with science. I inform them as and when situations warrant and they take a call depending on their operational commitments."

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