

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-418
ANSWERED ON -06/12/2023

CHAR DHAM MAHA MARG VIKAS PARIYOJANA

418. SHRI A. D. SINGH:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any road project of more than 100 kms needs environmental clearance;
- (b) whether the Char Dham Maha Marg Vikas Pariyojana of 900 Kms was approved without any environmental impact assessment by dividing the project into smaller projects;
- (c) if so, the details and the reasons for by passing the law;
- (d) whether it is a fact that the core reason for Char Dham Maha Marg Vikas Pariyojana is faster movement of traffic; and
- (e) the reasons for change in the purpose of the Pariyojana as of strategic national importance at later stage?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

(a) As per Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) notification dated 22.08.2013 expansion of National Highways greater than 100 Km involving additional Right of Way or land acquisition greater than 40m on existing alignments and 60m on re-alignments or by-passes requires prior Environment Clearances (EC).

(b) & (c) Chardham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojana comprises improvement of 5 existing National Highways (NHs) connecting Chardham viz. Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath including Tanakpur to Pithoragarh section of Kailas-Mansarovar yatra, of total length of about 825 km under 53 projects, each with a length of less than 100 km. Each project is independent, having distinct start and end points which are important places on these Highways. There was no requirement for Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) for these projects. However, under the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, MoEF&CC has

constituted a High Powered Committee comprising representatives from various reputed institutes like Physical research laboratory, Wildlife Institute of India, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Central Soil Conservation Research Institute, National Institute of Disaster Management, Forest Research Institute, MoEF&CC officials etc. with mandate to consider the cumulative and independent impact of Chardham Projects on the entire Himalayan Valleys and give directions to conduct EIA/Rapid EIA. Accordingly, directions of HPC are implemented.

(d) & (e) Improvement of highways including that of Chardham Mahamarg results in faster and safer movement of traffic. On the intervention of application filed by the Ministry of Defence, Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 14.12.2021 permitted widening of the 3 strategically important National Highways {viz. Rishikesh-Mana (NH-7), Rishikesh-Gangotri (NH-34) and Tanakpur-Pithoragarh(NH-9)} under Char Dham Pariyojana to 2-lane with paved shoulder (10.0m wide pavement). Hon'ble Supreme Court has set up an "Oversight Committee" to ensure the implementation of the recommendations given in the report of HPC constituted in terms of the order dated 08.08.2019 of Hon'ble Supreme Court including environmental aspects. HPC continues to oversee the implementation of its recommendations in the remaining stretches of Chardham Pariyojana.
