

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 427
ANSWERED ON – 06/12/2023

CONSTRUCTION OF TUNNELS AS PER NORMS

427. SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE:

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

- (a) whether the Government had considered the suggestion of experts to reduce road formation width of Char-Dham route from proposed 12 m to 7.8 m; if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government has conducted a probe as to why NECL did not build a rescue route, as is the norm in tunnel construction; if so, the details thereof; if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government had conducted supporting measure studies and reviewed safety norms after the collapse of Yamunotri tunnel in 2019; if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

- (a) On the intervention application filed by 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)} to 2-lane with paved shoulder (10.0 m wide pavement) under Char Dham Pariyojana. Hon'ble Supreme Court has set up an "Oversight Committee" to ensure implementation of the recommendations given in the report of High-Powered Committee (HPC) constituted in terms of the order dated 08.08.2019 of Hon'ble Supreme Court including environmental aspects for these 3 strategically important NHs. HPC continues to oversee the implementation of its recommendations in remaining stretches under Char Dham Pariyojana.

(b) In the Silkyara bi-directional tunnel on Dharasu – Yumunotri highway (NH-134), a provision of separation wall has been provided at the center of the carriageway along with egress openings at an average interval of 565 m for vehicular crossover and at an average interval of 300 m for pedestrian cross passage for escape purposes during the emergencies.

(c) The Silkyara tunnel on Dharasu – Yumunotri highway (NH-134) is under construction on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode, wherein the design responsibility lies with the EPC contractor. After encountering minor spalls / falling of debris forming cavities during construction in 2019, the construction sequences and primary support system are reviewed from time to time on the basis of actual ground behaviour observed and are approved by Authority's Engineer engaged for the project which are executed under the supervision of officials of National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).

(d) Does not arise.
