



Chardham Project in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, the Centre informed the [Supreme Court](#) that **75%** of the work on the [Chardham Project](#), designed to improve connectivity to four major pilgrimage sites in Uttarakhand, has been completed.

Key Points

- **Chardham Project:**
 - The project involves the construction of a **900-kilometer all-weather road** to provide better connectivity to [Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath](#).
 - The project is strategically important as it extends to regions near the China border.
 - The new highways will make travel easier and safer, especially **during monsoons and winter**, when the existing roads become prone to landslides and blockages.
- **Oversight Committee:**
 - The Supreme Court had previously formed an **oversight committee** headed by retired Supreme Court judge **Justice A.K. Sikri** to address environmental concerns.
 - The committee has submitted **two reports** to the Supreme Court, one in April 2024 and another on **27th August, 2024**, assessing the project's progress and compliance with guidelines.
- **Environmental Concerns and Court Orders:**
 - The project faced opposition due to environmental concerns related to the sensitive [Himalayan ecosystem](#).
 - In **December 2021**, the Supreme Court allowed **double-lane widening** of the Chardham Highway but placed oversight responsibilities on the Sikri-led committee to mitigate environmental damage.
 - The oversight committee **does not have the mandate to conduct a fresh [environmental impact assessment](#)** but monitors the execution of the project.
- **Support from Government Ministries:**
 - The committee has the complete backing of the Ministries of **Defence, Road Transport, and Environment**.
 - The **Uttarakhand Government** and local district magistrates are also cooperating with the committee.
 - Representatives from the [National Environmental Research Institute](#) and the [Forest Research Institute \(Dehradun\)](#) are part of the environmental oversight mechanism.

PILGRIMS' PROGRESS



FEATURES OF REDEVELOPMENT

Realignment/stabilization of major landslide areas, realignment away from rivers, long bridges/viaducts & tunnel to bypass hazardous areas, reconstruction of narrow and distressed bridges, bypass for congested towns & wayside amenities

Areas for realignment and new structures have been proposed based on the ground reports of devastation during last year's heavy rain

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