

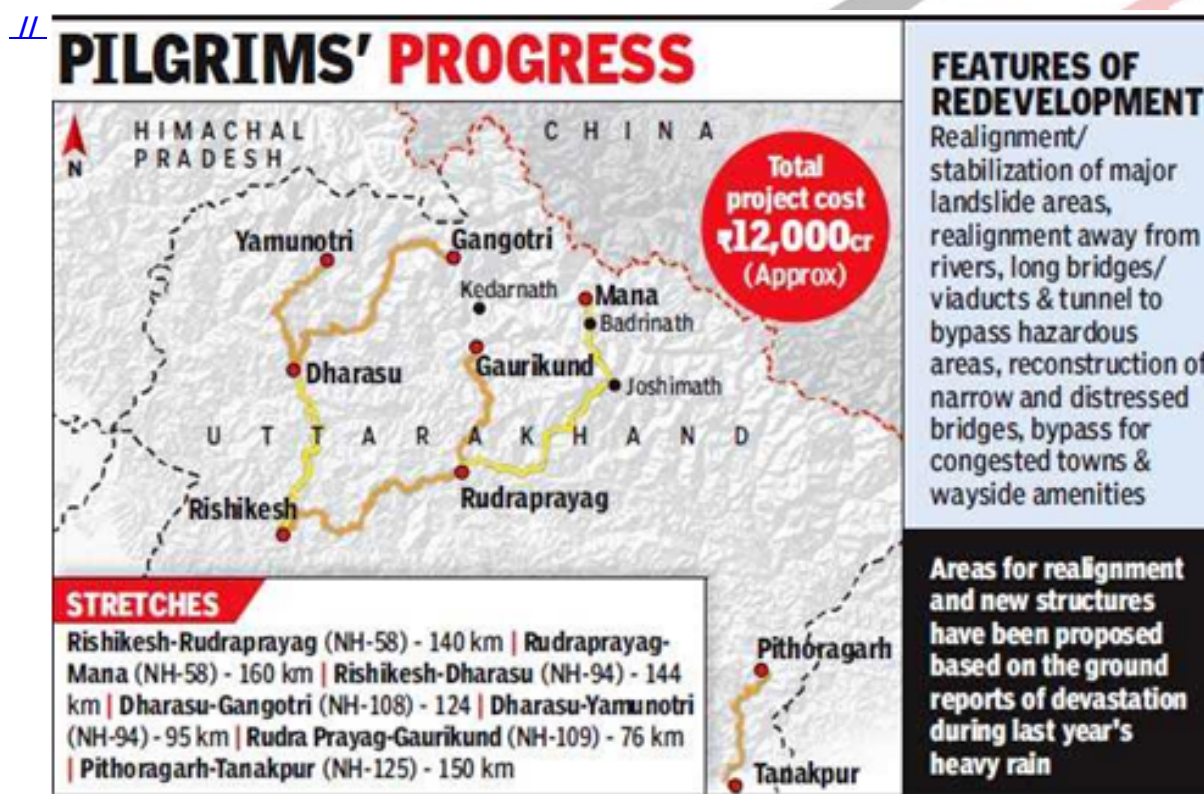


CharDham Project

Why in News

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) has spoken of the **need to balance national security concerns with environmental issues in the context of the Army's request to expand the CharDham Project (CDP) roads leading to the Indo-China border.**

- The request came in the context of construction being carried out by China across the border. However, expansion of roads has been **opposed by an NGO citing environmental concerns.**



Key Points

- **About CharDham Project:**
 - **Objective:** CharDham Pariyojana aims to **“improve the connectivity** to the Chardham pilgrimage centres (**Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri**) in the Himalayas, making journeys to these centres safer, faster and more convenient.
 - It will widen almost 900 km of highways connecting the pilgrimage sites and the Tanakpur-Pithoragarh stretch of National Highway (NH) 125, a part of the [Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route](#).

- **Role in National Security:** This project can act as the strategic feeder roads which connect the India-China border with the Army camps in Dehradun and Meerut where missile bases and heavy machinery are located.
- **Implementing Agencies:** Uttarakhand State Public Works Department (PWD), [Border Roads Organisation \(BRO\)](#) and the National Highway & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).

- NHIDCL is a fully owned company of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.

▪ **Environmental Concerns About the Project:**

- The project **may destroy about 690 hectares of forests** with 55,000 trees and **evacuate an estimated 20 million cubic metres of soil.**
- Ruthless harvesting or uprooting of vegetation in the widening of roads **can prove to be perilous for the biodiversity and regional ecology.**
 - Birds like Kalij Pheasant (*Lophura leucomelanos*, [Schedule-I](#)), Tragopans (Tragopan melanocephalus & Tragopan satyra, Schedule-I), and various species of Vultures (Schedule-I) along with endangered fish Golden Mahseer (*Tor putitora*) are among the wonderful species found there.
- While there is no link between the CharDham project and the recent [glacier broken tragedy of Chamoli](#), indiscriminate blasting during road construction makes cracks in soil and rocks that may enhance the possibility of flash-flood in the future.

[Source: IE](#)

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