

## '32 NEW ROADS ALONG CHINA BORDER'

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Work has started on eight roads while 32 helipads will come up along all stretches. | Photo Credit: -

Post-Galwan incident, the Government of India sanctioned 32 roads along the China border, of which work has started on eight roads, a report tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Monday said.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed a parliamentary panel that 32 helipads were being constructed and upgraded along the China border.

The report on Demands for Grants (2022-23) of the MHA by the parliamentary standing committee headed by Congress leader Anand Sharma said the Ministry had demanded Rs. 3,637.92 crore for border infrastructure in the coming fiscal though it was able to spend only 50% of the allocated budget till December 2021.

"The committee is surprised to note that only 50% amount of the RE [revised estimate] 2021-22 [Rs. 1481.10 crore] has been expended up to December 31, 2021. The Ministry has sought an amount of Rs. 3637.92 crore from the Ministry of Finance for the border infrastructure scheme in BE [Budget Estimate] 2022-23 [projected]. The Committee fails to understand the reasons for seeking such high allocation in spite of the under-utilisation of the funds allocated at RE 2021-22," the report said.

The Ministry informed the panel that to improve the existing infrastructure and to enhance the operational capabilities of security forces, the government had undertaken various projects and schemes in the past few years along the China border.

It stated that under the Indo-China Border Roads Phase-I (ICBR-I), the construction of 25 roads, measuring 751.58 km, at an estimated cost of Rs. 3482.52 crore was taken up. Out of this, 18 roads measuring 475.29 km were in operational use while the work on the remaining seven roads was on.

The first phase was initiated in 2005 when it was decided that the MHA would construct 27 priority roads totaling 608 km along China border.

The second phase (ICBR-II) was approved on September 21, 2020, months after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in clashes with the Chinese People's Liberation Army in eastern Ladakh.

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