

Road building along Rajaji National Park challenged

The construction of a road in Rishikesh in Uttarakhand skirting the boundary of the Rajaji National Park was challenged in the Supreme Court Friday on the ground that it posed danger to the wildlife there.

The apex court Friday issued notice to the Uttarakhand government on a plea of dvocate A.K. Sahu, who said he discovered the road building activity in the prohibited zone during his recent visit to Rishikesh.

A special three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan, also asked the Centrally Empowered Committee (CEC), constituted by the apex court to assist it in matters elated to ecology, to visit the area and apprise the court of the dangers posed by the road to the sanctuary.

The bench, which also included Justices Arijit Pasayat and S.H. Kapadia, asked the CEC to file its report to the court within two weeks.

Sahu told the bench that the road was being built on the edge of the sanctuary, despite an earlier court order prohibiting construction of any road within a distance of one kilometre from the edge of the sanctuary.

This road, besides destroying the sanctity of the river Ganga which flows there, would also eat into the area of the wildlife sanctuary and prevent migratory birds from coming to the place in winter, the petition said.

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