

India Builds in North Amid China Tensions

India is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to build roads, tunnels and landing strips throughout the Himalayas, as it prepares for a possible future clash with its long-time nemesis China.

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India's bloody border clash with China in 2020, which killed soldiers on both sides, exposed an alarming vulnerability along the disputed 2,200-mile border, a vague demarcation line known as the Line of Actual Control. While China has for decades built up a vast network of railways and roads along its border regions, India has done little to build the infrastructure its military would need to traverse its own mountainous border areas.

When fighting erupted in

2020—soldiers at 14,000 feet fought hand-to-hand using batons and clubs wrapped in barbed wire—Beijing could have rushed in reinforcements within hours, according to analysts. India would have needed up to a week to send additional troops along its bumpy or nonexistent roads.

“It was a dramatic shift in thinking,” said Maj. Gen. Amrit Pal Singh, former chief of operational logistics in the northern region of Ladakh, which is home to some of the most sensitive stretches of India’s border with China. “We realized we needed to change our total approach.”

Some of the projects are designed to link high-altitude areas with military outposts and civilian settlements that are isolated during the winter. One of the most ambitious is the Zojila tunnel, which is be-

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