



Atal Tunnel

Why in News

The Prime Minister has inaugurated the **Atal Tunnel in Himachal Pradesh's Rohtang**, which connects **Solang Valley near Manali** to **Sissu in Lahaul and Spiti district**.

Key Points

▪ About:

- The **9.02-km tunnel is the longest highway tunnel** in the world above the height of 3,000 metres.
- It cuts through a mountain west of the Rohtang pass and will shorten the distance between Solang Valley and Sissu by around 46 km and will take around 15 minutes to cover. Earlier, it would take nearly 4 hours to travel between the two points.

▪ Significance:

- **All year Connectivity:** The Atal tunnel is the first step towards all-year connectivity to Ladakh. The tunnel has the potential to link **Ladakh to Manali and Chandigarh throughout the year**, as it would bypass Rohtang Pass, which is snowed in through the winter months.
- **Strategic:** The tunnel provides a strategic advantage to the country's armed forces by providing year-long connectivity to border areas. It will save an entire day for troops and supplies as they move towards forward posts.
- **Avail Basic Facilities:** The residents of Ladakh who had to face immense hardship to avail even basic facilities like healthcare and food supplies will now be able to reach Manali and connect with the rest of the country using this new tunnel. Essential commodities like petrol and vegetable supplies would also likely be available throughout the year.
- **Boon for Farmers:** The drop in travel time will help many, especially farmers whose precious crops like peas and potatoes will no longer rot in trucks before reaching the market.
- **Boost to Tourism:** Livelihoods in the tourism sector of the residents in Lahaul Valley and Ladakh would get a boost.

Rohtang Pass

- Rohtang Pass (elevation 3,978 m) is located in the state of **Himachal Pradesh**.
- It is present on the **Pir Panjal Range of Himalayas**.

Pass	Link/Features
Banihal Pass	Kashmir Valley with the outer Himalaya and the plains to the south.
Bara-Lacha-La Pass	Lahaul district in Himachal Pradesh with Leh district in Ladakh.
Fotu La Pass	Leh with Kargil of Ladakh
Rohtang Pass	Kullu Valley with the Lahaul and Spiti Valleys of Himachal Pradesh.
Shipki La Pass	Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh with Autonomous Region of Tibet, China.
Jelep La Pass	Sikkim with Autonomous Region of Tibet, China.
Nathu La Pass	Sikkim with Autonomous Region of Tibet, China.
Lipu Lekh Pass	Chaudans valley of India with Autonomous Region of Tibet, China. It is located close to the tri junction of Uttarakhand (India), China and Nepal.
Khardung La	Ladakh with Siachen glacier. It is the highest motorable pass in the world.
Bom di La	It is in Arunachal Pradesh

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