

## Z-Morh Project in Kashmir | Jammu & Kashmir | 22 Oct 2024

#### Why in News?

The <u>Z-Morh tunnel</u> project in <u>Jammu & Kashmir</u> recently witnessed militant attacks highlighting strategical significance of the project.

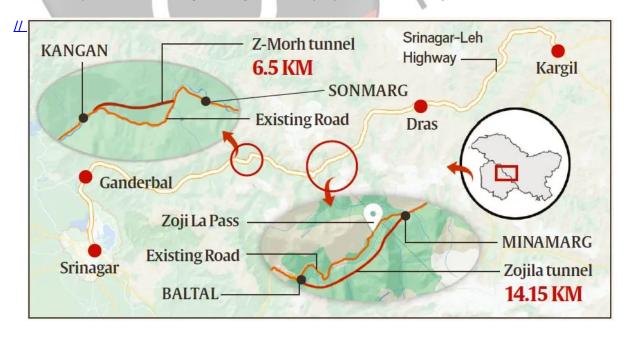
#### **Key Points**

#### Z-Morh Tunnel:

- A 6.4 km-long tunnel connecting the <u>Sonamarg</u> health resort with Kangan town, Ganderbal district.
- Located near Gagangir village, the tunnel's name is derived from the Z-shaped road stretch where it is constructed.
- It will provide all-weather connectivity to Sonamarg, a major tourist destination on the <u>Srinagar-Leh highway.</u>

#### Strategic Importance:

- The tunnel is part of the larger **Zojila Tunnel project**, aimed at ensuring all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Ladakh.
- It is critical for **military logistics, enabling faster movement** of troops to Ladakh, where tensions with both **Pakistan and China** exist.
- The tunnel facilitates safe connectivity to regions like <u>Dras, Kargil, and Leh</u>, which are crucial for defense operations, particularly around the <u>Siachen Glacier and Eastern Ladakh</u>.
- Z-Morh tunnel will act as a precursor to the **Zojila Tunnel**, which is under construction and expected to be completed by **December 2026**.
- Enhances India's capability in reinforcing military personnel in sensitive areas of Ladakh, vital post-2020 India-China standoff.
- The attack on the project underscores evolving threats to critical infrastructure, highlighting the importance of safeguarding national projects from insurgent activities.



# Major Infrastructure Projects in J&K | Jammu & Kashmir | 22 Oct 2024

### Why in News?

The recent militant attack has put a spotlight on ongoing infrastructure projects in <u>Jammu & Kashmir</u>, with contractors assessing risks but not yet raising alarm.

#### **Key Points**

- Ongoing Mega Projects in J&K:
  - The Centre is executing 51 mega projects in Jammu & Kashmir, initially estimated at Rs 76,000 crore, but costs have risen by 56% to Rs 1.16 trillion, as per the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
  - Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL):
    - It is a **Rs 42,500 crore** project and connects Kashmir Valley with India, stalled since 1995. It features the world's highest rail bridge over the <u>Chenab River</u>, crucial for regional integration, economic growth, and defense mobility.
  - J&K Rail Link Project Dharam:
    - The <u>Dharam-Banihal</u> section of the <u>Jammu & Kashmir Rail Link Project</u> is part of the Katra-Banihal section of the <u>Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)</u> Project.
    - The project is a national initiative to connect the Kashmir Valley to the rest of India by rail. The Dharam-Banihal section includes a <u>Tunnel Communication System</u> that provides uninterrupted radio communication between handheld devices and base stations.
- National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL):
  - NHIDCL is a government-owned company established in 2014 for the development & maintenance of National Highways & Strategic Roads of India.
  - It operates as a nodal agency of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).

# PAVING THE WAY

- 51 mega infrastructure projects, initially valued at ₹76,000 crore, now cost ₹1.16 trillion
- Projects include the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link, nearing completion at ₹42,500 crore
- Contractors report no significant impact on operations after recent attacks in J&K
- Major firms involved include Megha Engineering, Afcons Infrastructure, L&T, and Patel Engineering
- Local workforce involvement seen as key to mitigating security risks

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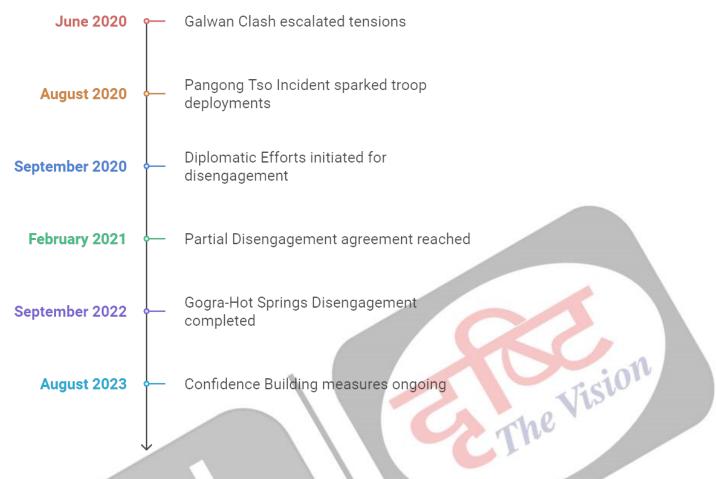
# India-China Standoff and Patrolling Arrangements Along LAC | Jammu & Kashmir | 22 Oct 2024

### Why in News?

India and China have been engaged in a prolonged <u>standoff since 2020</u> along the <u>Line of Actual Control</u> (<u>LAC</u>) in the Ladakh region, with several points of contention and military confrontations.

 Recent developments indicate efforts towards easing tensions and restructuring patrolling arrangements.

#### **Key Points**



- Sectors Across the LAC: It is divided into three sectors.
  - The eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim (1346 km).
  - The middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (545 km).
  - The western sector in Ladakh (1597 km).
  - The alignment of the LAC in the eastern sector is along the 1914 McMahon Line.
    - The McMohan line marked out previously unclaimed/undefined borders between **Britain and Tibet.** The middle sector is the least disputed sector, while the western sector witnesses the highest transgressions between the two sides

