



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

Why in News?

The [Z-Morh tunnel](#) project in [Jammu & Kashmir](#) recently witnessed militant attacks highlighting strategic significance of the project.

Key Points

- **Z-Morh Tunnel:**
 - A **6.4 km-long tunnel** connecting the [Sonamarg](#) 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 [Srinagar-Leh highway](#).
- **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 [Dras, Kargil, and Leh](#), which are crucial for defense operations, particularly around the [Siachen Glacier and Eastern Ladakh](#).
 - 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 [Jammu & Kashmir](#), 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 [Chenab River](#), crucial for regional integration, economic growth, and defense mobility.
- **J&K Rail Link Project Dharam:**
 - The [Dharam-Banihal](#) section of the [Jammu & Kashmir Rail Link Project](#) is part of the Katra-Banihal section of the [Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link \(USBRL\) 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 [Tunnel Communication System](#) 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 Udampur–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

Z-Morh Tunnel

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- It will provide all-weather connectivity to Sonamarg, a major tourist destination on the **Srinagar-Leh highway**.

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 [standoff since 2020](#) along the [Line of Actual Control \(LAC\)](#) 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

Key Events in India-China Border Tensions



- **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 McMahon 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

Disengagement along LAC

Patrolling arrangement
Foreign secretary Vikram Misri said India and China have arrived at an agreement on "patrolling arrangements" along the LAC, "leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020."

Resolving pending fissures
The breakthrough in negotiations will pave the way to solve the dragging impasse in **Depsang Plains** and **Demchok**, thus far the two remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh

How the impasse began
Standoff on the LAC began with a skirmish between Indian and Chinese troops on the banks of Pangong Lake in May 2020. A brutal clash at Galwan Valley in June 2020 killed 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops

Map Labels: CHINA, Daulat Beg Oldi, Depsang Plains, Leh, Galwan Valley, LAC, Pangong Tso, Chushul, Demchok, INDIA, J&K, Ladakh.

Quote: "We reached an agreement on patrolling. With that...we have gone back to where the situation was in 2020, and...the disengagement process with China, you can say, has been completed."
- S Jaishankar, external affairs minister

