



## 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.



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# 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**.

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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 [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

