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## BRO Clears Snow at Zojila Pass | Jammu & Kashmir | 19 Nov 2024

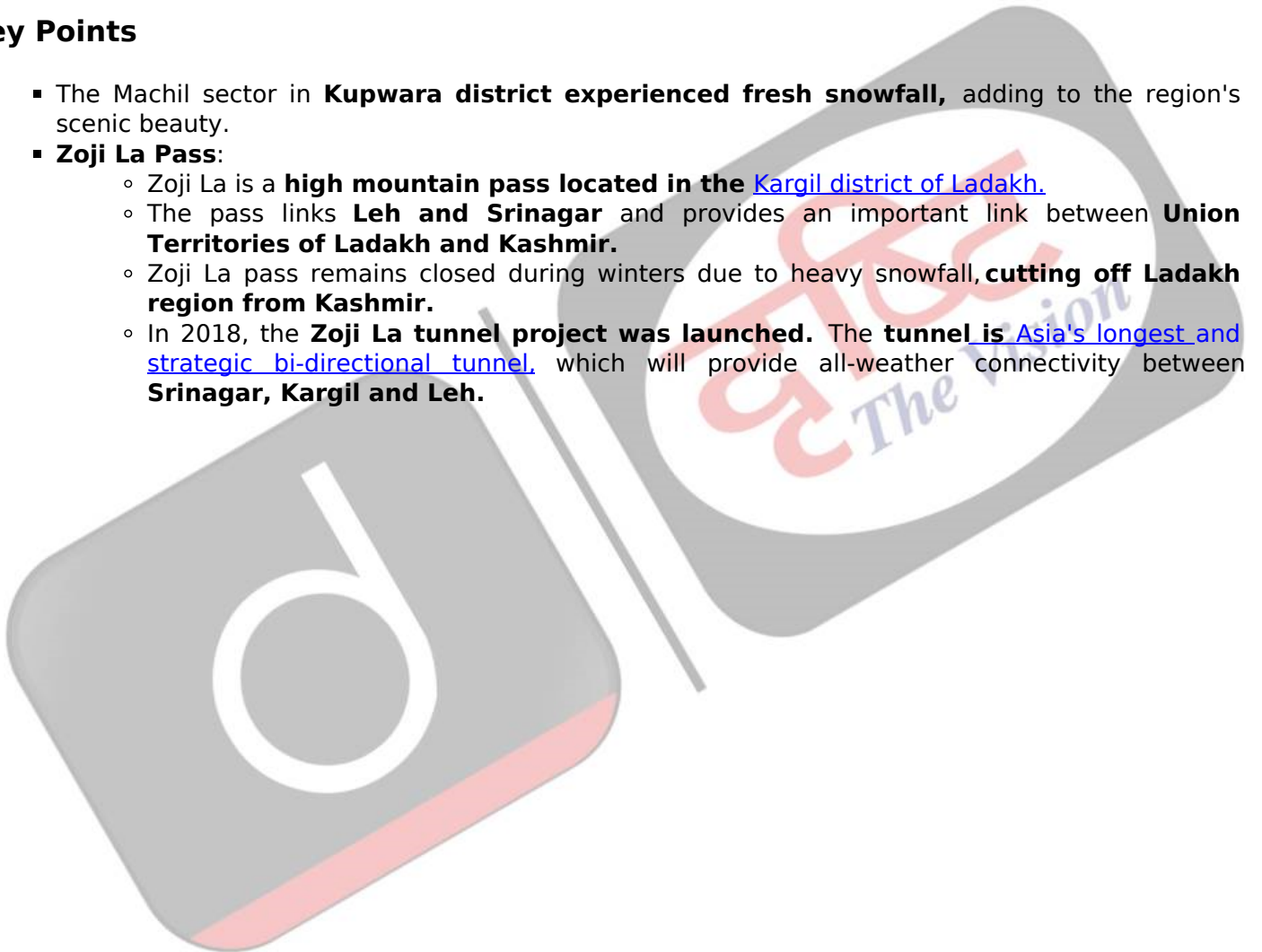
### Why in News?

Recently, the [Border Roads Organization \(BRO\)](#) conducted a snow clearance operation at [Zojila Pass](#), following heavy [snowfall](#), to restore connectivity and ensure safe travel in the area.

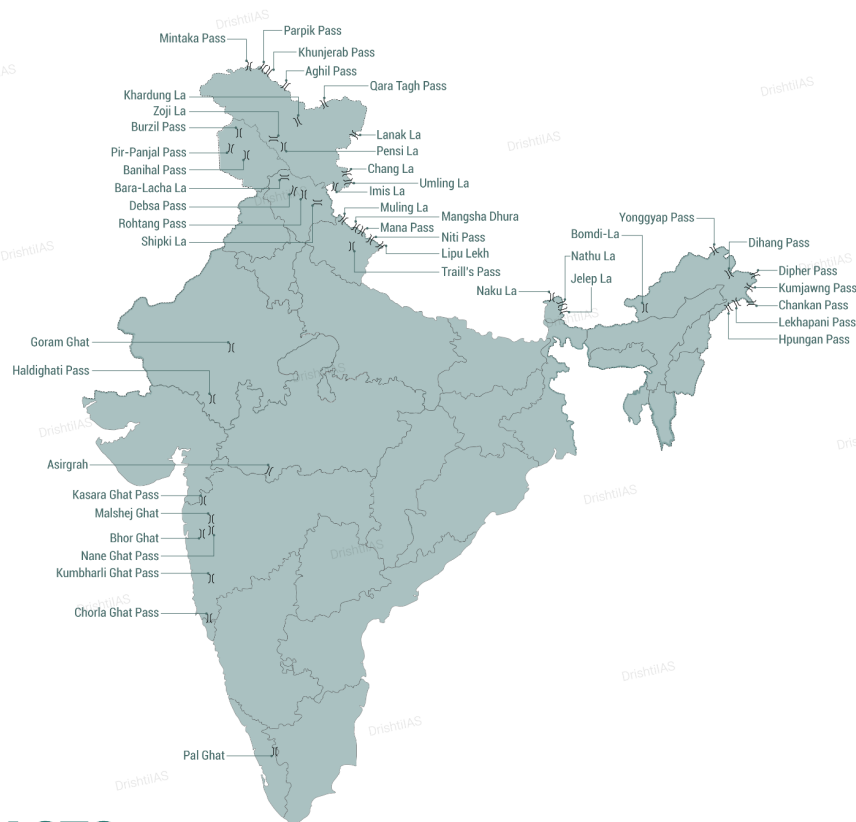
### Key Points

- The Machil sector in **Kupwara district** experienced **fresh snowfall**, adding to the region's scenic beauty.
- **Zoji La Pass:**
  - Zoji La is a **high mountain pass located in the [Kargil district of Ladakh](#)**.
  - The pass links **Leh and Srinagar** and provides an important link between **Union Territories of Ladakh and Kashmir**.
  - Zoji La pass remains closed during winters due to heavy snowfall, **cutting off Ladakh region from Kashmir**.
  - In 2018, the **Zoji La tunnel project was launched**. The **tunnel is [Asia's longest and strategic bi-directional tunnel](#)**, which will provide all-weather connectivity between **Srinagar, Kargil and Leh**.

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# MAJOR PASSES IN INDIA



## FACTS

- Umling La pass located in Eastern Ladakh has recently become the world's highest motorable pass (Project Himank).
- Lipu Lekh Pass is located close to the tri junction of Uttarakhand (India), China and Nepal.
- Nathu La (Sikkim) is situated on the Indo-Tibetan border. It is one of the three open trading passes between India and China (other two: Shipki La and Lipu Lekh Pass).
- Naku La, located in Sikkim, was recently in news due to the Indo-China face-off along the LAC at the pass.
- Zoji La links Leh with Srinagar and is known as the "Mountain Pass of Blizzards". The Zojila tunnel is Asia's longest tunnel.
- Dungri La (or Mana) Pass connects India and Tibet. It is located in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve of the Zaskar mountain range (Uttarakhand). Even Indian nationals need prior permits from the Army to travel through this pass.
- Rohtang Pass (Himachal Pradesh) is situated in the Pir Panjal Range of the great Himalayas and connects Kullu Valley with Lahaul and Spiti Valleys.
- The widest gap of Western Ghats is at Palakkad (or Pal Ghat) in Kerala adjoining Tamil Nadu.



## Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

- BRO was **conceived and raised in 1960** by [Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru](#) for coordinating the **speedy development of a network of roads in the North and the North Eastern border regions** of the country.
- It works under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Defence**.
- It has diversified into a large spectrum of construction and development works **comprising airfields, building projects, defence works and tunneling** and has endeared itself to the people.

**Saffron Production Declines in Kashmir Valley | Jammu & Kashmir |**

**19 Nov 2024**

## Why in News?

The [Kashmir Valley](#) has experienced a notable **decline in production of saffron** due to insufficient rainfall.

- The harvest, traditionally **carried out from mid-October to November**, is primarily concentrated in **South Kashmir's Pampore**, famously known as the "[Saffron Bowl of Kashmir](#)."

## Key Points

- **Rainfall Deficit in Kashmir:**
  - Srinagar meteorological department reported a 79% **rainfall deficit** from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024, following a 26% deficit during the monsoon, **severely affecting agriculture**, including saffron.
- **Government Initiatives:**
  - The [National Mission on Saffron \(NMS\)](#), launched in 2010-11, **aims to address challenges in saffron cultivation**.
  - In **2020**, [Kashmiri saffron received the Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#), with efforts underway to position it as a globally recognized brand.
- **Farmers' Demands:**
  - Farmers emphasize the need for operational borewells and enhanced funding under NMS to ensure sustainable saffron cultivation and address ongoing challenges.
- **Saffron:**
  - Saffron is a **plant whose dried stigmas (thread-like parts of the flower)** are used to make **saffron spice**.
  - Saffron cultivation is believed to **have been introduced in Kashmir by Central Asian immigrants** around the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE.
  - It has been **associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine** and represents the rich cultural heritage of the region.
  - It is a **very precious and costly product**.
  - In ancient Sanskrit literature, **Saffron is referred to as 'Bahukam'**.
  - It is cultivated and harvested in the Karewa (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir.
  - **Types:**
    - There are **three types** of saffron available in Kashmir **Lachha Saffron, Mongra Saffron and Guchhi Saffron**.
  - **Importance:**
    - It **rejuvenates health and is used in cosmetics** and for medicinal purposes.
    - It has been associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine and **represents the rich cultural heritage of the region**.

## Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- A GI tag is a **name or sign used on certain products** that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
- The GI tag ensures that only the **authorised users or those residing in the geographical territory** are allowed to use the popular product name.
  - It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
- A registered GI is **valid for 10 years**.
- GI registration is overseen by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.