

Motorable Road to Amarnath Cave Shrine

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Why in News?

The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** has completed the construction of a motorable road that connects the <u>Amarnath cave shrine</u> in Kashmir's Lidder Valley with **the Baltal base camp**, making the pilgrimage more accessible and comfortable for the devotees.

 This milestone resulted from the successful upgrade of the Baltal road, a feat accomplished through the continuous efforts of Project Beacon.

Note:

- Project Beacon is the BRO's oldest undertaking, was raised on May 18, 1960, with its headquarters at Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir.
 - Beacon currently takes care of the road infrastructure development and maintenance in important areas of Kashmir.

What are the Key Facts Regarding Amarnath Cave Shrine?

- The Amarnath mountain features a cave on its south famously known as the Amarnath Cave. This cave is the location of the Amarnath Temple, a significant Hindu shrine situated in the Pahalgam tehsil of the Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir, India.
 - The shrine is perched at an altitude of 3,800 metres, contributing to the challenging nature of the pilgrimage.
- Amarnath Peak, a part of the <u>Himalayas</u> is a mountain with a peak elevation of 5,186 meters, in the Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir, in the vicinity of Sonamarg.
- Amarnath yatra is an annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave, where devotees pay homage to an ice stalagmite believed to be the lingam of Lord Shiva.
 - The ice stalagmite forms every year during the summer months and reaches its maximum size in July and August, when thousands of Hindu devotees make an annual pilgrimage to the cave.
- Traditional Access Routes:
 - Pilgrims historically approached the shrine via two routes Pahalgam and Sonamarg both located in the Lidder Valley, each presenting its own set of challenges through demanding terrains.
 - Pilgrims also had the option to use chopper services from Baltal to Panchtarni, located 6 km away from the shrine. However, ecological concerns led to the discontinuation of services directly to the shrine.



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