



PM to Inaugurate Z-Morh Tunnel | Jammu & Kashmir | 10 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The Prime Minister is going to **inaugurate the Z-Morh tunnel** on 13th January 2025, marking the **first major milestone** in establishing a year-round **strategic corridor between Kashmir and Ladakh**.

Key Points

- **Strategic Importance of the Z-Morh Tunnel:**
 - **Year-Round Access:**
 - The Z-Morh tunnel, located in **Ganderbal district of central Kashmir**, is crucial for keeping Sonamarg open to tourists throughout the year.
 - It **addresses the previous issue where snowfall and avalanches would block access** to the tourist spot in winters.

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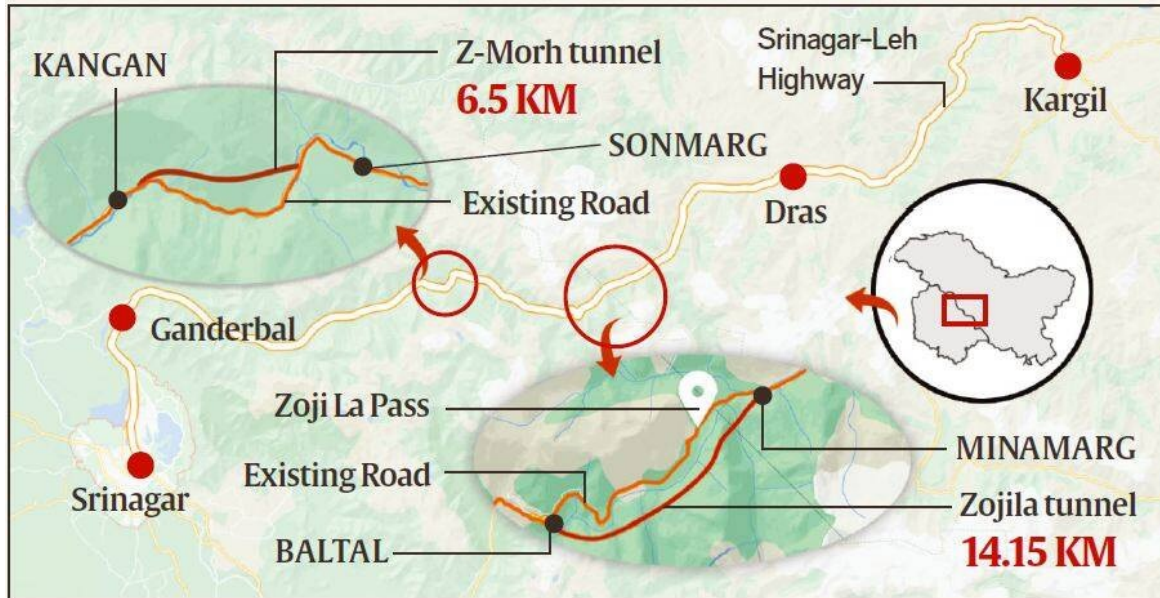
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- **Tunnel Features:**
 - The Z-Morh tunnel, located **under the Thajiwas Glacier**, **bypasses** areas prone to **landslides and avalanches**.
 - An **intelligent traffic management system** will help regulate vehicle flow and will also facilitate adventure tourism at Thajiwas Glacier and **the Sindh River**.
- **Cultural and Tourism Boost:**
 - The tunnel was praised as a **major infrastructure asset for central Kashmir**, with significant potential to **boost winter tourism in the region**.
- **Details of the Tunnel Project:**
 - **Cost and Length:**
 - The Z-Morh tunnel, built at a cost of Rs 2,680 crore, is 6.5 km long and features a two-lane passage.
 - It includes a 10.8-meter main tunnel, a modified horseshoe-shaped escape tunnel, and several culverts.
 - **Connectivity:**
 - The Z-Morh tunnel is part of the larger strategic route to Ladakh, linking to the Zojila tunnel.

- **The Zojila tunnel**, Asia's longest, will reduce travel time between Ganderbal and Kargil from three hours to just 20 minutes.

▪ **Geopolitical and Strategic Significance:**

- The Zojila and Z-Morh tunnels are **vital for the movement of goods and personnel**, especially for security forces stationed in Ladakh.
- **The Zojila Pass** is currently the **only road linking Kashmir to Ladakh** but is often closed during the winter months due to heavy snow.
- Both tunnels are located in **seismic Zone IV**, necessitating the implementation of robust safety measures to prevent structural damage.



Vande Bharat for Katra-Srinagar Route | Jammu & Kashmir | 10 Jan 2025

Why in News?

Recently, **the Railway Board** unveiled a **Vande Bharat Express train**, specially designed to operate seamlessly in the challenging winter conditions of Jammu & Kashmir, for the upcoming **Katra-Srinagar rail route**.

Key Points

▪ **Climate-Specific Features:**

- The Vande Bharat Express, stationed at Shakurbasti coaching depot in New Delhi, has been **specially designed for Jammu & Kashmir's extreme winter conditions**.
- It features **advanced heating systems** to prevent the freezing of water and bio-toilet tanks, ensure the vacuum system and laboratories remain warm, and **optimize air-brake system** functionality in sub-zero temperatures.

▪ **Passenger Amenities:**

- The train also **includes all amenities** found in existing Vande Bharat Express trains, such as fully air-conditioned coaches, automatic plug doors, and mobile charging sockets.

▪ **Symbol of Connectivity:**

- The train connects the Kashmir Valley more effectively to the national railway network,

symbolizing India's commitment to bridging geographical and economic gaps.

Vande Bharat Trains

- It is an **indigenously designed and manufactured semi high speed**, self-propelled train that is touted as the next major leap for the Indian Railways in terms of speed and passenger convenience since the introduction of Rajdhani trains.
- The first Vande Bharat was **manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai** as part of the '[Make in India' programme](#), at a cost of about Rs. 100 crore.
- The Vande Bharat was **India's first attempt at adaptation of the train set technology** compared with conventional systems of passenger coaches hauled by separate locomotives.
- The train set configuration, though complex, is faster, easier to maintain, consumes less energy, and has greater flexibility in train operation.



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About Indian Railways

- It was **established in 1853** and is **one of the largest railway networks globally**.
- The **first train in India** ran over a distance of 21 miles, connecting **Bombay and Thane**.
- India has the 3rd **largest metro-rail network** in the world after **China and the US**. By 2050, India is projected to account for **40% of the global rail activity**.