

Shipki La Pass

Source: TH

Shipki La Pass (3,930m) in Himachal's Kinnaur district, along the **India-China border** has been **opened to domestic tourists** to **boost borderland economies,** enhance strategic connectivity, and promote cultural tourism.

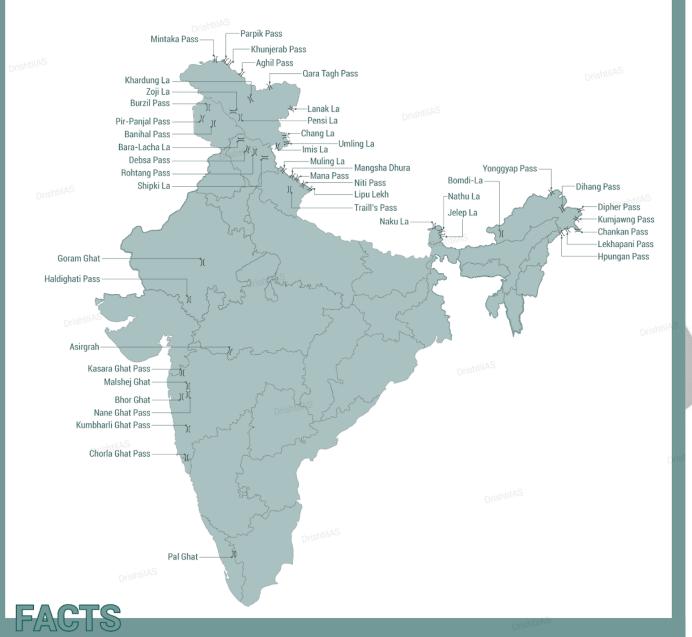
Shipki La Pass

- Shipki La is a motorable mountain pass which marks a boundary post on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and is among India's highest motorable passes.
- The Sutlej River (Langqen Zangbo in Tibet) enters India through this pass, which historically served as a key Indo-Tibetan trade route.
- The pass was earlier known as **Pema La** or **Shared Gate** and was renamed **Shipki La** by the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** after 1962.
- It has been a vital trade route since the 5th century, which ceased after the 1962 Sino-India War, post-Doklam standoff and Covid-19.
- Shipki La facilitated India-Tibet trade, with imports like wool, livestock, yak products, religious items, and minerals, and exports of grains, spices, tobacco, timber, and metal tools.

Mountain Passes

- Passes are natural low points or gaps in mountain ranges that facilitate the movement of people, goods, and armies across otherwise difficult terrain.
- They are formed by erosion, glaciation, or tectonic activity and serve as connectors between valleys or regions, historically enabling trade, migration, and military movement, with strategic, economic, and cultural significance.

MAJOR PASSES IN INDIA



- O Umling La pass located in Eastern Ladakh has recently become the world's highest motorable pass (Project Himank).
- O Lipu Lekh Pass is located close to the tri junction of Uttarakhand (India), China and Nepal.
- O 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).
- O Naku La, located in Sikkim, was recently in news due to the Indo-China face-off along the LAC at the pass.
- O Zoji La links Leh with Srinagar and is known as the "Mountain Pass of Blizzards". The Zojila tunnel is Asia's longest tunnel.
- O Dungri La (or Mana) Pass connects India and Tibet. It is located in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve of the Zanskar 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.



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