



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



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.



Drishti IAS

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