

# Jammu & Kashmir Digest

A Review of Developments in J&K



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
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## Road and Tunnel Transformations Driving Growth and Connectivity in J&K

The landscape of Jammu and Kashmir has been revolutionised with a significant transformation in its road infrastructure, with major developments in highways, tunnels, and bypasses enhancing connectivity across the region. Key projects, such as the upgrades on NH-44, the Banihal-Qazigund Tunnel, and the Chenani-Nashri Tunnel, are reducing travel times and overcoming terrain challenges.

New tunnels like the Zojila and Tawi tunnels will ensure all-weather connectivity and improve access to remote areas, benefiting both military logistics and tourism. These advancements are boosting economic growth by facilitating trade, promoting tourism, and improving security. The improved road network has unlocked new opportunities for economic growth in J&K.

Local businesses, farmers, and artisans can now access larger markets, promoting trade in agriculture, handicrafts, and horticulture. Enhanced connectivity to destinations like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonmarg has increased tourist footfall, boosting the hospitality and adventure tourism industries. Pilgrimage tourism to sites like Vaishno Devi and Amarnath Cave has also flourished. The upgraded roads and tunnels play a critical role in improving security by facilitating the rapid movement of defense personnel and supplies. Additionally, all-weather roads ensure effective disaster management and emergency response during natural calamities.

With future projects planned, J&K is set to become a thriving hub of economic activity, tourism, and regional integration. – [Travel and Tour World](#)

## Pir Panjal Winter Festival: A Celebration of Youth, Culture, and Sports

The Indian Army has kicked off the 51-day Pir Panjal Winter Festival in Poonch, featuring a two-month-long celebration of sports and cultural events. The festival highlights the Army's dedication to youth empowerment, cultural preservation, and its stand against drug abuse.

It includes a variety of competitions, such as an Under-25 boys cricket tournament, volleyball tournaments for boys and girls, Kho-Kho for girls, and performances of Gujari and Pahari folk dances. Additionally, there are talent hunts in music and dance, along with exhibitions and competitions in science, arts, painting, essay writing, and elocution.

“This festival is a testament to the Army’s unwavering commitment to youth empowerment, cultural preservation and social reformation, particularly in advocating its commitment against drug abuse,” said Defense spokesperson Lt Col Suneel Bartwal.

Furthermore, “This initiative serves as a catalyst for fostering sportsmanship, cultural renaissance and holistic development among the youth, particularly those hailing from remote and marginalised communities of Poonch. The overwhelming response from the enthusiastic populace of Poonch underscores the profound reverence and camaraderie shared between the community and the Indian Army,” the spokesperson said. – [The Tribune](#)

## Plans Unveiled for 4 New World-Class Tourist Destinations with World Bank Support

The Government of India, in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir government, and the World Bank, is planning to develop four new tourism destinations: Kokernag (Anantnag), Baradari (Reasi), Bhadarwah (Doda), and Doodhpathri (Budgam), with world-class infrastructure. This initiative comes in response to an increase in tourist arrivals, with 1.2 million tourists visiting in the first half of 2024.

The World Bank's role will focus on knowledge sharing and promoting local handicrafts. Union Tourism Ministry officials said as far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, the focus would be on ecological sustainability.

The project is designed with a strategic vision, incorporating Tourism Destination Spatial Plans for well-organised growth. The tourism sector's contribution to Jammu and Kashmir's economy has grown from 7.84% in FY 2019-20 to 8.47% in FY 2022-23. The ongoing projects aim to further boost tourism, enhance infrastructure, and solidify the region as a premier destination for travellers. – [The Hindu](#)

## Lal Draman Winter Festival: Reviving a Hidden Gem in Jammu & Kashmir

The Winter Festival at Lal Draman, a scenic meadow in Doda district, Jammu and Kashmir, recently drew nearly 2,500 visitors to celebrate the region's culture, adventure, and natural beauty. The event, organized by the District Administration, the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department, Tejas Ek Pahal Foundation, and the Indian Army, included cultural performances, adventure sports, and trekking activities.

The district administration is now focused on revitalising Lal Draman's tourism potential, with initiatives such as the Winter Festival and the Lal Draman Fair aimed at rekindling interest. However, the meadow's long-term development will depend on addressing infrastructure challenges and fostering collaboration between the administration, local stakeholders, and private investors. The hope is that these efforts will position Lal Draman as a thriving and sustainable tourist destination. – [Travel and Tour World](#)