

Jammu & Kashmir Digest

A Review of Developments in J&K



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- PM Modi Inaugurates Z-Morh Tunnel, Promises Prosperity for Jammu and Kashmir
- Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express to Revolutionise Travel with Speed and Comfort

More News and Analyses

PM Modi Inaugurates Z-Morh Tunnel, Promises Prosperity for Jammu and Kashmir

The Z-Morh tunnel was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jammu and Kashmir on 13 January 2025. He called the Union Territory "the crown of the country" and expressing his desire to see it flourish. The 6.5-kilometre tunnel, part of the broader Zojila project and strategic Srinagar-Leh National Highway, will significantly enhance connectivity to Ladakh, especially in winter, when heavy snow often isolates it.

With an investment of ₹2,400 crore, the tunnel is expected to boost tourism and logistical operations, benefiting both civilians and the military.

Prime Minister Modi also paid tribute to seven workers who lost their lives during the project as a result of a terror attack in October 2024, acknowledging their contributions in challenging circumstances - "First of all, I would like to thank all the brothers who worked in the most difficult circumstances, risking their lives, for the progress of the country and Jammu and Kashmir. Also, seven of our labour colleagues lost their lives but completed this task by overcoming all challenges. Today, I would like to remember the 7 colleagues who have lost their lives," he said.

The Z-Morh Tunnel, which took nearly a decade to complete, is part of a larger infrastructure project to improve connectivity across the union territory. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah praised the tunnel's potential to enhance winter tourism in central Kashmir. With its completion, the tunnel is set to become a key piece of the region's development, complementing other ongoing projects like the Zojila tunnel, and is expected to improve the overall travel experience for residents, tourists, and the armed forces. – [Hindustan Times](#), [Swarajya Mag](#)

Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express to Revolutionise Travel with Speed and Comfort

The highly anticipated 8-coach Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express is set to begin operations soon, drastically reducing the travel time between the two cities to just 3 hours and 10 minutes. This major leap in connectivity is made possible by the completion of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), which has cost nearly ₹40,000 crore. The Vande Bharat Express will offer a modern, high-speed travel option for commuters, pilgrims, and tourists, cutting down the previous travel time of over six hours.

The train is specially designed to withstand extreme cold temperatures as low as minus 20°C, featuring advanced heating systems and a heated windshield in the driver's cabin to ensure safety and comfort in harsh winter conditions.

Beyond speed, the train is equipped with anti-vibration seismic devices to ensure safe travel in Kashmir's seismic Zone-V. This technological feature helps absorb tremors in the Himalayan region, contributing to both faster and safer journeys. The launch of the Vande Bharat Express is expected to boost tourism and economic activity in Kashmir by providing a quicker, more comfortable means of transportation. Covering 800 km in under 13 hours, the train will enhance the overall travel experience, creating excitement among locals and tourists alike for a smoother, more efficient journey between Jammu and Srinagar. – [TRK News](#)

Jammu and Kashmir Sees Surge in Tourism Amid Fresh Snowfall

The fresh snowfall in Kashmir has sparked a significant rise in winter tourism, with over 12,000 tourists visiting in the first week of January alone. The region is witnessing a surge in bookings, with hotels and houseboats fully booked until the end of the month. Following a record-breaking 2024, which saw nearly 3 million tourists, officials are optimistic that 2025 will bring even more visitors.

Manzoor Pakhtoon, Chairman of the Houseboat Association, said, “The tourist inflow has been excellent for the past two to three years, and 2024 was a great year for tourism. We are hopeful that the upcoming season will be equally remarkable, especially for winter sports like skiing and the Khelo India event. With the introduction of train services, we are confident that tourist numbers will increase even further. We also had a significant number of visitors from Southeast and East Asian countries, as well as Europe. Many Russian tourists visit for skiing.”

The Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department has declared 2024 as one of the best seasons in the valley’s history, driven by new attractions and ongoing development projects aimed at enhancing tourism. Efforts are underway to develop 75 new tourist destinations, heritage sites, Sufi and religious locations, and adventure treks.

Popular destinations like Sonamarg have turned into winter wonderlands, drawing tourists eager to experience the snow-covered landscape. The Baderwah region in Jammu, particularly the Guldanda meadow, has also gained attention, with tourists flocking to the area after heavy snowfall.

Located at nearly 10,000 feet altitude, Guldanda has become a key attraction, contributing to Baderwah’s growing reputation as a year-round tourist spot. Over 5 lakh tourists visited Baderwah last year, and the numbers are expected to increase as more visitors come to enjoy the winter sports and scenic beauty of the area. – [Zee News](#), [Hindustan Times](#), [Live Mint](#)

BSF Empowers Border Women with Beautician Training Programme

The Border Security Force (BSF) has launched a special initiative to train women living near the international border as beauticians, aiming to empower border residents and promote skill development.

The four-week training programme, which is being conducted in the R S Pura sector, focuses on providing essential beautician skills to local women. The first phase of the programme took place from September 16 to October 25, 2024, and the second phase began on December 23, 2024, with another group of 15 participants, set to conclude on January 18, 2025.

This programme is part of the BSF’s broader effort to foster self-reliance and holistic growth in border areas. Upon completing the training, participants will receive certificates to acknowledge their new expertise, enhancing their opportunities for livelihood and contributing to the prosperity of the region. This initiative is an example of how skill development can create lasting change and empowerment for women living in border communities. – [Kashmir Observer](#)