

Chenani-Nashri Highway Tunnel: Beginning of a New Era in Road Connectivity

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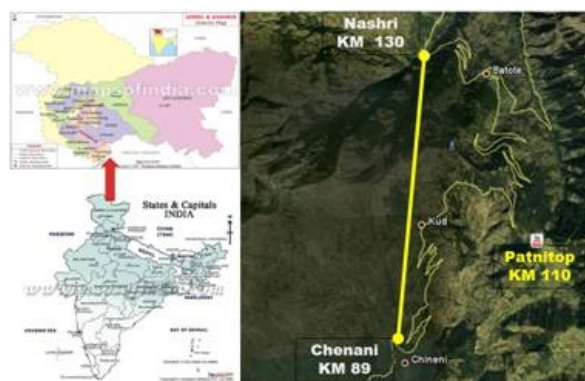
The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will dedicate India's longest highways tunnel - the Chenani- Nashri tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir- to the nation on 2nd April, 2017. An ideal example of the government's 'Make in India' and 'Skill India' initiative, the 9 km long, twin-tube, all-weather tunnel between Udhampur and Ramban in Jammu & Kashmir is not only India's longest highways tunnel but also Asia's longest bi-directional highways tunnel. Built at an elevation of 1200 metres on one of the most difficult Himalayan terrains, the tunnel will cut the travel time between Jammu and Srinagar by two hours, bypassing about 41 kms of road length. It will also ensure an all weather passage on a route that often sees heavy traffic jams and disruptions due to landslides, snow, sharp curves, breakdown of vehicles and accidents.

The tunnel was constructed at a cost of about Rs 3720 crores. It is a part of the 286-km-long four-laning of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. The structure consists of a 9 km long, two-laned main tunnel with a parallel escape tunnel of same length. The two tunnels are connected by 29 cross passages at regular intervals along the entire length of the tunnel. These cross passages can be used for evacuation of vehicles and commuters in case of breakdown or any other emergency. There are two minor bridges on the south and north sides and 4-lane approach roads with Toll Plazas on both ends of the tunnel. The maximum height permitted in the tunnel is 5 meters and for checking the height special sensors have been installed just before the toll points at both ends.

The tunnel has an efficient, transverse ventilation system. There are inlets bringing fresh air at 8 metre intervals and outlet for exhaust every 100 metres. There is also a fully-integrated control system with ventilation, communication, power supply, incident detection, SOS call box and fire fighting. Fitted with intelligent traffic mechanism, the tunnel has fully automatic smart control and no human intervention will be required for its operations. The tunnel is also equipped with advanced scanners to ward off any security threat. Very few tunnels in the world have this kind of fully integrated tunnel control.

The project is also environment friendly. The time saving on the Jammu- Srinagar route will further result in fuel saving of approximately Rs 27 lakhs per day. Besides, the construction of the tunnel has avoided large -scale deforestation.

The Chenani-Nashri tunnel will have a very positive impact on the state economy. In line with the Skill India initiative of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the skill sets of local people were developed and improved, and they were engaged for construction of this tunnel. The project has provided employment to over 2,000 unskilled and skilled youth of Jammu and Kashmir as 94 percent of the work force was from the state. Around 600 to 900 people from across the country also worked on this project in 3 shifts over the past 4 years.





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