

14th January 2025

Z-Morh Tunnel

The **Z-Morh Tunnel or Sonamarg Tunnel** in Jammu and Kashmir was inaugurated by the Indian Prime Minister on January 13, 2025.

Key Points-

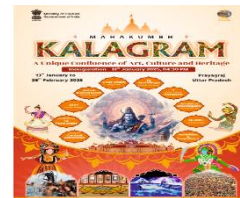
- ❖ The Z-Morh Tunnel is a **6.5-kilometre**-long, two-lane road tunnel constructed between **Gagangir and Sonamarg** in the Ganderbal district.
- ❖ The main tunnel is 10.8 metres wide and consists of a 7.5-metre-long horseshoe-shaped escape tunnel and an 8.3-metre-long D-shaped ventilation tunnel.
- ❖ **Connectivity** : Built at an altitude of over 8,650 feet, the tunnel will improve connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg.
 - In future, the tunnel will be connected to Leh. The aim of the tunnel is to provide all-weather access to the region.
 - The tunnel will also significantly reduce travel time between Srinagar and Leh.
- ❖ **Cost** : It is part of a Rs 2,700 crore project.
- ❖ **Significance** : It will bypass landslide and avalanche-prone routes and provide safe, uninterrupted access to the region.
 - This will promote tourism.
- ❖ **Way forward** : The upcoming tunnel is part of a broader infrastructure project, which also includes the upcoming Zojila Tunnel, which is expected to be completed by 2028.

'Kalagram'

Union Minister for Culture and Tourism inaugurated the Indian Cultural Heritage Centre 'Kalagram' in the Nagvasuki area of the Mahakumbh Mela.

Key Points-

- ❖ The Kalagram, set up by the Ministry of Culture, at Maha Kumbh, reflects India's unity in diversity.
- ❖ This Kalagram will be a major attraction of Maha Kumbh 2025, showcasing stage **performances of Char Dhams**, grand entry of 12 Jyotirlingas, uninterrupted eternal Kumbh exhibition, and cultural diversity in 7 regional culture courtyards.
- ❖ It will include a taste of Indian cuisine through **traditional food stalls from different states** of the country, and colourful performances by over 14,630 cultural artists.
- ❖ The vibrant Kalagram will have a grand Ganga Pandal with a capacity of 10,000, along with three additional stages in the Arial, Jhunsi and Triveni areas, each with a seating arrangement of 2,000 to 4,000 spectators.



Mahakumbh 2025

- ❖ The Maha Kumbh Mela, scheduled to be held from January **13 to February 26, 2025**, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, is a historic event that will attract over **40 crore** devotees from across the world.
- ❖ Spread over an area of 4,000 hectares, the fair represents a harmonious blend of India's rich cultural traditions and advanced organisational capabilities.
- ❖ Astrologically significant, the Maha Kumbh is determined by rare astronomical alignments involving the **Sun, Moon and Jupiter**.

- ❖ The Maha Kumbh was recognised by UNESCO in **2017** as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- ❖ In Hinduism, the Maha Kumbh Mela is held every 12 years at four holy sites : **Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nashik.**

Mission Mausam

Mission Mausam was launched by the Prime Minister at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi** on the occasion of the 150th Foundation Day of the India Meteorological Department.

Key Points-

- ❖ **Aim** : "Mission Mausam" has been launched with the aim of making the country weather-ready and climate-smart.
- ❖ The mission aims to achieve high-level capability by developing state-of-the-art weather monitoring techniques and systems, implementing high-resolution atmospheric observations, next-generation radars and satellites and high-performance computers.
- ❖ It will also focus on improving the understanding of weather and climate processes, providing air quality data.
- ❖ **IMD Vision-2047** : IMD Vision-2047 document for climate resilience and climate change adaptation was also released.

India Meteorological Department :

- ❖ The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is an agency of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, Government of India.

- ❖ It is the premier agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.
- ❖ **Established** - 1875
- ❖ **Headquarters** - Initially in Calcutta. Later moved to Shimla, then Poona (now Pune) and finally to New Delhi.

Himkavach

DRDO launched Himkavach for soldiers.

Key Points-

- ❖ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) launched a new uniform for soldiers deployed in extreme cold on the Siachen and Ladakh border. It has been named Himkavach.
- ❖ **Feature** : Himkavach is designed to work in temperatures ranging from **20°C to -60°C**.
 - Himkavach is a **clothing system** that is made by combining multiple layers of dresses. All the layers are designed according to the insulation system to generate heat.
- ❖ **Current Context** : Currently, soldiers wear the ECW CS uniform. It was developed by DRDO's Defense Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS).

Person In News- Achievement

Neeraj Chopra

- ❖ India's Paris Olympics silver medallist Neeraj Chopra has been named the world's best men's javelin thrower in 2024 by the world-renowned American magazine '**Track and Field News**'.

- ❖ Neeraj Chopra pipped two-time world champion **Anderson Peters** of Grenada to the top spot in the 2024 rankings published by the California-based magazine.



Person In News- Worldwide

Tamim Iqbal

- ❖ Former Bangladesh captain **Tamim Iqbal** has announced his retirement from international cricket.
- ❖ Tamim has played 70 Tests, 243 ODIs and 78 T20 matches for Bangladesh.



Nicolas Maduro

- ❖ Nicolas Maduro was sworn in as President of Venezuela for the third consecutive term.
- ❖ He has been the President of Venezuela since 2013.

Person In News- Obituary

Iqbal Chagla

- ❖ Recently a senior advocate of India Iqbal Chhagla passed away.
- ❖ He was **85 years** old.



Important Days/Date

12 January

National Youth Day

- ❖ National Youth Day is celebrated every year on 12th January in memory of the great **spiritual leader, philosopher and thinker** Swami Vivekananda.



- ❖ Vivekananda's inspiring life and powerful message urge the youth to cherish their dreams, unleash their energies and shape the future in accordance with his envisioned ideals.
- ❖ Youth is defined as the age group of **15-29 years**, which is about **40%** of the total population of India.
- ❖ The Government of India declared Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary as National Youth Day in **1984**. It has been celebrated every year since 1985.

About Swami Vivekananda-

- ❖ Swami Vivekananda was born in **Kolkata** on **12 January 1863**.
- ❖ His childhood name was **Narendranath Dutt**.
- ❖ His father's name was **Vishwanath Dutt** and his mother's name was **Bhuvaneshwari Devi**.
- ❖ At the age of 16, in 1869, Swami Ji passed the Calcutta University examination.
- ❖ In **1893**, Swami Ji represented India in the religious conference held in **Chicago, America**.
- ❖ On **4 July 1902**, Swami Ji merged into the five elements by taking Mahasamadhi in meditation at the Ramakrishna Math in Belur.
- ❖ The name of Swami Vivekananda's guru was **Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa**.

Important News- Other States

Karnataka

- ❖ **South India's first** Infectious Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (IRDL) will be set up by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) at the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI).

Important News-Worldwide

Singapore

- ❖ Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam will visit India from January 14 to 18.
- ❖ The state visit is taking place to mark the **60th anniversary of the establishment of India-Singapore diplomatic relations.**
- ❖ India and Singapore are likely to sign two skills development agreements during the visit.
- ❖ This will be Shanmugaratnam's first state visit to India and the first visit by any Singaporean president to India in 10 years. The last visit was by former President **Tony Tan King Yam** in February 2015.

Miscellaneous

- ❖ The Union Commerce and Industry Minister launched the India Cleantech Manufacturing Platform at the India Climate Forum 2025 in New Delhi. The initiative is designed to enhance India's clean technology value chains in solar, wind, hydrogen and battery storage sectors.

- ❖ India has joined the **UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics**, a premier body focused on leveraging Big Data to monitor and report on the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ❖ The India-Nepal Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Combat Unauthorized Trade was held on January 10-11, 2025 in Kathmandu.
- ❖ The Indian genomic data set was unveiled at the Genome India Data Conclave held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi and Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launched the 'Framework for Exchange of Data Protocols (FEED)' and the Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC) portal, making **10,000 whole genome** samples accessible to researchers in India and across the world.
- ❖ Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) delivered the **last Scorpene class submarine, Vagsheer**, to the Indian Navy, completing Project 75. The other five submarines in this class are Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj, Vela and Vagsheer.

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