

PM Flags off Banihal-Qazigund Rail Link

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प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह ने बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेल खंड का उद्घाटन किया

कश्मीर घाटी पहुंची उम्मीदों की ट्रेन

बनिहाल | एजेसियां

विकास को गति देने और देश के अन्य हिस्सों से घाटी की दूरी मिटाने की उम्मीद के साथ बुधवार को पहली रेलगाड़ी कश्मीर घाटी पहुंची। प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह और यूपीए अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी द्वारा 18 किलोमीटर लंबे बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेल खंड का उद्घाटन करने के साथ ही रेल से घाटी जाने का सपना साकार हो गया।

इस मौके पर मनमोहन सिंह के राज्य के विकास में हर संभव मदद करने का वादा किया। उन्होंने कहा कि देश के सबसे सुंदर हिस्से कश्मीर के रेल संपर्क से जुड़ने से पर्यटन, लोगों को आवागामी, व्यापार को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा तथा राज्य में लोगों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर सृजित करने में मदद मिलेगी। उन्होंने उम्मीद जताई कि

उधर-कटरा-बनिहाल खंड भी पूर्व निर्धारित कार्यक्रम के तहत वर्ष 2017 में चालू हो जाएगा।

मनमोहन सिंह ने कहा, मुख्य क्षेत्रों को दूरदस्तान के इलाकों से जोड़ने के लिए योजनाएं लागू की जा रही हैं। जम्मू क्षेत्र के शरीर एवं पुंछजिलों को कश्मीर



बुधवार को जम्मू में स्फूर्ति छात्रों के साथ बनिहाल-काजीगुंड को जोड़ने वाली रेल में साफर करते पीएम मनमोहन सिंह और कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी (पीछे)। • ३८



बुधवार को बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेल खंड को जोड़ने वाली 11.3 किलोमीटर लंबी सुरंग से निकलती ट्रेन। • ३८

घाटी से जोड़े वाले मुगल मार्ग, कश्मीर को लद्दाख क्षेत्र से जोड़ने वाले रजमार्ग पर सुरंग बनाना इसके चंद्र उदाहरण हैं। सोनिया गांधी ने उद्घाटन समारोह में जुटी भीड़ को संबोधित करते हुए कहा कि यूपीए राज्य के लोगों के भावनाओं से अवगत है। वह मानता है

कि किसी समस्या का समाधान देश के लोकतांत्रिक ढांचे के तहत विचार विमर्श और बातचीत के जरिए ही हो सकता है। कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष ने कहा, मैं जेएच आशावादी हूँ कि यूपीए सरकार राज्य में प्रधानमंत्री श्याम सड़क सहित तमाम योजनाओं को पूरी तरह से लागू करवाना

सुनिश्चित करने के लिए सभी तरह की सहायता मुहैया कराएगी। भाजपा पर परोक्ष हमला करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि एक राजनीतिक दल अनुच्छेद 370 को मुद्दा बना रही है ताकि लोगों को चक्रवात या सके। गौरतलब है कि 18 किलोमीटर के इस खंड से कश्मीर घाटी

सोपे रेल संपर्क से जुड़ गई है। इस रास्ते में 11.3 किलोमीटर लंबी सुरंग बनाई गई है जो एशिया की तीसरी सबसे लंबी रेल सुरंग है। इसकी वजह अब साल भर घाटी से संपर्क बना रहेगा। अधिकारियों के मुताबिक रोजाना पांच जोड़ी ट्रेन इस रूट पर चलेगी।



कई मायनों में बेमिसाल सुरंग

- इसे बनाने में न्यू ऑरिएंटल टनेलिंग मेथड का किया गया इस्तेमाल
- 7500 मेट्रिक टन स्टील और 3,28,000 वयुविक मीटर कंक्रीट सुरंग को बनाने में लगा
- सुरंग के अंदर तीन मीटर चौड़ी सड़क भी बनाई गई है
- हादसे की स्थिति में लोगों को बचाने के लिए सुरंग में बनाई गई है 3 मीटर चौड़ी सड़क
- घनी से बचाव के लिए पीवीसी मेम्ब्रेन लगाई गई है
- सुरंग में हवा आने-जाने और आग से बचाव के बेहतर इंतजाम किए गए हैं
- सुरक्षा के मद्देनजर सुरंग सीसीटीवी कैमरों से है लैस, टेलीफोन बुध की भी है व्यवस्था
- सुरंग में जाने के बावजूद यात्रियों के मोबाइल फोन से गैरबर्न नहीं होने रिस्कना

11.3 किलोमीटर है सुरंग की लंबाई, एशिया में दूसरी सबसे लंबी रेल सुरंग

1300 करोड़ रुपये आई है सुरंग बनाने में लागत

5770 फीट की ऊंचाई पर पिर पंजाल पहाड़ी को काट कर बनाई गई है सुरंग

PM flags off Banihal-Qazigund rail link

sns & pti

BANIHAL/ NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE: In a giant leap in connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today inaugurated the 18-km long Banihal-Qazigund section of the ambitious mountain railway, promising all support for development of the state.

Flanked by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah, Governor N N Vohra and central ministers, the Prime Minister flagged off the first train and boarded it for a journey across the 11-km tunnel, the longest in the country, through the difficult terrain of Pir Panjal ranges. Mrs Gandhi and others also accompanied him in the brief journey.

"I assure you that the Centre will provide all possible support to Jammu and Kashmir for its development," Dr Singh said addressing the gathering at the function winding up his two-day visit to the state which had witnessed a terror attack on Monday in which eight soldiers were killed.

The rail link to Kashmir, the most beautiful part of the country, will help boost tourism, movement of people, business and enable more employment opportunities for the people of the state, he said.

The Banihal-Qazigund section, which reduces the 35 km distance by road to half, was constructed at a cost of about Rs 1,700 crore.

The Udhampur-Katra-Banihal section, which will connect the Kashmir

valley with the rest of the country's rail network, is expected to be completed by 2017. "I am very hopeful that the remaining work will be completed within the stipulated time so that the people of Kashmir can benefit from this all-weather surface link," Dr Singh said. Speaking at the function, Mrs Gandhi said the UPA was aware of the sentiments of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and affirm that solution to any problem lies in the democratic set up of the country through discussions and deliberations.

The chief minister used the occasion to make a veiled attack on the BJP for raking up the issue of Article 370 saying the special status for the state was being used as a political issue by the party to befool people.

With today's inauguration, people from Banihal can reach Qazigund in just 12 minutes by train. At present, it takes about an hour and 15 minutes by road to commute between the two locations, that too if there are no traffic jams on the road.

The 17.7-km-long rail link having the country's longest transportation tunnel of an over 11.2 km tunnel through the Pir Panjal range, would pave the way for future rail connectivity to the Kashmir valley with the national railway system.

The distance between Banihal and Qazigund by train is reduced to 17.729 km compared to about 35 km road length. People will have to spend below Rs 20 by train, compared to Rs 150 on a shared Tata Sumo, a railway official said.

However, it will take another four



Mr Manmohan Singh and Mrs Sonia Gandhi during the flagging off ceremony in Banihale. *afp*

years, according to official estimates, to connect the operational rail link in Kashmir valley with the rail network in the rest of India.

The tunnel has been constructed using New Austrian Tunnelling Method, which has been used for the first time on such a large scale in India. This method optimises the tunnel design by mobilising the inherent ground strength in adopting a curved section, providing primary support system immediately after excavation and monitoring the ground behaviour while permitting it to develop its inherent strength.

Ircon International Ltd, a PSU

under the ministry of railways, has been the principal executing agency for Northern Railway to execute the work of Dharam-Qazigund section of USBRL Project which includes the Banihal-Qazigund section and Pir Panjal tunnel.

The Kashmir Valley Railway (Qazigund-Baramulla section) is a 119 km long modern railway line that became completely operational in October 2009. So far it is an island railway, not yet connected to the Indian Railway network. It connects Baramulla in the western part of Kashmir to Qazigund at the other end of the valley, via Srinagar.

The 11.2 km long tunnel is equipped with state-of-the-art systems with CCTV cameras at every 62.5 m, linear fire detection system, fire fighting system with fire hydrants at every 125 m, emergency telephone with communication to control room at every 250 m, fire extinguishers and fire alarm at every 250 m, air quality monitoring system at every 500 m, escape route signs to guide the shortest escape route in an emergency at every 50 m, emergency lighting and normal lighting and public address system.

A 3 m wide road along the track for rescue and maintenance purpose

has been constructed with a 772 m long escape tunnel to provide an additional escape route. Tunnel ventilation system has been provided which consists of 25 fans along the tunnel, installed on the ceiling of the tunnel in groups of 5 each.

Falling in difficult and mountainous terrain, Jammu & Kashmir has always been a challenge to transportation providers. Other factors which increase the difficulty in providing modes of mass transportation is that the area is geologically unstable, prone to tremors and earthquakes, with deep gorges alternating between rocky mountains.

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The Hindu

NOIDA/DELHI

THE HINDU • THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2013

Banihal-Qazigund rail link opened

It will end isolation of Kashmir Valley in winter and usher in growth in the region: Manmohan

K. Balchand

BANIHAL (JAMMU): Waving a green flag, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi scripted a red letter day on Wednesday, launching a rail project to connect Kashmir with Jammu and the rest of the country.

First, they inaugurated the newly constructed station at Banihal, the last one in Jammu, and then the 11.215-km Pir Panjal tunnel, before boarding the train they themselves flagged off.

They travelled through the country's longest transport tunnel, which links the valley with Jammu and opens up a new horizon of development in the State, ending its isolation from the rest of the country in winter.

They enjoyed the 12-minute ride to Qazigund with 100 students, mostly girls, of the Banihal Higher Secondary School, and made the 17.8-km ride back to Banihal, passing through the tunnel, the second longest in Asia. Those who accompanied them were

Governor N.N. Vohra, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Railway Minister Mallikarjun Kharge and Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Dr. Singh and Ms. Gandhi interacted with the students and assured them of a prosperous future.

Hailing the Banihal-Qazigund section, which IRCON International executed at a cost of Rs.1,672 crore, as an engineering marvel, Dr. Singh said its importance was far greater as it would end the isolation of the valley at winter and speed up people-to-people contact across the country, besides boosting tourism. The rail link would make Jammu and Kashmir an integral part of the country's development, he said, highlighting the scope for more growth in trade in commodities among various regions.

Dr. Singh asked the Railways to complete the Katra-Banihal section at the earliest so that the people and the region could be better linked to the rail network nationwide.

The Katra-Banihal section, comprising the highest bridge

CONNECTION TO UDHAMPUR WILL LINK KASHMIR TO THE INDIAN RAILWAY GRID

OPENING UP THE VALLEY

BANIHAL-QAZIGUND SECTION:

11 km tunnel through Pir Panjal range

Country's longest rail tunnel

June 27 Banihal-Baramulla train to start

Reduces the 35 km distance to 18

Rs. 1,691 crore Construction cost

Banihal-Katra line to be completed by end of 2017



across the Chenab river, is considered the toughest portion of the Jammu-Srinagar-Baramulla link. It is expected to be completed by December 2017.

The Chief Minister exuded confidence that the return of UPA III would ensure the completion of the remaining section of Banihal to Katra and the whole rail link pro-

ject.

Describing the rail project as part of the United Progressive Alliance's efforts at developing the State, Dr. Singh said 34 of the 67 projects an-

nounced in 2004 had so far been executed. He said Rs.7,215 crore had been sanctioned for completing the rest. A sum of Rs.1,000 crore had been allocated for skills development and employment generation for the State's youth.

Ms. Gandhi said the linking of the Jammu region to the Kashmir Valley was the fulfilment of a dream that seemed impossible. The project was a matter of pride because the Railways had to overcome several challenges. It would usher in a new era of development and boost handicraft and tourism and create jobs for youth and an opportunity for the people living on the edge, especially women, to change their lifestyle.

Roads and highways were also being developed, with priority for rural roads, she said.

Mr. Abdullah said the project would change the lives of the people by boosting trade and tourism. It would not only connect the two regions of the State but also the hearts of the people.

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Indian Express

Valley rail link to boost progress, says UPA



PM Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi with students in a train, in Banihal on Wednesday.

PTI

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
BANIHAL (J&K), JUNE 26

DAYS after eight soldiers were killed in a militant attack in Srinagar, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi used the opening of the historic train link connecting the Kashmir Valley to the Jammu region Wednesday to reaffirm the government's commitment to Kashmir's development.

"People here are fed up of bloodshed. The youth here want jobs. The UPA wants Kashmir's future to be written with secularism, development

and democracy, where problems are solved through dialogue," Sonia said at the ceremony at Banihal station to flag off the first train on the route.

It was the first visit to the state by Singh and Sonia after Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru was hanged. About 10,000 security personnel were deployed in the town for the high-profile event that was held under the shadow of terror.

"Today, we begin a new chapter in Jammu and Kashmir. Through this rail link, Kashmir will eventually have an all-weather connect with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Indian Express

'Valley rail link to boost progress'

the outside world. Even its remotest, backward regions will have equal opportunities. There will be development in tourism, handicrafts and other industries," Sonia said referring to the link which will reduce travel time on the stretch by over one hour.

She praised Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's government saying it had brought change to the state and called for holding early elections to local bodies.

The 17.5 km link between Banihal in Jammu and Qazigund in the Valley is the first all-weather route between the two regions. Touted as the UPA's flagship project that showcases the reconstruction of Jammu and Kashmir, the stretch has a 11-km-long tunnel through the mighty Pir Panjal range.

The only existing link on this route, the Jawahar Tunnel meant for road transport and opened in 1965, gets blocked in winter due to heavy snow. The rail tunnel runs 300 metres below Jawahar Tunnel and is shielded from the harsh winter.

The rail line between Banihal and Qazigund has reduced the 35-km road journey to 17.5

km. It also promises economical and faster transportation of goods, food grains and fuel to the Valley.

"I would ask railways to complete the remaining work of the Kashmir link as early as possible so that we can connect Kashmir with the development process in the rest of the country," Singh said after flagging off the first train.

Singh and Sonia also travelled on the train with Kashmiri school children, with sources saying the two leaders were originally not scheduled to board it.

Built by railways PSU IRCON, the Pir Panjal tunnel is the country's longest and Asia's second longest transport tunnel. It has cost Rs 1,691 crore and taken seven years to build in the face of engineering challenges which are part of the 345-km rail link from Jammu to Baramulla.

Fully under CCTV surveillance to be monitored from a control centre, the tunnel also has automated fire-detection and dousing systems. The railways plans to complete the link between Udhampur and Katra by August, leaving only the

stretch between Katra and Banihal to be completed, which is scheduled to be commissioned by 2017.

Until then, the railways is working out a system in collaboration with the state government to launch a multi-modal travel ticket, with which people can come to Katra by train, take a bus until Banihal and board a train again to Srinagar with only a single ticket.

The separatist Hurriyat Conference, however, termed the Prime Minister's visit a failure saying Singh had not addressed the Kashmir issue and had projected it as an administrative and economic problem.

"The visit of the Prime Minister could have turned fruitful if he had announced some bold steps to solve the Kashmir issue. It is highly unfortunate that the Indian government continues with its traditional policy of obduracy and unrealistic politics," said Hurriyat chief Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. "By ignoring to talk about the Kashmir issue, he has rubbed salt on the wounds of Kashmiris." — *With inputs from Bashaarat Masood*

PM, Sonia flag off train connecting Kashmir valley to Jammu region

18-km Banihal-Qazigund rail link will boost tourism, trade: Manmohan

Mamuni Das

Banihal (J&K), June 26

The Jammu region is now connected with the mountainous Kashmir Valley through a rail network. On Wednesday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the United Progressive Alliance Chairperson Sonia Gandhi flagged off the train from Banihal to Qazigund.

The 18-km-long Banihal-Qazigund rail link, which includes the country's longest transportation tunnel – over 11-km long – through the Pir Panjal range, was executed by Icon at a cost of Rs 1,672 crore.

Banihal, a tehsil in Jammu region, is separated from Kashmir valley by the Pir Panjal mountain range.

The Prime Minister, who boarded the train for a journey across the 11-km tunnel through the difficult and beautiful terrain of the Pir Panjal ranges, later assured Jammu and Kashmir of “all possible support” for its development.”

Singh said the rail link to Kashmir would boost tourism, movement of people, business and enable more employment opportunities for the people of the State, he said.

TRAVEL TIME SLASHED

The benefits of this train include providing faster, cheap-



Rail link: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi flag off a train on Wednesday during the inauguration of the Qazigund -Banihal sector of Railway network at Banihal in Jammu and Kashmir . – Nissar Ahmad

er and more comfortable connectivity between Banihal and Kashmir valley through the year.

People can now commute between the two places in about 12 minutes by train, said D.P Choudhury, General Manager, Icon, the Indian Railways' construction arm.

At present, it takes over an hour to commute by road, if there are no traffic jams. The alternative route is through

the Jawahar Tunnel, which is part of a national highway.

In cost terms, people will have to spend below Rs 20 by train, almost one-seventh of the Rs 150 that they pay to move through shared Tata Sumos.

In distance terms, the tunnel will reduce the train track distance to almost 18 km compared with the road distance of about 36 km between Banihal and Qazigund.

Also, there will be all-weather connectivity as the approach roads to Jawahar tunnel often get clogged during the winters.

Additionally, real estate prices in Banihal have shot up 10-fold in the past six years, ever since Railways started working on the project.

RAIL LINK GAP

The new train also narrows the link gap between the 64,000-

km rail network spread across the country and the 135-km network in the Kashmir Valley, which is yet to be connected with the vast Indian Railway network.

To build the missing rail link of about 111-km between Katra and Banihal, the Government has officially set a target of 2018, which may be a difficult task given the bridges, tunnels and difficult terrain.

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Valley gets closer as PM opens link

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Valley on Wednesday came one step closer to the rest of the country when for the first time 'wheels of the nation' chugged through 11-km long India's longest railway tunnel through the Pir Panjal mountain range, connecting Kashmir to Banihal town in Jammu.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who flagged off the first train from Banihal at an impressive ceremony in the presence of UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Railway Minister Mallikarjun Kharge, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Union Cabinet Ministers Farooq Abdullah and Ghulam Nabi Azad, and J&K Governor NN Vohra among others, said, "It is a historic day when we are dedicating an 'engineering marvel' carved out from Himalayas by our spirited team of railway engineers to the nation.

The Pir Panchal tunnel passes approximately 440 metres below the existing Jawahar Tunnel and has reduced the existing road distance between Qazikund and Banihal from 35 km to 17.5 km.

Soon after flagging off the



PM Manmohan Singh dedicating the newly-constructed railway line between Banihal-Qazigund section to the nation by flagging off the first train from Banihal. Pioneer photo

train, the PM himself embarked on the train journey and was received by the cheerful group of schoolchildren.

Singh sat along with schoolgirls and enjoyed the rail journey up to Hillar village in Anantnag.

A large number of local villagers stood along the rail tracks to capture a glimpse of the train and the VVIPs.

The PM was accompanied by Sonia Gandhi and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah dur-

ing the small journey. Omar said I had never dreamt that one day I would be able to cross the mighty Pir Panjal mountains through the rail tunnel. He said it is a 'momentous' moment for all of us to be part of this historic event. I won't be able to forget this day during my lifetime, he added.

The local residents in the area are upbeat with the opening of the rail link as it would provide them employment opportunities and boost tourism

and trade activity in the region.

The dream project of connecting Kashmir Valley with the Jammu region was first conceived by Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1898.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister expressed hope that work on the Udhampur-Katra link would be completed soon within next few months and then the most challenging task of linking Udhampur with Banihal would be left.

He said we are keen to complete the work on the crucial leg of the project within stipulated time so as to connect the Valley with the railway network of the country throughout the year.

The work on the Udhampur-Banihal section is expected to be over in 2017.

The tunnel has been constructed at a cost of ₹1,691 crore using New Austrian Tunneling Method by Hindustan Construction company. IRCON, a PSU under the Ministry of Railways, has been the principal executing agency for the Northern Railway to execute this ambitious project.

Pakistan violates ceasefire pact; infiltration bid foiled in Rajouri

PNS ■ JAMMU

While PM Manmohan Singh was completing the last leg of his two-day Jammu & Kashmir visit, Pakistani Army once again provoked Indian forces by violating the ceasefire agreement along the LoC in Poonch on Wednesday.

This is the second major ceasefire violation in the last 24 hours and sixth in the last three weeks from across the border. According to Jammu-based spokesman of the Ministry of Defence, SN Acharaya, "Pakistani troops fired at forward Indian posts between Doda battalion and Saujiyan between 10.45 and 11.15 am." Meanwhile, alert troops in Rajouri also foiled a major intrusion bid by a group of heavily armed infiltrators inside the Indian territory.

देश-विदेश

अब धरती के 'स्वर्ग' तक पहुंचाएगी रेल

पीएम ने बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेल खंड का किया उद्घाटन

बनिहाल (जम्मू कश्मीर)

कश्मीर घाटी और जम्मू क्षेत्र को जोड़ने के लक्ष्य में बुधवार को एक बड़ी उपलब्धि हासिल हुई। प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह और यूपीए अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी ने पर्वतीय रेलवे के 18 किलोमीटर लंबे बनिहाल और काजीगुंड खंड का उद्घाटन किया। प्रधानमंत्री ने पहली ट्रेन को हरी झंडी



रेल सफर की शुरुआत को लेकर हर किसी के चेहरे पर खुशी थी।



AFP

18 किलोमीटर लंबे इस रूट पर आम आदमी आज से चढ़ कर सकेगा सफर

खंड और 11 किमी लंबी सुरंग की यात्रा के लिए इसमें सवार हुए। इस यात्रा में उनके साथ सोनिया गांधी भी थीं।

मनमोहन सिंह ने इस अवसर पर आयोजित समारोह में कहा कि केन्द्र सरकार जम्मू कश्मीर के विकास में हर संभव सहयोग मुहैया कराएगी। उन्होंने कहा कि देश के सबसे सुंदर जम्मू कश्मीर से रेल संपर्क जुड़ने से पर्यटन, श्रमिकों की आवाजाही और व्यापार को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। समारोह को संबोधित करते हुए सोनिया ने कहा कि यूपीए जम्मू कश्मीर के लोगों की भावनाओं से अवगत है। हम हमेशा मानते हैं कि किसी भी समस्या का समाधान शांति के लोकतांत्रिक ढांचे के तहत बातचीत के माध्यम से ही हो सकता है।

अब किसी भी मौसम में कश्मीर घाटी में पहुंचने का रास्ता साफ हो गया है। यह सपना साकार हुआ प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह और सोनिया गांधी द्वारा बुधवार को जम्मू-कश्मीर में बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेलमार्ग का उद्घाटन करने के साथ। इन दोनों ने इस मार्ग पर पहली रेल को हरी झंडी दिखाई। नजर डालते हैं इस रूट की खास बातों पर :

हर मौसम में कश्मीर यात्रा को हरी झंडी

- इस रेलमार्ग की लंबाई 18 किमी है।
- रेलमार्ग का 11 किलोमीटर का रास्ता सुरंग से होकर गुजरता है।
- इस सुरंग की वजह से बनिहाल और काजीगुंड की 35 किलोमीटर की दूरी घटकर महज 18 किलोमीटर रह गई है।
- यह सुरंग चीन के युशावोलिंग के बाद दुनिया में दूसरी सबसे लंबी सुरंग है।
- इस सुरंग की मदद से जवाहर सुरंग के अलावा एक और रास्ता खुल गया है।



- इससे जम्मू-ऊधमपुर-श्रीनगर-बारामूला रेल रूट के जरिए घाटी पहुंचा जा सकेगा।
- बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेलमार्ग पर 27 जून से हर दिन आठ डिब्बों की एक ट्रेन चलेगी।
- इस सुरंग के निर्माण में 1300 करोड़ रुपये की लागत आई है।
- इस सुरंग का निर्माण ऑस्ट्रेलियाई तरीके से किया गया है। इसमें वेंटिलेशन, सीसीटीवी कैमरे और फायर अलर्ट जैसी हर तरह की सुविधाएं हैं।

PM, Sonia flag off train linking Jammu to Valley

Rly Line Goes Through 11km Pir Panjal Tunnel

M Saleem Pandit | TNN

Srinagar: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday chugged through the 11-km-long Pir Panjal tunnel in the inaugural train journey between Banihal to Qazigund along with 12 girl students of a government high school. Both, however, evaded questions on politics after their rally speeches in Banihal but CM Omar Abdullah, taking on the BJP, spoke out against dilution of Article 370.

While the PM praised the engineers for the feat describing the tunnel as an example of engineering marvel that connects two regions of the state, Sonia reached out to the people with a salve saying, "I know very well that painful incidents happen here occasionally, but our democracy has enough scope to sort out issues through dialogue and negotiations."

"The people are fed up with violence and eager to taste peace and development. The large turnout of people during the panchayat elections is proof of their desire for peace and development," she said. The people's hardships, Sonia said, with the new rail link would become a thing of the past. "The inauguration of the all-weather track between Jammu and the Valley is part of the UPA's commitment to peace and progress," she said.

Omar kept the pitch populist in an election year. "The people of J&K categorically say that revocation of Article 370 is not possible and any attempt to do so would be over our dead bodies," he said, suggesting that it was strange that BJP leader Narendra Modi was talking about a negotiation on Article 370 considering it never mentioned this during its six-year tenure at the Centre.

He added, "The BJP raises the issue of Article 370 only when elections are in sight," and challenged it to tinker with the statute.



For steps to download & use free Alive app, see P 12

Hizb militants kill Sopore neta

Hizbul Mujahideen militants on Wednesday morning shot dead a local politician of Sopore town of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said. The deceased, identified as Kifayat Hussain, 45, was, according to the police, called out by two young men who opened fire from point blank range at about 10am at Bohripora village in Sopore tehsil of Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir, SP, Sopore, Imtiyaz Hussain said. TNN

Ceasefire violation in Poonch

The army foiled an infiltration bid in Rajouri sector of Jammu and Kashmir while Pakistani troops opened fire on Wednesday at Indian positions in Poonch district, the second ceasefire violation in 24 hours on a day the PM and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi were present in J&K. The army detected movement by a group of two to three armed intruders who had sneaked across. TNN

PM OPENS INDIA'S LONGEST RAIL TUNNEL IN J&K



■ Manmohan: Making connections

Srinand Jha

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BANIHAL: A 100 years after it was first conceived, the dream has finally been realised.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh inaugurated the country's longest rail tunnel (11.2 km) on Wednesday that will provide a key link between the Kashmir Valley and Jammu.

UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi was present at the event.

The 17.7 kilometer rail link from Banihal in Jammu to Quazigund (Kashmir) cost ₹1,672 crore and is part of the UPA's flagship Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramullah Rail Link (USBRL) project that will eventually link Kashmir to the rest of India.

"The UPA's agenda is to connect Kashmir with the rest of the country through rail links. The start of train services between the two regions is an outcome of stupendous effort. It is an engineering marvel and fulfills the dream envisioned by the late Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1898," the Prime Minister said at a high-profile function to mark the event.

A 100 children rode with the PM and Sonia Gandhi on the inaugural run of the track.

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► OLMAR SLAMS ADVANI, P9

PM OPENS RAIL TUNNEL IN J&K

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The prime minister pointed out that the Centre had released ₹7214 crore since 2004 for 67 developmental works announced for the state. "Thirty-four of these projects have been completed and other schemes are also making good progress," he added.

The event saw a huge political turnout with new Railways Minister Mallikarjun Kharge and senior Congress leaders including Ghulam Nabi Azad and Ambika Soni present at the event.

Those on the podium included state chief minister Omar Abdullah and governor NN Vohra.

Later, addressing a hugely attended rally at Banihal, the UPA chairperson made a conciliatory gesture towards hardliners, while referring to Monday's daring attack by militants in the heart of Srinagar. "Occasionally, some incidents happen that pain us. We do understand that there are genuine concerns, but feel that issues can be resolved in a democratic manner through negotiation and dialogue."

"The huge voter turnout in the last Panchayat elections showed that people are fed up with violence and want peace and development," she added.

देश की सबसे लंबी रेल सुरंग का उद्घाटन



प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह, कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी (पीछे), प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री उमर अब्दुल्ला और राज्यपाल एनएन वोहरा ने स्कूली छात्राओं के साथ बनिहाल में रेल यात्रा की। प्रे

◆ 11 किलोमीटर लंबी बनिहाल-काजीगुंड सुरंग जनता को समर्पित

जागरण संवाददाता, बनिहाल : प्रधानमंत्री डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह ने बुधवार को जम्मू-कश्मीर में पीरपंचाल पर्वत श्रृंखला के गर्भ में बनाई गई एशिया की दूसरी और देश की सबसे लंबी (11 किलोमीटर) बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेलवे सुरंग जनता को समर्पित की। इसके साथ ही कश्मीर घाटी का रेलवे संपर्क जम्मू संभाग के साथ जुड़ गया। अब बनिहाल से काजीगुंड होते हुए श्रीनगर और फिर बारामूला पहुंचा जा सकेगा। संप्रग अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी, केंद्रीय रेल

मंत्री मल्लिकार्जुन खड्गे, राज्यपाल एनएन वोहरा, मुख्यमंत्री उमर अब्दुल्ला के साथ बनिहाल-काजीगुंड के बीच पहली रेल सेवा का उद्घाटन करने के बाद जनसभा को संबोधित करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि आज का दिन ऐतिहासिक है। यह सुरंग भारतीय रेलवे इंजीनियरिंग की हैरान कर देने वाली उपलब्धि है। इसके लिए रेलवे इंजीनियर बधाई के पात्र हैं। इसके साथ ही उन्होंने रेलवे प्रशासन को ऊधमपुर-बनिहाल रेलवे लाइन का निर्माण कार्य भी समय से पूरा करने का निर्देश दिया। इसके पूरा होने के बाद कश्मीर घाटी जम्मू और बाकी पूरे देश से जुड़ जाएगी। डॉ. सिंह ने कहा, इस परियोजना को 1905

कश्मीरी सिखों ने पीएम से मांगा अल्पसंख्यक का दर्जा

श्रीनगर, प्रेद : जम्मू-कश्मीर में रहने सिख समुदाय के लोगों ने प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह से मांग की है कि उन्हें अल्पसंख्यक का दर्जा दिया और समुदाय के युवाओं को रोजगार मुहैया करने के लिए विशेष पैकेज भी दिया जाए। गौरतलब है कि प्रधानमंत्री मंगलवार से दो दिवसीय दौरे पर कश्मीर में थे। इस दौरान ऑल पार्टीज सिख कोऑर्डिनेशन कमेटी के चेयरमैन जगमोहन सिंह रैना की अगुआई में सिख समुदाय के एक प्रतिनिधिमंडल ने प्रधानमंत्री से मुलाकात कर उन्हें ज्ञापन सौंपा और इस संबंध में अन्या चर्चा की।

में ही मंजूरी मिल गई थी, लेकिन इस पर काम नहीं हो पाया। भारत-पाक विभाजन के बाद जम्मू का रेल संपर्क भी टूट गया था, जो 1971 में जम्मू-पठानकोट के बीच ब्राडगेज रेलवे लाइन की बहाली के साथ दोबारा जुड़ा। लेकिन जम्मू से आगे इसे विस्तार नहीं दिया जा सका। स्व. इंदिरा गांधी ने 1983 में यह काम शुरू कराया। मुझे खुशी है कि हमने उनका यह सपना साकार किया है। प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि आज शुरू हुई 11 किलोमीटर लंबी बनिहाल-काजीगुंड रेल सुरंग को तमाम भौगोलिक और मौसमी मुश्किल के बीच इंजीनियरों ने सात साल में तैयार किया है। यह कश्मीर घाटी को जम्मू संभाग और देश के अन्य हिस्सों से जोड़ेगी।