

**L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena visits eastern portal of Zoji-La Tunnel to review ongoing work *Expresses satisfaction over progress of work Asks officials to expedite work for year-round connectivity to Ladakh***

**Kargil, April 13:** The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today visited the Eastern Portal of Zoji-La Tunnel to inspect the ongoing construction work during his visit to Drass, reviewing progress on one of the most significant infrastructure projects aimed at ensuring all-weather connectivity to Ladakh.

During the inspection, the Lieutenant Governor was given a detailed presentation on the project. He was informed that the tunnel, being executed by Megha Engineering & Infrastructure Ltd at a sanctioned cost of Rs 6,808.69 crore, is expected to be completed by February 2028. It was further apprised that the breakthrough of the tunnel is anticipated by mid-2026.

The project incorporates modern engineering features, including lay-bys at intervals of every 750 metres and three ventilation shafts to ensure operational efficiency and safety. The Lieutenant Governor was also briefed on the use of the New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM) from both the western and eastern portals for excavation. However, officials highlighted that poor rock quality in certain stretches has posed challenges, impacting the pace of progress.

Expressing satisfaction over the progress achieved so far, the Lieutenant Governor directed the concerned officials to further expedite the work to ensure timely completion and early operationalisation of the tunnel, which will be crucial for ensuring year-round connectivity to Ladakh. He also emphasised the importance of maintaining the highest safety standards during construction and in the final structure, keeping in view the safety and security of commuters.

Describing the Zoji-La Tunnel as one of the dream projects of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Shri Saxena commended the dedication and resilience of the workforce engaged in the project, acknowledging their efforts in challenging terrain and harsh weather conditions.

He observed that upon completion, the tunnel will not only ensure seamless connectivity between Ladakh and the rest of the country but will also significantly boost tourism in the region. Highlighting its strategic importance, he noted that the project would contribute to enhanced economic growth and socio-cultural integration between the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor further stated that the completion of the Zoji-La Tunnel would mark a transformative milestone for the region, opening new avenues for development and positioning Ladakh as a major destination for tourism.



