Chungthang–Lachen road and Taram Chu Bridge

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Infrastructure*

Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of State for Defence inaugurated the Chungthang–Lachen axis and the Taram Chu Bridge, restored by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in North Sikkim under Project Swastik.

Chungthang–Lachen Road

- **Connectivity –** The road route ***connects Chungthang, in North Sikkim, to Lachen***, a remote, high-altitude town near the international border.
- **Strategic Linkage –** Lachen connects North Sikkim's Gurudongmar Lake (5 km south of the China Border) and the Thangu Valley.
- **Restoration –** It is part of post-disaster recovery due to
  - Devastating cloud bursts in May-June 2025,
  - Cyclone Remal in June 2024 and
  - The Glacial Lake Outburst Flood in October 2023.
- The BRO restored 28km of the Chungthang–Lachen road.
- **Clearance -** To re-establish the 28-km link, the BRO cleared 96 landslides and completed 8 kilometres of fresh formation cutting through treacherous terrain.

Taram Chu Bridge Restoration

- It is a ***400-foot Bailey suspension bridge above the Taram Chu water body***.
- It links Chungthang with Lachen via the Chungthang–Lachen Road.
- **Operational Capacity –** Designed for both civilian and military use, and strategic logistics to forward border areas.

Project Swastik

• **Aim –** To overcome ***mountainous terrain challenges in Sikkim*** and ensure connectivity to remote valleys and forward areas.
• **Implemented by –** Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
• **Nodal Ministry –** The Ministry of Defence.
• **Initiated in -** 1960 as Project DRAGON; renamed Project Swastik in 1963.
• **Major Works –** Maintains over 1,412 km of roads and 80 major bridges.
• Constructed Western Sikkim Highway, NH 310A and NH 310AG.
• Overcame GLOFs, cloudbursts, and floods in the Teesta River caused by the 2023 South Lhonak Lake breach.
• **Progress –** *In 2025, Project Swastik Marked 65 Years of Service.*

References

1. PIB | Chungthang-Lachen Road and Taram Chu Bridge
2. DD News | Chungthang-Lachen Road and Taram Chu Bridge
3. PIB | Project Swastik

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