Tanglang La – World's Highest Railway Station

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Why in news?

India is planning a major railway infrastructure project in the Himalayas that could be the world's highest railway station.

- **Location** – Tanglang La pass, a high-altitude mountain pass in the Leh district of Ladakh.
- It is situated along the NH3 Leh–Manali Highway, connecting the Gya-Meru valley to More Plains and Tso Kar.
- **Proposed Station** – A 489-km ***Bilaspur-Manali-Leh railway corridor*** at an altitude of approximately 17,244 feet (5,359 metres) above sea level.
- Once construction is over, it will be 188 metres higher than China's Tanggula station.
- The project is estimated to cost Rs 1.31 lakh crore& interestingly, 55% of the line, or 270 km, would be through tunnels.
- **Bilaspur-Leh rail line** – It will pass through the Tengla railway station in Ladakh.
- The station will be built below Tanglang La, a major high mountain pass on the Manali-Leh highway.

Features

- **Important towns** – It will connect several important towns in Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, including Bilaspur, Mandi, Manali, Sissu, Keylong, Sarchu, Rumtse, Upshi, and Kharu in Ladakh.
- **Extensive Tunnelling** – Roughly 270 km (55%) of the 489-km broad-gauge route will run underground through 62 tunnels to navigate the steep Himalayan terrain.
- **Passenger safety measures** – Air pressure and oxygen levels drop to half their normal levels at altitudes above 17,000 feet.
- To protect soldiers and rail passengers from breathing difficulties and extreme cold, the trains will have pressurised and heated cabins – Special oxygen masks will be provided.
- **Economic opportunity** – It will boost tourism, provide employment opportunities and keep Ladakh connected to different regions despite heavy snowfall. It will offer easy movement of freight and passengers to the border regions.
- **Strategic importance** – The project is located near the China border and has a lot of strategic importance; it will ensure seamless connectivity between Ladakh and the rest of the country.

- **Present status** – The project is still in the planning stage, and the construction approval for the railway line is still pending.
- **Challenges** – Constructing the proposed railway corridor will be difficult due to the area's complex geological formations, extreme weather conditions, steep mountain gradients and the challenges of working at high altitudes.



Reference

NDTV | India Plans World's Highest Railway Station

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