

## India constructs world's highest railway bridge in Kashmir

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Jammu: India is now home to the world's tallest railway bridge. Some 29 meters (over 95 feet) taller than the Eiffel Tower, the Chenab Bridge sits 359 meters (around 1,180 feet) above the Chenab River in India's contentious Jammu and Kashmir region.

After decades of construction, the bridge in northern India will be open to visitors by the end of December 2023 or January 2024, the Ministry of Railways said in a press release.

The 1,315 meter-long (4,314 feet) bridge is part of a broader project to make the Kashmir Valley accessible by the Indian Railway network. In addition to the Chenab Bridge, the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project involves what will become the country's longest transportation tunnel and Indian Railways' first cable bridge.

For India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who swept to power in 2014 on a ticket of nationalism and a promise of future greatness, investments in infrastructure like the Chenab Bridge and the broader rail link project can be seen as a powerful tool for social integration and political influence, connecting disparate regions with key cities.

Linking Kashmir with the rest of India by train will specifically boost the region's industrial and agricultural sectors by allowing all-weather rail connectivity between the valley and the rest of India, experts said.

Previously, the only land route connecting the Indian-controlled parts of Kashmir with the rest of the country was the winding 300-kilometer (185-mile) Srinagar-Jammu national highway, which closes during part of the winter and is also frequently the site of vehicle accidents.