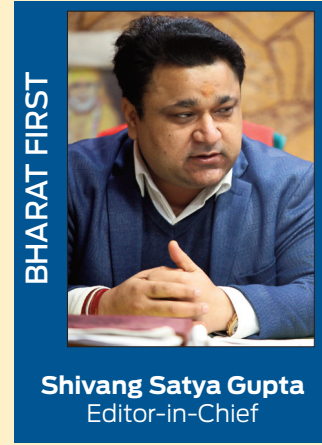


Kishtwar’s Glacial Lakes: Bharat must call out the soft narrative peddled against its strategic interests; cannot allow half-truths to decide our fate



SHIVANG SATYA GUPTA
Editor-in-Chief

Every few months, a new doomsday headline lands about the Himalayas, particularly in Jammu

and Kashmir. The latest is the reports in The Wire and The Economic Times warning that the 197 glacial lakes in Kishtwar could spell catastrophe for downstream communities and wipe out hydropower projects. It paints a serious picture of fragile mountains, unstoppable floods, and a future we can’t control.

However, as any keen observer worth his salt would know, such a picture is nothing, but half-truth. If you read closely, you’ll notice what’s missing. There’s plenty of fear, very little balance. The unspoken suggestion is that India’s development in Jammu & Kashmir is reckless, even dangerous. That’s a familiar refrain, and it deserves a closer look.

I am not denying that the Himalayas are sensitive terrain.

Glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) are real, and climate change is melting ice faster than in decades past. But risk isn’t the whole story. By focusing only on threats—and skipping over how India has prepared—these pieces leave readers with a sense of helplessness that simply isn’t accurate.

Kishtwar’s big hydropower projects—Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar, Danduru—aren’t just concrete and turbines. They are the backbone of local development and part of India’s energy security strategy under the Indus Waters Treaty. Pakistan has fought these projects at every stage, often claiming, without much evidence, that they harm its downstream flow. When our own media amplifies fears about glacial lakes

without mentioning safeguards, it unwittingly bolsters Islamabad’s objections.

Let’s make one thing clear. Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi knows the mountains are changing. Agencies like the NDMA and Central Water Commission are tracking glaciers and running early-warning systems. The Border Roads Organisation, SDRF, and Indian Army have a solid record of rapid disaster response in high-altitude zones. Modern hydropower projects are engineered with spillways, drainage systems, and seismic designs precisely because risks exist.

To leave all that out, as some reports do, is like telling half the story. Yes, we must watch the lakes. But no, India isn’t blindly

gambling with the Himalayas.

And then there’s Pakistan’s side of the line. Gilgit-Baltistan’s forests have been cut down at alarming rates. Dam safety and glacier monitoring are patchy at best. Yet, there’s little outrage in international columns. Why is scrutiny so intense on Indian projects, and so forgiving elsewhere? That imbalance shapes perceptions—and narratives matter. A sensible approach accepts the risks but refuses paralysis. That means admitting glaciers are dynamic and monitoring them relentlessly, talking openly about the safeguards already in place, framing hydropower as both an energy necessity and a sovereign right, and finally, expecting our media to inform, not just alarm.

For policymakers, it also means treating glacier monitoring as part of national security, publishing regular updates to build trust, calling out Pakistan’s ecological lapses, and making sure Kishtwar’s communities have resilient roads, schools, and hospitals so they’re partners in progress—not just bystanders to it.

Of course, climate change is a challenge and vigilance is non-negotiable, but it should not become a weapon to stall India’s growth. The glacial lakes of Kishtwar are a challenge to manage. They are a reason to strengthen our resilience, not a reason to abandon hydropower.

Through this column, let me set the record straight. The bigger danger isn’t just

the lakes, or the water trapped in those lakes. Instead, it’s the quiet narrative, rather it would call it the soft propaganda that India’s projects, especially the strategic ones in Jammu and Kashmir, are inherently reckless.

That narrative weakens national confidence at exactly the moment we need clarity and resolve. Bharat must call it out, expose the narrative, and march ahead with clarity.

For The Wire and The Economic Times, they must know that Development in Jammu & Kashmir is not a privilege to be begged for or negotiated upon. It’s a sovereign right, which is being exercised responsibly under the current dispensation at Centre, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

GI Tagging to boost Ladakh products, protect traditions, drive economic growth: LG Gupta

Promotes UT’s future through a balance of tradition, modernity



EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta on Thursday said granting Geo-

graphical Indications (GIs) to Ladakhi products will give them a unique global identity while safeguarding the region’s centuries-old traditions

and indigenous knowledge.

“GI tagging will protect these products from imitation, enhance their market value, generate fair trade opportuni-

ties for artisans and farmers, and serve as a catalyst for tourism and economic growth, thereby ensuring that Ladakh’s cultural heritage is preserved and promoted worldwide,” the LG said.

He stated this while interacting with Dr Rajni Kant, a GI Tagging expert and GI Facilitator, at the LG Secretariat.

The Lt Governor stated that the UT Ladakh Administration is committed to promoting more of Ladakh’s unique products on a global stage by ensuring that they receive GI tags from the government so that these products get their due recognition and fair price.

He said there are several other products produced in Leh and Kargil which also deserve GI tags, and the **P11**

Famers pillars of society, CEC Akhoon; attends Kisan Mela, extends assistance

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KARGIL: Emphasizing that farmers are the pillars of society, Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoon, Thursday assured that LAHDC Kargil is committed to extending all possible assistance, including subsidies on seeds, fodder, and agricultural equipment.

The CEC graced the Mega Kisan Mela 2025, organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)-1, Kargil, at Kurbathang as the Chief Guest.

The program began with a welcome address by Senior Scientist, KVK Kargil-1, Dr. Nasreen Fatima, who expressed gratitude to the esteemed guests, particularly the Chief Guest, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoon, for sparing valuable time to encourage and motivate the farming community of the region.

CEC Dr Mohd Jaffer



Akhoon visited various stalls set up by Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and government departments, where organic vegetables, agricultural tools, and equipment were displayed.

He interacted with SHG members, inquired about their income generation and the benefits of government subsidies, and also listened to their feedback and concerns.

During the event, Senior Scientist Dr. Nasreen Fatima and her team briefed the

gathering on the “Field Day on Corn.” She highlighted the nutritional value of sweet corn grown in Kargil, its potential for generating annual income, and its usefulness as animal fodder.

The CEC was also briefed on Codling Moth management, cultural practices in Kargil, and their historical significance in the region.

In his address, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoon underlined the importance of integrated agricultural **P11**

Safeguarding future of youth must: PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said gaming is not bad but gambling is and that future of the youth must be safeguarded. The PM also said India can dominate the global online gaming market.

In an interaction with national awardee teachers, the prime minister said there are huge job opportunities in online gaming market.

“India can dominate global online gaming market, if done in a right manner; there are huge job opportunities too. Gaming is not bad but gambling is, future of our youth must be safeguarded,” he said.

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, bars all forms of online money games while promoting e-sports and other online games.

The recently enacted law seeks to prohibit **P11**

Vital for harmony in diversity, Gupta; highlights cultural exchange at Ladakh Int’l Arts Festival’25

LG praises IPAF for offering platform to artists in Ladakh

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Cultural exchange fosters understanding, harmony, and global citizenship by sharing ideas, values, and traditions, while reducing prejudices and preserving diversity.

This was emphasized by Ladakh’s Lieutenant Governor, Kavinder Gupta, on Thursday at the International Performing Arts Festival 2025 at Arya Nagarjuna Auditorium, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS), Choglamsar.

Speaking to an audience



including Vice-Chancellor CIBS, Prof Rajesh Ranjan, principals, teachers, and students, the LG highlighted how art and culture transcend language barriers, creating empathy and shared experiences through storytelling, performances, and visual arts, promoting intercultural dialogue and social cohesion.

The Lt Governor stressed that art builds inclusive societies by promoting peace and countering ethnocentric attitudes.

Underscoring Ladakh’s unique identity, the Lt Governor said the region is **P11**

Zanskar Festival’25 to begin on Sept 20

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KARGIL: The much awaited two-day Zanskar Festival will be held from 20th to 21st September 2025 at Padum, Zanskar. The district administration has made all the arrangements for the smooth conduct of the festival.

In this regard, the Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoon, Thursday chaired an important meeting at his office chamber to review the necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the two-day Festival.

During the meeting, the CEC took a detailed brief from the Deputy Secretary

LAACL regarding arrangements related to venue preparation, security, uninterrupted power and water supply with backup facilities, medical support, boarding and lodging for participants, and various cultural show-cases.

The festival will feature exhibitions of local artifacts, traditional cuisine, agricultural tools and machinery, the Doksa lifestyle highlighting the traditional nomadic life of Zanskar Valley, along with traditional horse racing, yak rides, and other cultural attractions.

It was informed that this year the festival is being organized with a limited budget, and activities will be conducted within **P11**



Maharaja Gulab Singh Brigade (MGSB) congratulates Sanjeev Gupta on being appointed as Co-Convenor, BJP Tourism Cell, J&K UT. Wishing him great success in your new role for the progress and promotion of tourism in the Union Territory.

Jai Mata Di

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