

J&K’s lost Carbon Wealth: Lights for the entire Nation, but Darkness for J&K; Who pocketed the credits of our rivers?



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For over three decades, the rivers of Jammu & Kashmir have been harnessed to light up not just our homes, not just Jammu and Kashmir, but many other states beyond the borders of our Union Territory. The massive hydropower projects

built on our soil, from Kis-hanganga, Uri, Dul Hasti, to Nimoo-Bazgo, Chutak, Baglihar, and more, are a source of immense pride of each and every resident of Jammu and Kashmir.

But there is a side to this story that the public has barely been told. These projects don’t just generate electricity, they also generate carbon credits. Carbon Credits are a parallel stream of wealth created under international climate agreements like the Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

These credits are meant to reward clean energy generation by putting a price on every tonne of carbon dioxide avoided. On global markets, they trade at anywhere between \$8 and \$30 per credit, often yielding millions of dollars annually for a single project.

And yet, ordinary citizens of J&K have seen no visible benefit. The question writes itself: Who

pocketed the credits of our rivers?

In theory, the answer seems simple. NHPC Ltd., the central PSU running projects like Kis-hanganga and Dul Hasti, registers them under CDM and claims the credits. JKSPDC, our own state corporation, was supposed to earn carbon revenues from the prestigious Baglihar project and channel them into the state treasury. Joint Ventures like CVPPPL, developing the Chenab Valley mega-projects (Kiru, Kwar, Pakal Dul), have policy approval to keep the credits.

On paper, all is well.

However, in reality, there is a wall of silence. NHPC’s reports never disclose project-wise carbon credit earnings from J&K, while JKSPDC’s balance sheets don’t clearly list Baglihar’s carbon income. No CAG audit has traced these revenues, and the RTI applicants have been stonewalled with vague, non-committal replies.

This opacity is not just trou-

bling; it is unacceptable. It leaves citizens wondering whether these credits were undersold, under-reported, or quietly siphoned off.

Experts, The Earth News reached out to, point to three main routes by which this public wealth could have been manipulated: Consultancy capture, opaque sales and finally, no budgetary line item.

Registration under CDM and Voluntary Carbon Markets was outsourced to private consultants who often took disproportionate cuts or diverted proceeds. Credits can be sold in voluntary markets at a “declared” low price while fetching higher amounts in actual transactions — creating scope for illicit enrichment. And, without a dedicated entry in J&K’s budget books, there is no way for the public to know whether Baglihar’s credits ever reached the state coffers.

This is not just an accounting issue. If honestly accounted, this revenue could have been a game-

changer for J&K. How, you may ask. Let me explain. It could have resulted into lower electricity bills for consumers already paying some of the highest tariffs in the country, along with better flood management, drainage, and rehabilitation measures after disasters like the 2014 floods. It could have been realized in investment in solar, wind, and small hydel projects to make J&K power surplus; and at the risk of sounding very practical, employment for our youth in green energy projects.

Instead, we see nothing but a black hole. Insiders allege that billions have been skimmed off through backroom deals, with middlemen, consultants, and a handful of officials benefitting, while the public remained blissfully unaware that such wealth even existed.

This is not without precedent. Himachal Pradesh faced a scandal where hydropower carbon credits

were allegedly sold at throwaway prices, leaving the public with crumbs. J&K appears to have followed the same path — letting what could have been a steady, long-term income stream slip through the cracks of governance.

This is where governance must step in. J&K cannot afford another chapter of hidden loot. The solution is neither radical nor complicated. This involves transparency, audit, accountability and legislation.

The government may do well to publish project-wise data on carbon credit generation, sales, and revenue earned. It should commission a CAG-style forensic audit of all major projects, including Baglihar and Kis-hanganga, as well as fix personal responsibility on officials and consultants if funds were misused or diverted. Finally, the government should mandate that at least half of future carbon credit revenue be deposited

in a J&K Public Welfare Fund to support power subsidies, renewable energy, and disaster relief.

For decades, our rivers have not just lit homes but also quietly generated a stream of global income — income that rightfully belongs to the people of Jammu & Kashmir. Yet, we are left with no answers, no figures, and no clarity.

This is not just a matter of finance; it is a matter of justice. Who betrayed the trust of the people? Who converted our collective wealth into a private windfall? And why are successive governments silent?

The people of J&K deserve to know. The nation deserves to know. We, at The Earth News, will stay on this trail. If you have documents or testimony on carbon credit deals in J&K, write to us. Together, let us ensure that the wealth of our rivers finally flows back to its rightful owners, the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Starry skies, strong foundations; Gupta’s remote visit boosts development, astro-tourism in Ladakh

Reiterates mission to make Ladakh a leading UT across the country



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: In a significant push to bolster development, gover-

nance and unlock tourism potential in the high-altitude areas including Changthang region, the Lieutenant Governor

of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta conducted an extensive outreach tour to Nyoma Sub Division on Friday.

The LG’s visit was marked by a series of public engagements and infrastructure inaugurations, underscoring the administration’s focus on connecting with remote communities.

The cornerstone of the day was a dedicated public grievance redressal programme at Nyoma, where LG Gupta interacted directly with public representatives and local residents, listening to their concerns and reaffirming his commitment to inclusive development.

“Direct engagement with people strengthens relationships, improves service ►P11

Indian Army rescue S-Korean mountaineers at 17K ft, 1 dies

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KONGMARU LA: Indian Army carried out a dramatic nighttime rescue at Ladakh’s Kongmaru La Pass, airlifting two critically ill South Korean nationals stranded at nearly 17,000 feet.

They were on a trekking expedition from a peak in the UT of Ladakh. However, one of the climbers passed away during treatment.

Fire and Fury Corps in a message said, “Indian Army Humanitarian Assistance: Ladakh. On 04 Sep 2025, during a mountaineering expedition, two South Korean nationals fell critically ill near Kongmarula, an isolated peak of Ladakh. Army Aviation helicopters of Fire & Fury Corps executed a



night Casualty Evacuation from an unprepared site at an altitude of 17000 feet, to ensure timely evacuation of the mountaineers to SNM Hospital, Leh for further treatment.”

Fire and Fury Corps expressed heartfelt condolences to the family of one of the mountaineers who unfortunately lost his life during the rescue operation.

At 2020 hours, the squadron swung into action, launching their helicopters to execute the mission. The helicopter landed at 2115 hours at the peak, and the rescue team wasted no time in evacuating the foreign nationals by air. After a successful rescue, the individuals were handed over to medical authorities. ►P11

LG Gupta, CEC greet people on Eid-e-Milad

LEH: Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta and Chairman, Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson on Friday extended warm greetings to Muslim community of Ladakh on the auspicious occasion of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi.

“Warm greetings to all on the auspicious occasion of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi. May the day inspire us to follow the path of peace, compassion and brotherhood,” LG Gupta said in a message.

CEC Advocate ►P11

LNP-NIT Raipur pitch Geohydrological Study for Leh Centre examines Project to Map Groundwater in Ladakh Villages

■ YASH KHAJURIA

LEH: The Centre has begun examining a detailed proposal to address Ladakh’s water scarcity through a district-wide geohydrological study, jointly prepared by the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Raipur and the Leh Nutrition Project (LNP). The project was presented on August 29 before the Expert Committee of the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, during its 27th Scientific and Technical Advisory Group meeting in New

Delhi, chaired by Joint Secretary Ms. Namita Prasad.

Officials said the proposal covers all villages in Leh district, aiming to assess groundwater resources, strengthen irrigation systems, and expand climate-adaptive solutions such as artificial glaciers. If cleared, the study could become the most comprehensive water governance exercise in Ladakh to date.

The team comprising NIT Raipur experts Dr. D.C. Jhariya and Dr. Chandan Kumar Singh, along with LNP representatives, made a detailed presentation highlighting the urgent need to assess groundwater potential in

Ladakh’s arid terrain and to introduce climate-adaptive interventions, including scaling up of artificial glacier models pioneered in the region.

Officials acquainted with the matter said the project aligns with NMHS objectives of strengthening scientific research, sustainable development, and community-based solutions in the Himalayan belt. If approved, the study could lay the groundwork for long-term water security across Leh’s villages, where agriculture continues to be critically dependent on timely irrigation. The background to this proposal is rooted ►P11

IAF bolsters Northern Frontier, Air Vice Marshal; reviews op-readiness



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: In a strong reaffirmation of the Indian Air Force’s preparedness along the northern frontier, Air Vice Marshal Vikas Sharma, VM, Air Officer Commanding

(AOC) Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, concluded a four-day visit to Air Force Station Leh after conducting an extensive review of operational readiness.

During the visit, Air Vice Marshal Sharma, accompa-

nied by Air Commodore Sanjay Prabhu, Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station Leh, met Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta.

The discussions centered on civil-military cooperation, strategic preparedness, disaster management, infrastructure development, and welfare of the local population, a defence spokesperson said on Friday.

The AOC and Air Commodore Prabhu on Thursday assured the LG of the IAF’s continued support in both strategic and humanitarian domains. They highlighted ongoing efforts to augment logistical support and maintain high operational readiness across Ladakh.

A Raj Niwas ►P11

Jammu-Sgr NH shut, Mughal road reopens

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Jammu-Srinagar national highway remained closed for vehicular traffic for the fourth consecutive day on Friday due to multiple landslides and washing away of road patches.

However, the inter-regional Mughal Road, connecting Jammu region’s Poonch district with Kashmir’s Shopian district, was reopened for vehicular traffic after three days of closure.

“The Jammu-Srinagar highway and Sinthan Road are closed for vehicular movement due to landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones at several places,” a traffic police officer said.

The highway had remained closed due to multiple blockades since August 26 following torrential rains, flash floods, and landslides, but was reopened for traffic for a few hours on August 30. In total, the highway has been closed for ten days.

The closure of highways and other inter-regional roads to Kashmir has resulted in over 3,700 vehicles getting stuck at various places from Kathua to Kashmir.

Mughal Road, which was closed for four days, was reopened for traffic, and LMVs including passenger and private cars have been allowed from both sides on the Mughal Road from Jammu towards Srinagar ►P11

Gyalson discusses Ladakh issues with party Gen Secy



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: Chairman, Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson on Friday discussed issues concerning Ladakh union territory with National General Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), B. L. Santosh in New Delhi.

The delegation led by CEC comprised of State President, Tashi Gyalton Khachu, and State General Secretary, Kunzang Namgyal.

During the meeting, the delegation held detailed discussions on issues concerning the welfare and development of Ladakh, as well as organizational matters of the region.

B. L. Santosh assured the delegation of full support from the central leadership on the matters discussed.

Pertinent to mention here that, in April this year, a delegation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders from the region, led by the CEC met with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi. The sought his intervention in strengthening the gazetted recruitment process and updating the websites of Indian embassies abroad to recognise Ladakh as a separate UT.

Tourism, a key economic driver in Ladakh, was major point of concern. The leaders had pointed out the difficulties faced by foreign tourists due to the current ►P11

Border dispute with China tops India's security challenges: CDS



NEW DELHI: India faces its greatest national security threat from the unresolved border dispute with China, followed by Pakistan’s proxy war aimed at ‘bleeding India by a thousand cuts,’ Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan stated on Friday.

He also highlighted regional instability and its effects on India, alongside the need to prepare for future battlefields dominated by advanced technology, as the third and fourth major challenges in an increasingly complex environment.

In an address at an event in Uttar Pradesh’s Gorakhpur, the chief of defence staff (CDS) said dealing with threats emanating from two adversaries with nuclear weapons is another major challenge facing India as it will have to be prepared for any kind of conventional warfare.

Gen Chauhan said the armed forces were given full operational freedom to conduct Operation Sindoor and its aim was not only to avenge the Pahalgam terror attack, but also to draw a “red line” on cross-border terrorism.

In first such public comments, the CDS also said that the National Security Advisor (NSA) played a significant role in planning ►P11

Champion Make in India, Swadeshi with students, PM Modi to teachers

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a unique twist, assigned teachers a special “homework” during an interaction with National Teacher awardees.

He urged educators to spearhead campaigns promoting swadeshi products, boosting the “Make in India” and “Vocal for Local” initiatives.

Modi proposed schools celebrate events like ‘Swadeshi Day’ or ‘Swadeshi Week,’ where students showcase local products from home and share their stories.

He encouraged discussions and village marches with placards to foster pride in Indian-made goods, confident that teachers and students will drive a nationwide movement for swadeshi pride.

“Today I am doing the task that you always do, giving homework. I am giving you a homework to lead cam-



paigns to promote swadeshi products. I am confident that you will complete it. Students should be encouraged to get swadeshi products from home, and there should be discussions on that. Students can also participate in marches in villages carrying placards rooting for swadeshi ►P11