

Chillai Kalan

December 23, 2021

In news- The harshest period of cold, called 'Chillai Kalan' started on December 21 in the Kashmir valley.

About Chillai Kalan/Chillia Kalan

- Chillai Kalan is a Persian word which means *Major Cold* and it is the **local name given to the 40 day period (starting from 21 December to January 29 every year) of harsh winter in Kashmir.**
- It is **followed by a 20-day long Chillai-Khurd** (small cold) that occurs between January 31 and February 19 and a **10-day long Chillai-Bachha** (baby cold) which is from February 20 to March 2.
- Interestingly, as per **Persian tradition, the night of 21st December is celebrated as Shab-e Yalda – “Night of Birth”, or Shab-e Cheleh – “Night of Forty”.**
- **Iranian Azerbaijanis call it Chilla Gejasi**, which marks the beginning of the first 40 days of winter.
- The first day of 'Chillai kalan' is to be celebrated as 'World Pheran Day'.
- During this period **use of Pheran (Kashmiri dress) and a traditional firing pot called Kanger increases.**
- During Chillai-Kalan, the **weather in Kashmir valley continues to remain dry and cold with minimum temperatures hovering below the freezing point** and chances of **snowfall are most frequent** and maximum.
- The snow that falls during this time period freezes and lasts longer.
- It is **this snow that adds to the glaciers of the Valley and replenishes the perennial reservoirs** that feed the rivers, streams and lakes in Kashmir during the months of summer.