

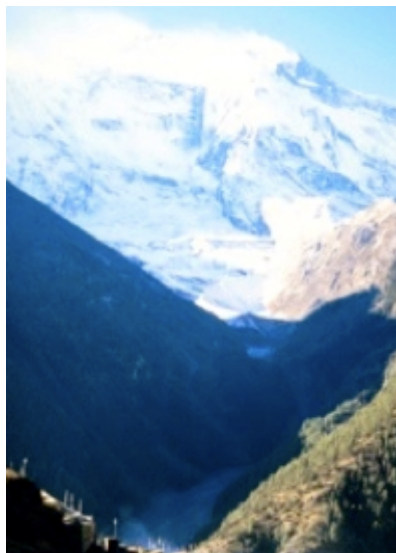


Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on January 20, 2010

## UN Bases Climate-change Forecast on Decade-old Speculation

The world of climate change is heating up with news that forecasts contained in the United Nation's 2007 climate report were based on misquoted speculation by an Indian glaciologist from an interview published nearly a decade earlier.

The Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) claimed that global warming would cause the massive Himalayan glaciers to shrink to extinction by 2035. As reported by [The Australian](#), the IPCC cited campaign literature published by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in making the claim, even exaggerating that report to pin a high likelihood on the prediction.



The WWF gleaned its information from a 1999 article published in the journal *New Scientist*. The author, Fred Pearce, had quoted Indian scientist Syed Hasnain who was at the time chairman of the working group on Himalayan glaciology for the International Commission on Snow and Ice. Hasnain told Pearce he had data about a portion of the Himalayan glaciers he feared were at risk. Pearce told *The Australian* he eventually obtained a copy of Hasnain's report, but it contained no specific date by which any melting was forecast to occur, nor had it been peer-reviewed or published in a scientific journal.

Hasnain now works for the head of the IPCC, Rajendra Pachauri, as head of the glaciology team for TERI, an energy research institute headquartered in India. Last week TERI announced plans to collaborate with the University of Iceland and the Carnegie Corporation of New York to study "the effects of climate change on the Himalaya and the manifold consequences that follow for the possibilities of water management and food production on the plains below." In its [press release](#), TERI bemoaned the fate of Himalayan glaciers: "According to *predictions of scientific merit* [emphasis added] they may indeed melt away in several decades." The [EU Referendum](#) reports that TERI received hundreds of thousands of dollars toward this research from the Carnegie Corporation.

Not surprisingly, Pachauri downplayed the importance of the revelation about AR4's source of glacier information, though [The Times of India](#) quoted an apologetic Pachauri acknowledging that the IPCC's reputation will suffer. "We have to see that its gold-plated standard is maintain," he reassured *The Times*.

Though TERI can rest easy knowing its Carnegie money is secure, this latest revelation is especially embarrassing for the IPCC, which [brags it uses](#) only the latest, peer-reviewed research in writing its regularly published assessment reports. The next, Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), is due for release in 2013. *The Australian* quoted the IPCC climatologist who had charge of the Himalayan glaciers chapter



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in AR4, Murari Lal, "If Hasnain says officially that he never asserted this, or that it is a wrong presumption, then I will recommend that the assertion about Himalayan glaciers be removed from future IPCC assessments." He also admitted having little knowledge of glaciers.

Other scientists scoff at the idea of a catastrophic Himalayan glacier melt of such massive ice formations. As reported by *The Australian*, Cambridge University's director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Julian Dowdeswell, explained, "A small glacier such as the Donkriani glacier is up to 120m thick. A big one would be several hundred metres thick and tens of kilometres long. The average is 300m thick so to melt one at 5m a year would take 60 years."

Other officials are enraged at the revelation of IPCC's deceitful tactics. *The Times of India* quoted environment minister Jairam Ramesh complaining that "due diligence had not been followed by the Nobel peace prize winning body." Ramesh feels vindicated since the IPCC has ignored his challenges to AR4. Though he admits dramatic changes in recent years to Himalayan glaciers, he said the "IPCC's alarmist position ... was not based on an iota of scientific evidence."



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