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Glacier scientist: I knew data hadn't been verified

By [David Rose](#)

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The scientist behind the bogus claim in a Nobel Prize-winning UN report that Himalayan glaciers will have melted by 2035 last night admitted it was included purely to put political pressure on world leaders.

Dr Murari Lal also said he was well aware the statement, in the 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), did not rest on peer-reviewed scientific research.

In an interview with The Mail on Sunday, Dr Lal, the co-ordinating lead author of the report's chapter on Asia, said: 'It related to several countries in this region and their water sources. We thought that if we can highlight it, it will impact policy-makers and politicians and encourage them to take some concrete action.'

'It had importance for the region, so we thought we should put it in.'



Chilling error: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change wrongly asserted that glaciers in the Himalayas would melt by 2035

Dr Lal's admission will only add to the mounting furore over the melting glaciers assertion, which the IPCC was last week forced to withdraw because it has no scientific foundation.

According to the IPCC's statement of principles, its role is 'to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis, scientific, technical and socio-economic information – IPCC reports should be neutral with respect to policy'.

The claim that Himalayan glaciers are set to disappear by 2035 rests on two 1999 magazine interviews with glaciologist Syed Hasnain, which were then recycled without any further investigation in a 2005 report by the environmental campaign group WWF.

It was this report that Dr Lal and his team cited as their source.

The WWF article also contained a basic error in its arithmetic. A claim that one glacier was retreating at the alarming rate of 134 metres a year should in fact have said 23 metres – the authors had divided the total loss measured over 121 years by 21, not 121.

Last Friday, the WWF website posted a humiliating statement recognising the claim as ‘unsound’, and saying it ‘regrets any confusion caused’.

Dr Lal said: ‘We knew the WWF report with the 2035 date was “grey literature” [material not published in a peer-reviewed journal]. But it was never picked up by any of the authors in our working group, nor by any of the more than 500 external reviewers, by the governments to which it was sent, or by the final IPCC review editors.’

In fact, the 2035 melting date seems to have been plucked from thin air.

Professor Graham Cogley, a glacier expert at Trent University in Canada, who began to raise doubts in scientific circles last year, said the claim multiplies the rate at which glaciers have been seen to melt by a factor of about 25.

‘My educated guess is that there will be somewhat less ice in 2035 than there is now,’ he said.



Forced to apologise: Chairman of the IPCC Raj Pachauri

‘But there is no way the glaciers will be close to disappearing. It doesn’t seem to me that exaggerating the problem’s seriousness is going to help solve it.’

One of the problems bedevilling Himalayan glacier research is a lack of reliable data. But an authoritative report published last November by the Indian government said: ‘Himalayan glaciers have not in any way exhibited, especially in recent years, an abnormal annual retreat.’

When this report was issued, Raj Pachauri, the IPCC chairman, denounced it as ‘voodoo science’.

Having been forced to apologise over the 2035 claim, Dr Pachauri blamed Dr Lal, saying his team had failed to apply IPCC procedures.

It was an accusation rebutted angrily by Dr Lal. ‘We as authors followed them to the letter,’ he said. ‘Had we received information that undermined the claim, we would have included it.’

However, an analysis of those 500-plus formal review comments, to be published tomorrow by the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), the new body founded by former Chancellor Nigel Lawson, suggests that when reviewers did raise issues that called the claim into question, Dr Lal and his colleagues simply ignored them.

For example, Hayley Fowler of Newcastle University, suggested that their draft did not mention that Himalayan glaciers in the Karakoram range are growing rapidly, citing a paper published in the influential journal Nature.

In their response, the IPCC authors said, bizarrely, that they were 'unable to get hold of the suggested references', but would 'consider' this in their final version. They failed to do so.

The Japanese government commented that the draft did not clarify what it meant by stating that the likelihood of the glaciers disappearing by 2035 was 'very high'. 'What is the confidence level?' it asked.

The authors' response said 'appropriate revisions and editing made'. But the final version was identical to their draft.

Last week, Professor Georg Kaser, a glacier expert from Austria, who was lead author of a different chapter in the IPCC report, said when he became aware of the 2035 claim a few months before the report was published, he wrote to Dr Lal, urging him to withdraw it as patently untrue.

Dr Lal claimed he never received this letter. 'He didn't contact me or any of the other authors of the chapter,' he said.

The damage to the IPCC's reputation, already tarnished by last year's 'Warmergate' leaked email scandal, is likely to be considerable.

Benny Peiser, the GWPF's director, said the affair suggested the IPCC review process was 'skewed by a bias towards alarmist assessments'.

Environmentalist Alton Byers said the panel's credibility had been damaged. 'They've done sloppy work,' he said. 'We need better research on the ground, not unreliable predictions derived from computer models.'

Last night, Dr Pachauri defended the IPCC, saying it was wrong to generalise based on a single mistake. 'Our procedure is robust,' he added.

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This really is an embarrassment.

"Our procedure is robust."

"Procedure" being:

1. Sensationalize the effects of global warming.
2. Manufacture reports/cherry-pick data that support your 'sky is falling' scenarios.
3. ?
4. Profit

robust indeed.

- Hal Michaels, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 24/1/2010 11:49

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Once more the sky is falling global warming people have been proven to manipulate data and lie to keep their pet donkey walking along what ever path they want.

- Tom, aylesbury, 24/1/2010 11:43

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The real scandal here is with the BBC who report these blatant lies as facts then NEVER retract them when they are proved to be wrong.

- Martin, Ashford, 24/1/2010 11:13

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Can we please recognize that this was not a mistake, this was a deliberate action to create the myth of man made global warming, something they have knew about and used as propaganda for ten years. That deliberate false statment brought to the IPCC's attention many times before by external scientists. Pachauri knows he is untouchable, that is why he was not a salaried employee with a contract at the IPCC.

The UN is an uncontrollable machine infiltrated by Pachauris at all levels within the various bodies.

- Jennifer, Doncaster, 24/1/2010 11:09

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Right - that's THE END of all the ACC lies for once and for all...

Got that Brown? Got that Cameron? Got that BBC?

- Rusty, Surrey, 24/1/2010 11:06

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Looks like its all falling apart for global warming - just hope the IPCC pays back the trillions of dollars its received and is prosecuted for misleading the world!

- Janet, Liverpool, 24/1/2010 10:45

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