

MAN-MADE GLOBAL WARMING

The climate-change 'science' continues to unravel, says DEEPAK LAL

ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA

It has been a bad two months for the purveyors of the “science” of man-made global warming. The BASIC group of countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) stood firm at Copenhagen from being bounced in to an agreement on mandatory carbon emission cuts. With the Democrat’s defeat in Massachusetts, there is little hope of President Barack Obama pursuing the US climate change Bill, leaving Europe — particularly the UK — out on a limb with their legislation of targets for savage CO₂ emission cuts which, if implemented, will lead to their rapid descent into the Stone Age.

But an equally important drama has been playing in New Delhi with Dr Rajendra Pachauri, the head of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), having to retract various purportedly “scientific” claims made in the panel’s 2007 report. The one which has rightly come to the fore in India is Glaciergate, concerning the IPCC’s claim that the Himalayan glaciers would melt by 2035. When the government-sponsored report by eminent Indian glaciologist Dr Vijaya Raina came out in November, saying that the IPCC’s claims were baseless and recklessly alarmist, it was dismissed by Dr Pachauri, a railway engineer with a PhD in economics, as being “arrogant” and “voodoo science”. Subsequently, he had to eat crow as he and the IPCC had to admit that their predictions about Himalayan glaciers were without scientific foundations.

Glaciergate had been preceded by Climategate in November, when a hacker leaked hundreds of emails from the Climate Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia. These show that Professor Phillip Jones, the director of the CRU — the source of the most important of the four sets of temperature data on which the IPCC relies — along with a tight network of colleagues had for years discussed various tactics to avoid releasing their data to outsiders under freedom of information laws. They kept coming up with innumerable excuses to conceal the background data on which their findings and temperature records are based. Jones, astonishingly, even claimed in 2008 that this data from all over the world was “lost”. But the emails show that scientists were told to delete large chunks of data. As this was done after the receipt of a freedom of information request, it became a criminal offence, and the University of East Anglia had to agree to release the data in

A LONG, FAST DECLINE: 7 YEARS’ GLOBAL COOLING AT 3.6°F (2°C)/CENTURY

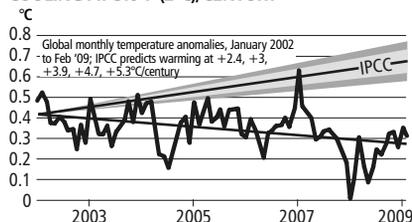


Figure 1: How the IPCC’s projections of rising temperatures have increasingly diverged since 2001 from the trend in actual temperatures. Source: Science and Public Policy Institute.

CLIMATE CHANGE OVER THE PAST 1,000 YEARS AS SHOWN BY THE IPCC IN 1990

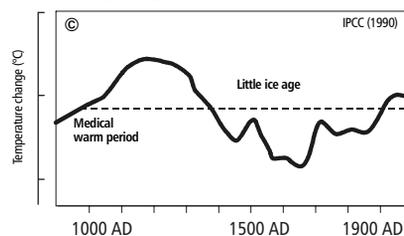


Figure 2: Climate change over the past 1,000 years: JT Houghton et al, IPCC First Assessment Report, 1990.

collaboration with the met office’s Hadley Centre after obtaining the agreement of other met offices around the world.

The unwillingness to release the data was for two reasons. First, since 1977 when sunspot activity has decreased as the Sun seems to have gone to sleep, both terrestrial and more accurate satellite temperature readings show the Earth is cooling, even as CO₂ emissions have increased (See fig. 1), contradicting the man-made global warming theory. Second, they have been keen to resurrect the infamous “hockey stick”.

Till 1999, when a recent physics PhD-turned-climatologist, Michael Mann, published a paper on the 1,000-year temperature record, the accepted trend was given by fig. 2, which appeared in the 1990 IPCC report (reproduced in its Chairman John Houghton’s book *Global Warming* (1994)). This shows that temperatures in the Medieval Warm Period had been higher than those predicted to increase as a result of rising CO₂ emissions. Mann and his colleagues (*Nature*, 1998:779-787) showed that, including data from Californian pine cones and with suitable statistical manipulation, the data was best represented by fig. 3, where the temperature was constant followed by a rapid rise with the Industrial Age. Their “hockey stick” became the iconic figure in



THE HOCKEY STICK GRAPH AS SHOWN BY THE IPCC IN 2001

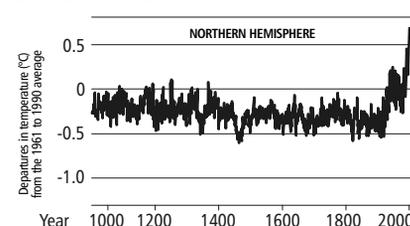


Figure 3: The “hockey stick” graph: Mann ME, et al (1999), northern hemisphere temperatures during the last millennium: Inferences, uncertainties and limitations

the 2001 IPCC report.

Till two Canadians, statistician Stephen McIntyre and economist Ross McKittrick, published an article showing that “there was an error in a routine calculation step... that falsely identified a hockey stick shape as the dominant pattern in the data. The flawed computer program can even pull out spurious hockey stick shapes from lists of trendless random numbers” (*Energy and Environment*, 2003:752-771).

With the subsequent furor, the US Congress set up two scientific committees to examine climate history. They upheld McIntyre and McKittrick, and one investigation chaired by Dr Edward Wegman — a leading statistician — excoriated the Mann papers as well as his various highly placed supporters who had tried to whitewash them. Wegman also commissioned a “social network analysis” of Mann’s defenders to find out how independent they were, which found that they “are closely connected and thus ‘independent studies’ may not be as independent as they might appear on the surface”. Mann’s supporters were “a tightly knit group of individuals who passionately believe in their thesis. However, our perception is that this group has a self-reinforcing feedback mechanism, and, moreover, the work has been sufficiently politicized that they can hardly reassess their public positions without

losing credibility”. (Wegman Report, 2006 is available at http://www.cimateaudit.org/pdf/others/07142006_Wegman_Report.pdf).

These revelations of the debauching of climate change “science” by the IPCC continue apace. As I write, there is a report that the IPCC’s 2007 claim that global warming is linked to a rise in natural disasters has also been shown to be scientifically invalid. The IPCC vice-chairman says it will be reviewed.

The unravelling of this politicised climate “science” has already had political consequences. At the recent BASIC environmental ministers gathering, Xi Zhenhua, the Chinese representative, said that Beijing would keep an “open attitude to the disputes in the scientific community” as “there is a view that climate change is caused by cyclical trends in nature itself”. As a start, to help in an honest resolution of these disputes, the IPCC needs to be disbanded. If necessary, by the BASIC countries withdrawing, and setting up a truly independent global scientific commission of scientists supporting the two alternative theories on global warming outlined in my previous columns. Meanwhile, to end conning the media, Dr Pachauri should issue a statement that he not be referred to as the world’s leading climate scientist. No more than Al Gore or me!