



Current Affairs of the Day

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- New labour codes to allow four-day workweek

GS Paper - III

- No glacial lake found, landslip likely trigger: experts
- Full coverage: Impacts of climate change on Hindu Kush Himalayan region



New labour codes to allow four-day workweek

Highlights:

1. The new labour codes set to be implemented soon would provide companies with the flexibility of reducing the number of working days to four days a week and provide free medical check-ups to workers through the Employees State Insurance Corporation.
2. The draft rules under the labour codes are being finalised.
3. The concerns about the working hours going up from 10.5 hours to 12 hours, with one hour of rest, that arose during consultations had been addressed.
4. Under the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 draft rules, the limit of working hours for a week were 48 hours. Mr Chandra said this limit was “sacrosanct” and the employers and workers would have to agree to a change in working days. It cannot be forced.

No glacial lake found, landslip likely trigger: experts

Though the jury is still out, glaciologists and experts in rock sciences are converging on the view that the cause of the Chamoli deluge was most probably a landslip and not a glacial lake burst.

Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding (GLOF)

A glacial lake outburst flooding (GLOF) occurs when a breach in the glacial lake causes a sudden surge downstream. Such lakes are formed when glaciers erode land, melt and over time become a large mass of water in the depression formed, and these can be breached, causing floods downstream. However, several scientists, based on an analysis of satellite images, have failed to spot any such lakes.

Reason of deluge

1. The Central Water Commission (CWC) monitors and prepares monthly reports on the state of glacial lakes and waterbodies measuring 10 hectares and above via satellite. Nothing out of the ordinary was observed.
2. Other experts opine that a large mass of rock or debris might have impacted the glacier and triggered an avalanche.
3. We can now say with some belief that the incident occurred due to the fracture of a hanging glacier [about 0.2 sq. km in size] together with snow and rock avalanches, at a 5,600-metre altitude near the Trishul peak.

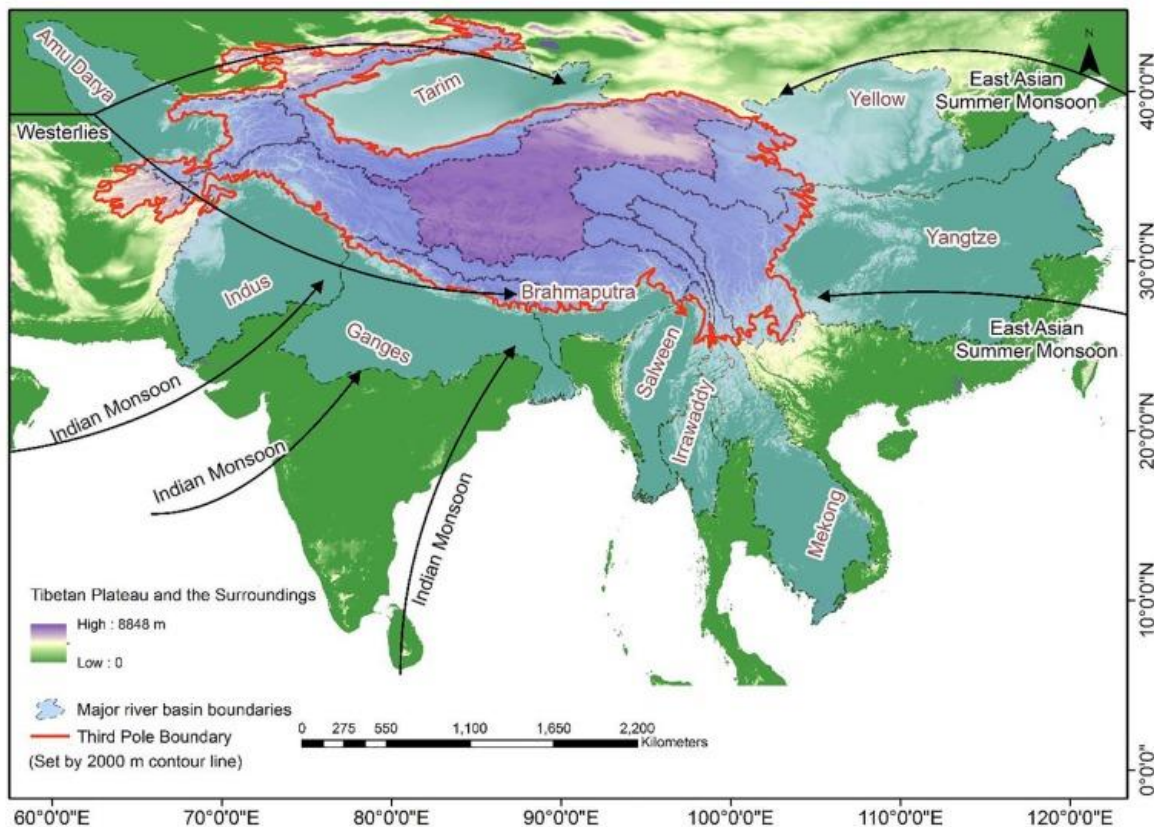


Full coverage: Impacts of climate change on Hindu Kush Himalayan region (The Third Pole)

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) assessed the ecologically important but fragile region for the very first time. Here's all you need to know about it

1. Hindu Kush Himalayan region warming faster than the global average
2. Number of glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region is rising
3. Besides global warming, pollution also impacts glaciers

Hindu Kush Himalayan region warming faster than the global average



The Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region also known as the Third Pole— spread over 3,500 square kilometres across eight countries including India, Nepal and China — is warming faster than the global average. The HKH region — part of the Third Pole due to its largest permanent snow cover after the North and South poles — sustains the livelihoods of 240 million people living in the mountains



and hills. It also houses the origin of 10 river basins that include the Ganga, Brahmaputra and the Mekong. Some 1.5 billion people depend on these basins for sustenance.

The assessment establishes HKH region firstly as an incredibly important asset for Asia and the world. It is a key source of water, energy, carbon stocks, as well as rich biodiversity. For example, the rivers starting from HKH are home to about 2 billion people, with 500 GW of hydropower potential.

Mountains are warming up faster than the global averages. Even if we could limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, mountain temperatures would rise above 2 degrees Celsius, and if current trends continue temperatures could go up by 4 to 6 degrees Celsius. Although the climate of the region has changed significantly in the past, it is projected to change more dramatically in the near future. In 1998-2014, when global warming slowed down, this region continued to warm.

Impact of unusual warming in the HKH

1. Warming may be good news for agriculture. The length of the growing season has increased by 4.25 days per decade — a positive change for agriculture.
2. Warming in the HKH region has ramifications for the global climate. **This region is a heat source in summer and a heat sink in winter.** Along with the Tibetan Plateau, this influences the Indian summer monsoon.
3. So, any changes in this region would have a bearing on the monsoon itself that already shows signs of changes in spread and distribution.
4. Such large warming could trigger a multitude of biophysical and socio-economic impacts, such as biodiversity loss, increased glacial melting, and less predictable water availability—all of which will impact livelihoods and well-being in the HKH.
5. Faster snow and glacier melting due to warming is already manifesting in formation of glacial lakes. Glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF) are becoming frequent and causing huge casualties and loss to local infrastructures.
6. Glaciers in HKH have been retreating faster, and consistently causing greater water flows in rivers. In Tibetan Plateau, river runoff has increased by 5.5%. Most of the lakes in high altitudes have also reported water level rise by 0.2 m/year besides their surface areas expanding.



Number of glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region is rising

1. The increase in the number of glaciers is primarily due to glacier fragmentation — that big ones are splitting into smaller ones. And this is happening due to consistent loss in areas the glaciers occupy.
2. According to ICIMOD's assessment, in a 1.5degree Celsius world, about a third of glaciers in HKH region will disappear by 2100, and under the current emission scenario, the region will lose two-third of glacier volumes.
3. Overall, snowfall and accumulation have been coming down in this region. Since 2000, the snow-covered area of HKH has reported a decline.

Besides global warming, pollution also impacts glaciers

1. The region is under threat from climate change plus a host of other changes including ecosystem degradation, outmigration, and air pollution.
2. Many major cities in and near the HKH have annual average PM2.5 concentrations almost 10 times higher than WHO guidelines. In addition to negative health impacts, this also adds to glacier melt.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is an intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre working on behalf of the people of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH). The organization is based in Kathmandu, Nepal, set up by and works in eight regional member countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan