

October 2024
Uttarakhand Disaster & Accident Analysis Initiative (UDAAI)
Monthly Reports

Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation
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About UDAAI Monthly Reports

Uttarakhand Disaster & Accident Analysis Initiative (UDAAI) is a monthly initiative by Dehradun-based environmental action and advocacy group, Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation. The goal of the UDAAI reports is to document disasters and accidents in Uttarakhand, leading to human and ecological casualties. UDAAI is based on media reports in respectable publications in English and Hindi newspapers, as well as news portals. UDAAI neither attempts nor claims to document all disasters and all accidents in Uttarakhand; its focus instead is to document major casualties and non-casualty events on a regular basis.

We strongly believe that with the perils of inclement climate and unabated disasters, the ecologically fragile and earthquake-prone state of Uttarakhand needs to take many more steps to increase its disaster preparedness. We therefore see UDAAI as a document that highlights attention towards the urgent need of a holistic disaster management and accident minimization policy framework in Uttarakhand.

It is our earnest hope that UDAAI will spur political leadership, policy makers, bureaucracy, research and academic institutions, businesses, civil society organisations, media and the citizenry at large to initiate inclusive, regular and action-oriented conversations on the subjects of resilience, mitigation and adaptation in Uttarakhand. With mainstreaming and a greater focus on the issue, there is likely to be an improvement in the process of planning of climate actions and disaster management in Uttarakhand.

World's highest Shiva temple faces water leakage, weakening foundation

Tungnath, the highest temple dedicated to Lord Shiva at an altitude of 3,680 metres, in Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag district, is facing serious structural challenges, including water leakage, subsidence, and a weakening foundation, all of which have worsened during the monsoon season. The ongoing heavy rainfall has accelerated the damage, leading to concerns about the ancient temple's stability and safety for visiting devotees and tourists. Locals believe the temple was built by the Pandavas of Mahabharat after the war in Kurukshetra.

In response, the Badrinath Kedarnath Temple Committee, led by Ajendra Ajay, reached out to the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to explore possible restoration methods. The organisations sent teams to inspect the site in Sept. After assessing the condition, they provided their recommendations to temple committee on steps to protect the temple from further damage.

"The temple is facing serious issues like subsidence, weakening foundation, and shifting wall slates, which have caused water leakage during the rainy season, said Ajay.

The committee has also sought assistance from the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) to ensure the temple's safety. Ajay said that once they receive CBRI's suggestions, they will proceed with repair, restoration, and beautification efforts.

Manoj Saxena, superintendent archaeologist at ASI, told TOI, "While the temple is not officially protected by ASI, our team visited the site and gave our recommendations. Now it is up to the temple committee and the state government to take the necessary actions.

The restoration work is expected to move forward once the CBRI's final report is submitted. Repair and beautification efforts will aim to preserve the temple's historical and spiritual significance while ensuring it remains structurally sound.



Glacier retreat heightens risk of glacial lake outburst floods'

The ongoing glacier retreat in western Himalayas is increasing the risk of Glacier Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) in the region, says a study published by Springer, a reputed publisher of scientific journals. A GLOF is caused by the sudden release of water from a lake fed by glacier melt.

Authored by Suhail A Lone and G Jeelani from Kashmir University, the study compared two climatologically distinct basins - the Liddar Basin in the Kashmir Himalayas and Suru Basin in Ladakh—to examine changes in glacier snout positions and areas over recent decades. Using 43 years of optical remote sensing data, the study assessed five glaciers: Kolahoi, Hoksar, and Sheshram in the Liddar Basin, and Parachik and Drang-Drung in the Suru Basin.

The study revealed that from 1981 to 2022, the region saw a temperature rise of 0.2 degrees celsius per decade and a precipitation drop of 0.03mm per year, leading to a marked reduction in glacier area. "Kolahai, Hoksar, and Sheshram glaciers have lost 21% of the glacier extent in a course of 40 years from 1980 to 2020. The glaciers in Ladakh Himalayas are also showing a significant decreasing trend," said Lone.

The study warned the loss of glaciers could impact regional hydrology, potentially destabilising the local economy. It also noted similar trends in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, making them vulnerable to climate-induced disasters.

‘Glacier retreat heightens risk of glacial lake outburst floods’

State Vulnerable To Disasters Due To Similar Trends

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Drang-Drung glacier in Suru Basin shrank 2 sqkm between 1980 & 2022

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Kolahoi glacier, the largest in Liddar Basin, shrank from 13.5sqkm to 10.4sqkm between 1980 and 2022. Sheshram, the second largest, shrank from 5.9sqkm to 4.7sqkm while Kohsar reduced from 1.3sqkm to 0.7sqkm. In Suru Basin, Drang-Drung shrank from 50.8sqkm to 48.8sqkm, and Parachik from 49.3sqkm to 47.8sqkm during the same period.

The study warned the loss of glaciers could impact regional hydrology, potentially destabilising the local economy. It also noted similar trends in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, making them vulnerable to climate-induced disasters.

TIMES OF INDIA
OCTOBER 11, 2024

Landslide on Helang-Marwadi Bypass, Workers Escape by Running

Jyotirmath. A massive landslide occurred on the under-construction Helang-Marwadi bypass of the Badrinath Highway, sending shockwaves through the area. Fortunately, no workers were caught in the debris as they managed to escape in time. However, one of the machines involved in the construction work was damaged when it got buried under the rubble. The incident, which occurred two days ago, came to light after a video went viral.

The bypass road is being constructed between Helang and Marwadi, covering a distance of around 6.5 km. Once completed, it will provide a direct route for travelers to Badrinath, Hemkund, and Mana, eliminating the need to pass through Jyotirmath. Initially, the irrigation department was tasked with the construction of the bypass, but the project was halted due to local opposition. After getting clearance for construction on the dam, the responsibility was handed over to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). The bypass is expected to be completed by 2025, with current work including hill cutting and other tasks.

On October 12, during the construction, a severe landslide occurred. Several pine trees from the hillside, along with mud and rocks, came crashing down. The resulting dust cloud and workers fleeing for safety were captured in a viral video.

This highlights the challenges faced by construction work in such difficult terrain, where landslides and other natural calamities are a frequent occurrence.



AMAN UJALA
OCTOBER 15, 2024

Pindari Glacier Has Receded Over Half a Kilometre in the Last 60 Years

Bageshwar. Due to the continuous increase in human intervention, glaciers are retreating year by year, and the Pindari Glacier is no exception. Environmentalists are concerned about this ongoing trend. Famous photographer and Padma Shri awardee Anup Sah shared that 60 years ago, the glacier's zero point was visible, but now, all that remains are eroded mountains. The glacier has receded by more than half a kilometre.

Anoop Sah (75), a member of the Uttarakhand Wildlife Council, and his fellow photographer Dharendra Bisht (63), who recently completed a trek to the Pindari Glacier, shared their experiences with a news agency. Sah recalled that his first visit to Pindari Glacier was in 1964, when it required a 115-kilometre trek from Kapkot to reach the glacier.

Today, vehicles can travel up to Khaati, reducing the trek to just 31 kilometres. However, despite this convenience, the route has worsened over the years. Due to landslides between Khaati and Dwali, the trekking distance has increased by about three kilometres.

These changes highlight the significant environmental transformations happening in the region, reflecting both the retreat of the glacier and the challenges posed by natural and human factors in the area.

बीते 60 साल में आधा किलोमीटर से अधिक पीछे खिसका पिंडारी ग्लेशियर

पद्मश्री साह ने जताई चिंता, बोले- जहां से पहले शुरु होती थी बर्फ अब वहां दिख रहे भुरभुरे पहाड़

बागेश्वर। लगातार बढ़ते मानव दखल से ग्लेशियर पीछे की ओर खिसकते जा रहे हैं। पिंडारी ग्लेशियर भी साल-दर-साल पीछे खिसक रहा है। इसको लेकर पर्यावरणविद चिंतित हैं। मशहूर छायाकार पद्मश्री अनूप साह बताते हैं कि 60 साल पहले जहां जीरो प्वाइंट हुआ करता था, अब वहां पर भुरभुरे पहाड़ दिखाई देते हैं। ग्लेशियर आधा किमी से अधिक पीछे जा चुका है।

पिंडारी ग्लेशियर को ट्रेकिंग कर लौटे राज्य वन्यजीव परिषद के सदस्य अनूप साह (75) और उनके साथी छायाकार धीरेंद्र बिष्ट (63) ने संवाद न्यूज एजेंसी से अपने यात्रा के अनुभव साझा किए। पद्मश्री साह बताते हैं कि 60 साल पहले उन्होंने पहली बार 1964 में पिंडारी ग्लेशियर की यात्रा की थी, उस समय कप्तोट से 115 किमी की पैदल दूरी तय

जीरो प्वाइंट 1964

जीरो प्वाइंट 2024

सीमेंट और कंक्रीट से बचना है वेहद जरूरी

छायाकार साह और बिष्ट बताते हैं कि ट्रेकिंग रूट पर हो रहे निर्माण कार्य से सीमेंट और कंक्रीट का उपयोग, भागी-भाग्य साइन बोर्ड लगाने से ग्लेशियर को सहत पर असर पड़ रहा है। वहां स्थानीय मसालेन बास, रिगल आदि का उपयोग किया जाना चाहिए। ट्रेकरों और सेलामियों को नियंत्रित करने, दूर गाइड को विधिवत प्रशिक्षण दिलाने, साइन बोर्ड में वास्तविक दूरी और ट्रेक रूट के अनुसार आवाजों का टाइमिंग भी अंकित किया जाना चाहिए।

वन्यजीव और जंतुओं पर भी पड़ रहा है इसका असर

साह ने बताया कि ग्लेशियरों के पीछे खिसकने का असर वन्यजीव-जंतुओं पर भी पड़ रहा है। क्षेत्र में दिखने वाले धार, भल, सांघर, घुरड़, काकड़, सैटायर, टैगोपान, मोनल, पहाड़ी तीतर और सालम पंजा, सालम मिश्री, अतीस, कुटकी आदि का दिखना अब दुर्लभ हो गया है। हिम तेंदुआ और भालू जैसे जानवर अब चरवाहों की भेड़ों और घोड़ों को निवाला बनाने लगे हैं।

करनी पड़ती थी। वर्तमान में खाती तक वाहन सुविधा होने से मात्र 31 किमी ही ट्रेकिंग करनी पड़ती है लेकिन पहले की अपेक्षा अब मार्ग अधिक खराब है। खाती से द्वाली तक भूस्खलन के कारण दूरी करीब तीन किमी बढ़ गई है। संवाद

11 बार पिंडारी जा चुके हैं साह

साह 11 बार पिंडारी जा चुके हैं। इससे पूर्व 1998 में वह पिंडारी ग्लेशियर गए थे। 1994 में टूल पाम, 1972 में नंदा खाट, 1973 और 2023 में बल्लूरी का सफल अभियान भी कर चुके हैं। उनके साथ गए छायाकार धीरेंद्र बिष्ट इससे पूर्व 38 साल पहले पिंडारी गए थे। अक्टूबर को ये लोग गनोखेत से रवाना हुए थे और 22 अक्टूबर को आए।

पद्मश्री अनूप साह

AMAR UJALA

OCTOBER 24, 2024

About Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation

SDC Foundation is a Dehradun-based environmental action and advocacy group engaged in communication, citizen engagement and capacity building in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. The foundation works in partnership with institutions of Government of India, Government of Uttarakhand and other stakeholders such as research & academic institutions, community groups, civil society, media partners, NGOs, businesses & trade bodies, schools & colleges in the state.

Climate and environment conservation, waste management, sustainable urbanisation and a basket of sustainable development issues are key focus areas of the foundation.

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PS : Errors or omissions in UDAAI documentation, if any, are purely unintentional. In case any errors or key omissions are detected or any fresh updates are available for events that are already documented, SDC Foundation may kindly be notified at email id contactsdcuk@gmail.com. We shall make the necessary corrections in subsequent versions of the monthly reports of UDAAI.