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CLIMATE SCIENCE

Tibetan Glacier Melt Leading To Sandstorms In China

by Staff Writers
Beijing (AFP) May 03, 2006

Global warming is melting glaciers in China's Tibetan region at a rate of 7.0 percent annually, triggering drought, desertification and sandstorms in other regions, state press reported Tuesday.

Data collected over four decades has shown that glaciers on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, known as the "roof of the world," are shrinking at an unprecedented pace, Xinhua news agency said.

"The melting glacier will ultimately trigger more droughts, expand desertification and increase sandstorms," the report quoted Dong Guangrong, a specialist at the China Academy of Sciences, as saying.

About 47 percent of China's glaciers are on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau in the Himalayas, where the Yangtze, Yellow, Brahmaputra, Mekong and Salween rivers all originate.

The fast rate of glacier melt has meant more water run-off from the plateau which exacerbates soil erosion and leads to desertification, it said.

Northern China, including Beijing, has suffered from 13 dust storms this year which have been attributed to desertification in China's northwestern regions, including Qinghai province

In the worst storm on April 17, an estimated 336,000 tons of dust fell on Beijing, leaving the air quality in the capital at hazardous levels.

Rising temperatures on the plateau may also pose a threat to the world's highest railway,



Melting glaciers in Tibet are triggering more droughts in China and expanding the deserts. One of the effects of this seen recently is the sandstorms in Beijing.

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which is expected to go into operation in July, according to Chinese press reports.

The landmark 26.2 billion yuan (3.16 billion dollar) Tibetan railway linking Qinghai province with Tibet could be destabilized if the permafrost, or frozen ground, underneath the tracks melt, the reports said.

Source: Agence France-Presse

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CLIMATE SCIENCE

Canada To Spend 2 Billion Dollars To Fight Global Warming



Ottawa (AFP) May 03, 2006

Canada's Finance Minister Jim Flaherty promised two billion Canadian dollars (1.8 billion US dollars) in his budget Tuesday to help stem global warming, but offered few details, prompting angry reactions from environmentalists.

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