

## NEWS AND NOTES

### **Saving the Himalayan Eco-system**

As part of the National Action Plan for Climate Change, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has initiated a plan of action for saving the Himalayan ecosystem.

'India had anecdotal evidence that glaciers may be receding. There was need for obtaining precise and carefully vetted data, both through satellite imaging and ground surveys. The establishment of a Centre for Glaciological Studies was welcome, he said adding that the initiative taken to commission a study on the Himalayan glaciers in collaboration with the ISRO was commendable'.

"This initiative must become an integral part of this National Mission and institutionalized so that the long-term trends are monitored and analysed. Only then would it be possible to formulate appropriate and effective adaptation strategies." Describing the entire Himalayan zone, including the mountains, the foothills and the terai area, as an extremely fragile zone, he said that over the years, deforestation, demographic pressures and rapid and often uncontrolled urbanization and construction with only marginal attention being paid to environmental safeguards had caused steady degradation.

Now, however, these stresses and strains are already beginning to be accentuated by the adverse consequences of climate change. While the larger challenge of global climate change has to be addressed, we need to prepare our country and people to anticipate and respond to its consequences. And part of the adaptation response lies in halting and reversing the degradation that has already taken place in the Himalayas" (Source: *The Hindu*, 27 October 2009)