

NASA launches Himalayan monitoring system in Nepal

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Around 1.3 billion people depend on the water that flows down from the [Himalayan glaciers](#), which experts say are melting at an alarming rate, threatening to bring floods and later drought to the region.

But relatively little is known about the impact of [climate change](#) on the vast region, which environmental campaigners describe as a "third pole" because of its huge water reserves in the form of ice and snow.

The web-based system, called SERVIR, will allow scientists, governments and aid agencies to access [satellite images](#) of the Himalayas, giving them early warning of floods and other disasters and aiding research on climate change.

A [NASA](#) statement said SERVIR, launched in partnership with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu, could be used to address threats to biodiversity as well as risks from flooding, forest fires and storms.

"The whole of the Himalayan region is something of a black hole for scientists and we hope to use this system to bridge the data gap," said Basanta Shrestha, a senior ICIMOD executive.

"We can use this to monitor the dynamics of the cryosphere (ice systems) in the light of climate change, which is very important in terms of both disaster management and future water availability."

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