

# Indian forecasting to aid Maldives

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**Though the Congress-led UPA Government goofed up and spoiled the country's age-old ties with Maldives, Indian scientists have done the country proud by taking up the responsibility of monitoring and forecasting the safety of the island nation from natural disasters. Starting Friday, all atolls in Maldives will get hourly information about the status of the Indian Ocean which will be of help to the island nation's local administration, fishermen community, tourism and shipping sectors.**

Scientists of Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), a Hyderabad-based research laboratory, have succeeded in developing an exclusive Ocean State Forecast for Maldives. "The Maldives coast is often threatened by high swell waves from the Indian Ocean. The programme developed by us will disseminate information about waves, swell waves, winds, ocean currents and sea surface temperature," TM Balakrishnan Nair, head, Ocean Science and Information Services Group, INCOIS, told The Pioneer over telephone from Hyderabad.

The data will help Maldives in its economic development. Fishermen could plan their fishing activities in the troubled Indian Ocean depending on the Ocean State Information provided by the INCOIS.

"A nation, whose economy depends only on fishing and tourism, is being given valuable data free of cost by us. Depending on the height and speed of sea waves. Maldives authorities could plan fishing and sailing operations in all islands and atolls constituting the nation," said Satish Shenoy, director, INCOIS.

The National Tsunami Early Warning System installed at INCOIS is providing round-the-clock tsunami alert to all the countries lying in the rim of the Indian Ocean. The new initiative, free of cost, is being disseminated through Thailand-based Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early warning System for Asia and Africa (RIMES).

"The data given by INCOIS scientists get localised at the RIMES control station and disseminated to the user countries in their local languages. We have 31 countries as members with whom we interact regularly and customise their requirements," said AR Subbiah, the Tamil Nadu-born director of RIMES. He said INCOIS is the only beacon of hope for all countries lying along the Indian Ocean Rim from tsunami attacks. "With Friday's launch, the data supplied by INCOIS becomes a value-added product," he said.

The scientists of the INCOIS offer crucial data like Potential Fishing Zones to fishermen in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala on regular basis. "This has helped the fishermen save a lot on fuel because they need not wander in the sea in search of fish. The INCOIS data gives them exact locations in Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea where fish wealth is plenty," said Nair.

According to Shenoy, Seychelles, Comoros and Mauritius are the three countries to be soon offered the value-added services from INCOIS. Along with the Ocean State Forecast for Maldives, INCOIS launched another important product named Web Map Services of Ocean State Forecast. "Users will be able to access entire Ocean State Forecasts, details of waves, wind, sea surface temperature and currents at any location in the Indian Ocean. The Indian Navy and the Coast Guard had requested this kind of dissemination as this only can help them to plan their daily briefing to those who venture into the sea," said Nair.

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