

## Ocean forecast system from Friday

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Chennai

Thousands of fishermen in Puducherry will benefit from the country's first comprehensive Ocean Information and Forecasting System to be commissioned on Friday. The OIFS was designed and developed by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, the Hyderabad-based central repository for marine data in the country.

The fishermen venturing out to sea can make use of the board to identify potential fishing zones in the Bay of Bengal. "What we are commissioning is a digital board to display all parameters associated with the ocean, especially the Bay of Bengal off the Puducherry coast," said Dr Shailesh Nayak, director, INCOIS.

Speaking to this newspaper, Dr Nayak, a leading scientist in remote sensing, said the digital display board was mainly meant for fishermen. "They will get all information about the state of the sea, wave condition, strength and wind direction from the board," he said.

He also pointed out that the integrated ocean information boards would be of help to ports, harbours, oil and shipping companies. "The boards are user friendly. The fishermen need not browse computers since they will get direct information," Dr Nayak said. He also disclosed that INCOIS would soon install OIFS boards along the entire Tamil Nadu coast. Dr T.M. Balakrishnan Nair, head, Ocean Science and Information Service Group, INCOIS, has reached Puducherry to help fishermen and NGOs to get used to the system.

"The board will display the state of the sea and the forecast for the next three days. Whatever data we gather from the buoys installed in the Bay of Bengal will be instantly transmitted to the board. The height and direction of the sea waves for the next six hours too could be known through the board," said Dr Nair.

Dr Nair and his team of scientists will interact with fishermen of Puducherry, representatives of local bodies, coast guard and BSNL officials on Friday to create an awareness about OIFS among the people.

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