

Floats to make predictions on monsoon

The Times of India

Hyderabad, November 19th 2002

Four-hundred and fifty specially designed floats will monitor and study sea surface topography in the Indian Ocean for accurate prediction of the onset of monsoon or its failure. This will enable governments to make contingency plans to bail out farmers during drought.

This is being done under a first of its kind international project called Argos involving 25 countries. A total of 3,000 such floats called 'Argos Floats' will be deployed in the waters around the world and 150 specially designed floats in Indian waters will be funded by the central government.

This was disclosed by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) scientist Dr. M Ravichandran on the sidelines of the ongoing 26th National Systems Conference-2002 here on Monday.

Nine floats were released into the water during October by a team that included Ravichandran and three more Argo Floats are scheduled to be released within a month.

These floats are released into the water either from a ship or an aeroplane using parachutes. On hitting the water, these floats, fitted with an hydraulic engine, timer and battery will go to a depth of 2 km to record temperature, salinity, and pressure of the water - parameters that are crucial for prediction of a monsoon.

The floats which weight between 25 kg and 30 kg are programmed to travel with the flow of undersea currents at a depth of 2 km for 10 days before coming to the surface and transmitting real data to the Argos satellite for about 15 hours before submerging again to a depth of 2 km.

The main center for the Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observation System(IOGOOS) is at the INCOIS in Hyderabad.

Using the data transmitted to the satellite, experts will be able to predict accurately the onset of the monsoons, extent of spread of the monsoons and duration, Ravichandran said. INCOIS director K Radhakrishnan is the incharge for the IOGOOS.

Times News Network