

INCOIS launches three advance warning systems

All three are free and will help in reducing losses for users

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD


The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has launched three products for the benefit of fishermen, people living in coastal areas of South India and others, like the Small Advisory and Forecast Services System (SVAS), Swell Surge Forecast System (SSFS) and Algal Bloom Information Service (ABIS), for use on Tuesday.

All three products are available for free and will help in significantly reducing damage and losses for the users concerned and for authorities to make contingency plans for reducing damage, explained Head, Ocean Science & Information Services Group, INCOIS, T.M. Balakrishnan Nair, after the launch.

'SVAS' is for small vessels operating in Indian coastal waters warning about potential sites where vessel overturning can take place, 10 days in advance.

Beneficiaries

Small vessels of beam width up to seven metres covering the entire range of beam widths of the fishing vessels used in all the nine coastal

 ABIS, one of the systems, is to help fishermen, fishery resource managers and ecologists get real-time information about the spread of phytoplankton blooms.

T.M. BALAKRISHNAN NAIR,
Head, Ocean Science and Information
Services Group, INCOIS

States and Union Territories can benefit from it. The warning system is based on 'Boat Safety Index' (BSI) derived from wave model forecast outputs like wave height, steepness, directional spread and rapid development of wind at sea which is boat-specific.

Swell surges

The 'SSFS' has been designed for forecasting swell surges occurring in the west coast two-three days in advance as they generally catch the local people by surprise.

"Such events are intermittent throughout the year. 'Kallakkadal' is a colloquial term used by Kerala fishermen to refer to the freaky flooding episodes,

UNESCO, too, had accepted this term for scientific use," said Dr. Nair.

During 'Kallakkadals', the sea surges into the land and inundates vast areas. However, it is different from the phenomenon of tsunamis as two different kind of waves are involved.

Study findings

A study by INCOIS scientists has revealed that specific meteorological conditions in the Southern Indian Ocean support the generation of long period swells which travel northward and reach the Indian coasts in three to five days' time, causing havoc in the coastal areas.

The 'ABIS' is to help fishermen, fishery resource managers and ecologists get real-time information about the spread of phytoplankton blooms with details of species and size in North Eastern Arabian Sea, coastal waters off Kerala, Gulf of Mannar and coastal waters of Gopalpur.

Harmful algal blooms are not only detrimental to coastal fisheries but tend to induce respiratory problems within the coastal population, adds Dr. Nair.