

Plan for ocean forecast system

By KUMAR CHELAPPAN

Chennai, Aug 3: The entire coastal belt of the country, especially the fishermen community which lives in it, is likely to benefit from the plan of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, to launch a real time ocean information and forecasting system for the country.

The Ocean State Forecast System (OSFS) developed by

the scientists of INCOIS, operating in the Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean will provide information about the sea wave, swell waves, wind and tidal current every three hours. "This is a path breaking step towards establishing a complete information system about the parameters associated with the sea," said Dr T M Balakrishnan Nair, head, Ocean Science and Information Service Group, who led a team of scientists

in the development of the OSFS, Coastal Sea State Forecast and Ocean Nowcast.

Speaking to this newspaper from his laboratory in Hyderabad, Dr Nair, an Oceanographer of international repute said that his team of scientists works on data furnished by various satellites including ISRO's OCEANSAT-1. "We can predict the state of the Ocean ten days in advance using computer models, satellite data and the information which

we collect from instruments deployed at sea such as wave rider buoys, current meters etc. The data from buoy helps to validate and predict the height and direction of the sea and swell waves," Dr Nair said. (Swell Waves, are long crusted waves, typically associated with monsoon, that have moved out and away from the area in which they were formed).

The OSFS has been widely accepted by customers who include fishermen, shipping

companies and security agencies.

Dr Nair, has been awarded certificate of merit by the Union government in connection with the second anniversary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

To disseminate the information to fishermen (through radio, TV, village information centres and Digital Display Boards) who venture out to sea, INCOIS is working in close association with NGOs.