

Scientific Organizations should work in synergy and not in silos: Vice President

Vice President's Secretariat

Scientific Organizations should work in synergy and not in silos: Vice President**Engage with coastal states to make them tsunami-ready: Vice President tells Scientists****Interacts with Scientists & Researchers at Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services**

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu called upon various scientific organizations in the country to work in synergy and not in silos for improving people's lives. He was interacting with the Scientists of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and the National Tsunami Warning Centre located there, in Hyderabad today. The Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri Mohammad Mahmood Ali and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said he was extremely impressed with its capabilities and the work being carried out by the scientists in the areas of ocean observations, information and advisory services. He told the scientists to work closely with NDMA, coastal states and their disaster management units to make the coastal communities tsunami-ready.

At the National Tsunami Warning Centre, the Vice President enquired about tsunami alerts and the on-going research on tsunami detection. The Director of INCOIS, Dr Satheesh C. Shenoj gave an overview of the Tsunami Warning Centre's activities.

Later addressing the scientists and researchers, the Vice President complimented INCOIS for issuing Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) Advisories to 5.79 lakh fishermen along the Indian coastline in their local languages. The advisories were reducing their fishing time by 60-70 per cent, while netting two to three times higher profit compared to their searches prior to receiving the advisories, he added.

The Vice President said that techniques and knowledge base developed at INCOIS was not only helping in improving the quality of the life of fishing community, but also resulting in huge national savings on diesel and valuable human effort, he added.

Lauding INCOIS for developing operational services for predicting oil spills, the Vice President advised the institution to constantly interact with the user agencies like the Coast Guard, Maritime Police and seek their feedback to improve advisories and services. Glad that the Indian Coast Guard, the agency responsible for the mitigation of oil spills occurring in the seas around us, was now using the oil spill trajectory predictions and working closely with INCOIS to improve the accuracy of predictions, he added.

The Vice President also suggested to INCOIS to integrate Multi-Hazard vulnerability maps and the

3D GIS maps with tsunami early warnings and storm surge predictions to give a more accurate forecasts of the areas that might get inundated due to tsunami or storm surge. It will help in better management of the disasters and mitigate the suffering of the coastal population, he added.

The Vice President also wanted INCOIS to popularize 'Sagar Vani', an integrated information dissemination system, among the fishermen and other users so that the ocean information and alerts could be reached to a large number of people.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am delighted to visit the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and interact with scientists and researchers.

Ever since its inception in 1999, INCOIS has carved a niche for itself in the field of oceanography. Let me first compliment the Director of INCOIS, scientists and other staff of the institute for the excellent progress made by this centre in the areas of ocean observations, information and advisory services.

I am aware that the services of INCOIS, backed with strong science, generated and delivered through hi-technology innovations, are directly touching the lives of millions of coastal population.

I noted that INCOIS is literally following its mission statement that states: *"Provide the Ocean Information and Advisory Services to Society, Industry, Government Agencies and Scientific Community through Sustained Ocean Observations and Constant improvements through Systematic and Focussed Research"*.

The Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) Advisories issued by INCOIS have now become part of the value chain of the fishing community. I am told that an estimated 4.5 lakh users are regularly accessing this advisory and reducing their fishing time by 60-70 per cent, while netting two to three times higher profit as compared to their previous searches prior to receiving these advisories.

With millions along the Indian coastline dependent on fishing for their livelihood, I am pleased to know that these PFZ advisories with specific references to 586 fish landing centres along the coast are being given in the form of maps and texts in native languages. I am happy that the techniques and knowledge base developed at our research centers are helping in improving the quality of the life of fishing community. This results in huge national savings on diesel and valuable human effort.

I am sure, the efforts of INCOIS to improve the accuracy of these advisories and in predicting the Potential Fishing Zones will further help our fishermen in their fishing activities. I also compliment INCOIS for designing and installing new generation Electronic Display Boards (EDBs) at major fishing harbors.

I am also pleased to know that INCOIS is providing forecasts on state of oceans around India.

As you all are aware, marine operations and safe navigation require accurate information on ocean weather. INCOIS service on Ocean State Forecasting (OSF) is a major step in this direction. The service provides forecasts on the condition of ocean waves, ocean surface currents, sea surface temperature and other related aspects five days in advance. I am happy that these services are used by fishermen, ports and harbours, Indian Navy and Coast Guard. I congratulate INCOIS for developing very high-resolution Ocean General Circulation Models and utilising them to provide the forecasts on the state of oceans around India.

I am also informed that INCOIS has developed the operational services to predict the movement of the oil spills when they occur in the seas around us. I am glad that the Indian Coast Guard, the agency responsible for the mitigation of oil spills occurring in the seas around us, is now using the oil spill trajectory predictions provided by INCOIS and working closely with INCOIS to further improve the accuracy of predictions.

Again, I am also pleased to know that the Search and Rescue Aid Tool (SARAT) developed by INCOIS is being used by Coast Guard, Maritime Police and other agencies to search for persons and objects missing at sea. I strongly urge you to constantly interact with various users and implementation agencies like the Indian Coast Guard, Maritime Police and seek their feedback to further improve your advisories and services.

I just visited the state-of-the-art National Tsunami Warning Centre and was impressed with the capabilities. I have been briefed that this centre is one of the best in the world and is providing timely and accurate tsunami advisories. I compliment INCOIS and other institutions involved in establishing this system indigenously in a record time. I am happy to note that the accuracy of our advisories is “on-par” or even “better” than other global centres and that our system has now expanded its services to all the countries on the Indian Ocean Rim. I am confident that we are well prepared to issue the warning in few minutes and save the precious lives in the eventuality of any tsunami in future.

I understand that INCOIS is focusing on expanding the operations to South China Sea and other areas, enhancing the accuracies of warnings by real-time tsunami modelling, and improving the resilience of coastal communities through capacity building programmes. I suggest that you must work closely with all coastal states, especially with their disaster management officials, to make the coastal communities tsunami-ready.

I have seen the Multi-Hazard vulnerability maps and the 3D GIS maps generated by INCOIS. I am sure that they will find enormous use in planning of coastal infrastructure as also in disaster mitigation. Meanwhile, I suggest you to integrate these maps with tsunami early warnings and storm surge predictions so that you can give a more accurate forecast of the areas that might get inundated due to tsunami or storm surge. It will help in better management of the disaster and mitigate the suffering of the coastal population.

Ocean data is an important prerequisite for the generation of services, initialization of models, validation of models and forecasts as well as for oceanographic and atmospheric research. INCOIS should continue its efforts in deploying and maintaining these ocean observing platforms (Argo floats, drifters, current meters, sea level gauges, tsunami buoys, etc.). With INCOIS establishing itself as the one-stop-shop for all ocean related data and data products, these activities need to be sustained.

Web, mobile and information technologies have evolved as the prime sources of information dissemination. I noticed that INCOIS has effectively capitalized on these technologies and built a single window system with multilingual and WEB-GIS functionality for delivery of ocean data, information, and advisories. The fact that the number of users has grown multi-fold over the years is a proof of its utility. I advice you to popularise the newly developed ‘Sagar Vani’, among our fishermen as well as among other users of ocean so that you can reach the information to a large number of users and general public quickly through multiple dissemination mechanisms.

I am delighted to learn about the academic activity and the growing number of Ph.D. and masters students on your campus. I am delighted that the International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography established at INCOIS in 2013 is now being developed into a UNESCO Category II Centre. I believe, UNESCO approved the establishment of this Centre, in recognition of the

capability of India in the field of ocean science. You must utilise this opportunity to keep up our leadership in the areas of ocean sciences and lead other countries in sustainable development of the oceans-- a common heritage of humanity.

I am aware of the numerous awards achieved by INCOIS and the Tsunami Warning System for its excellent record of service. I would like to congratulate the young & dynamic team for all the good work.

I have also taken note of the future plans of INCOIS that include, (i) enhancing the accuracy, resolution & reach of its PFZ & OSF services, (ii) regional & global tsunami watch operations, (iii) real-time tsunami & storm surge modelling, (iv) setting up high-resolution ocean general circulation models with data assimilation capability, (v) multi-hazard & 3D-GIS Mapping (vii) utilisation of GPS for tsunami early warnings, (viii) setting up of UNESCO Category 2 Centre as a world class training centre for operational oceanography and (ix) setting up Digital Ocean. I am sure, the Ministry of Earth Sciences will provide necessary resources and support to these extremely important initiatives.

Finally, before concluding, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the outstanding work being carried out at INCOIS to meet the societal needs—solving the problems faced by the people should be the basis for any scientific advancement.

Thank you, Jai Hind!

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