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### **Helpline for fisherfolk launched**

Special Correspondent

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Service (INCOIS), in association with the M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation, launched a helpline for fisherfolk here on Sunday.

Launching the facility, S.C. Sheno, Director, INCOIS, said it would enable not only “efficient fishing” but also “safe fishing”.

It will provide forecast advisories and early warnings on how the ocean is going to be and whether the fisherfolk could venture out to sea. It will also inform them of where substantial catch was available. Thus it would be possible to avoid unnecessary search for the catch and save substantial time. This would also result in reduction of carbon emissions.

An expert committee had been constituted to clear the doubts of fishermen on any issue .They could contact 9282442311\9282442312.

Mr.Sheno said that already his organisation was able to get in touch with one lakh out of the six lakh boats in the country. We would request that MSSRF help us with regard to last mile connectivity.”

Nupur Mitra, Executive Director, Indian Overseas Bank, handed over a cheque for Rs. 25 lakh to MSSRF chairman M.S.Swaminathan as support for the project.

Dr.Swaminathan said such timely information on the availability of fish and the condition of the sea would be of immense help to the fishing community which was afraid of going to sea after the tsunami struck India in 2004. Besides, passing on such information through mobile phones would be very useful as they could be reached anywhere. “This service could bring about a transformation in the lives of fisherfolk.”

Jayanthi Natarajan, Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, later handed over “fisher friend” mobiles to some members of the fishing community.

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