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## *It's in the air: A new centre to develop weather instruments*

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) and India Meteorological Department plan to establish a National Centre for Atmospheric Technology (NCAT) to develop instruments to read and predict weather data.

"The demand for accurate weather reading is high among different government agencies. We import machinery from developed countries, but it is expensive and difficult to maintain. NCAT will design instruments that are calibrated to international standards but custom-made for different agencies," said NIOT director M A Atmanand.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan mentions the setting up of NCAT and has tentatively allotted ₹17 crore every year. "With our technology, we will be more confident. Imported machines are like black boxes when it comes

The country currently imports instruments like ceilometer and transmissiometer.

"The former tells the altitude of the lowest cloud and latter the visibility range in the atmosphere

to maintenance, tough to decode," said Atmanand.

In 1986, the World Meteorological Organisation recommended the establishment of regional instrument centres in six places worldwide with a high standard of accuracy. "The new establishment will maintain accuracy standards that have been prescribed by World Meteorological Organisation," said Atmanand.

On December 12, representatives from Air Force, Navy, Isro, Tamil Nadu Agricultural

University Airports Authority of India and Indian Railways will brainstorm to come up with specific objectives for NCAT. "Apart from government agencies, many academic institutions and industrial players are participating. This shows that the demand for indigenous technology exists," said R Venkatesam, NIOT scientist and convenor.

India currently imports instruments like ceilometer and transmissiometer. "The former tells the altitude of the lowest cloud and latter the visibility range in the atmosphere. These instruments are useful for airports so we will try to develop them here," said Venkatesam.

"We have only three automatic weather stations in the city and 28 in the country. In many places we collect the details manually. With better systems, we can get better data," said the deputy director general of YEA Raj.





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## NIOT to get incubation centre for atmospheric technology

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai, will soon have an incubation centre for atmospheric technology, which would help in calibration and manufacturing of instruments to measure accurate wind speed, temperature, humidity and visibility.

"It will assist in development of instruments that would be of immense use in various departments including weather, defense services, railways and agriculture," said NIOT director Dr M.A. Atmanand. "It will also lead to standardisation

### Director speak

■ The technology will assist in development of instruments that would be of immense use in various departments, including weather, railways and agriculture

of measurements for weather forecasting," he added.

He said the Ministry of Earth Sciences has chosen NIOT for the incubation centre. "Later the National Centre for Atmospheric Technology (NCAT) can move out to a suitable location," he added.

While various users,

including India Meteorological Department, Indian Air Force, Indian Navy and Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research are expected to share their views on the subject, the NIOT is also involving the industries like Larsen & Toubro, Bharat Electronics along with educational institutions like IIT and VIT for designing and manufacturing of such instruments.

"We will have a brainstorming meet on the establishment of NCAT here on December 12," Mr Atmanand said. The incubation centre is expected to be in place at NIOT by April 2012, he added.