Bay of Bengal countries launch a fisheries research network – 'BOB-NOR' (Kochi)

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News

India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives have launched the 'Bay of Bengal Network of Ocean Researchers for Fisheries' (BOB-NOR) (reported 5 Nov 2026). It was launched at a meeting at the ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi, Kerala, on the sidelines of an international symposium on fisheries and remote sensing. Its aim is to study how rising sea temperatures, monsoon changes, salinity and ocean currents alter fish movement, breeding, growth and numbers – by combining satellite data, sea surveys, and climate and fisheries data. Scientists from the US, Brazil, Chile, Portugal, the UK and Greece also took part.

Key facts

Name	BOB-NOR – Bay of Bengal Network of Ocean Researchers for Fisheries
Countries	India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives
Venue	ICAR–CMFRI, Kochi (Kerala) – on the sidelines of the SAFARI / Trevor Platt Science Foundation symposium
Focus	Sea temperature, monsoon, salinity, currents → fish movement, breeding, numbers

Tools	Satellite data + sea surveys + climate and fisheries data
Background	14 Feb 2023 – a 'Bay of Bengal Marine Research Network' was proposed at a BOBP-IGO dialogue in Kochi

Background

- BOBP-IGO: the 'Bay of Bengal Programme' began in 1979 as a regional fisheries programme of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Through an agreement signed in Chennai in April–May 2003 it became an inter-governmental organisation (BOBP-IGO); members – Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand are cooperating non-contracting parties. Aim – better livelihoods for small-scale fishers. At the 13th Governing Council in Malé on 21 Feb 2025, India took over the chair from Bangladesh.
- CMFRI: began on 3 Feb 1947 in Madras (now Chennai) as a marine fisheries research station; came under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 1967; its headquarters moved from Mandapam (Tamil Nadu) to Kochi in 1971. It leads India's fish-stock assessment and mariculture research.
- Geography: the Bay of Bengal is the world's largest bay; the Ganga–Brahmaputra, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri flow into it. Heavy freshwater inflow keeps its surface water less salty. Millions of coastal people depend on its fisheries.
- Science: remote-sensing satellites measure sea-surface temperature and chlorophyll, helping predict where fish shoals may gather. In India, INCOIS (Hyderabad) issues 'Potential Fishing Zone' (PFZ) advisories.

Tamil Nadu link: BOBP-IGO's headquarters is at 91 St. Mary's Road, Abhiramapuram, Chennai; the agreement making it an inter-governmental body was also signed in Chennai in 2003. CMFRI too began in Chennai in 1947 and later functioned from Mandapam, Ramanathapuram district, where its regional centre still works.

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