News

To avoid communication blackouts that led to 20 fishermen going missing in the aftermath of Cyclone Okchi in 2017, a slew of government departments, research agencies and private companies have developed GEMINI.

GEMINI:

- GEMINI is a portable receiver linked to ISRO-satellites, that is “fail-proof” and warn fishermen of danger.
- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), a Hyderabad institute collaborated with Accord, a private company, to develop a box-shaped receiver.
- It has an antenna and in-built battery that can last three to four days, according to a brochure describing the device.
- GEMINI works on GAGAN developed by ISRO and the Airports Authority of India and is an India-made global positioning system and relies on the positioning system by ISRO’s GSAT satellites.

Why need GEMINI?

- The satellite-based communication is the only suitable solution for the dissemination of such emergency information.
- And affordable satellite based communication system should be made part of the dissemination chain to deal with cyclones, high waves and tsunamis.

Limitations

- The device allows only one-way communication it can’t be used by fishermen to make calls, for instance.
- At ₹9,000 a device, it’s also relatively expensive for the average fisherman, say officials, but attempts are on to subsidise it by as much as 90%.
- The device could be more easily accessible to India’s 900,000 fishermen if the chips powering mobile phones were able to receive signals from the GAGAN system.