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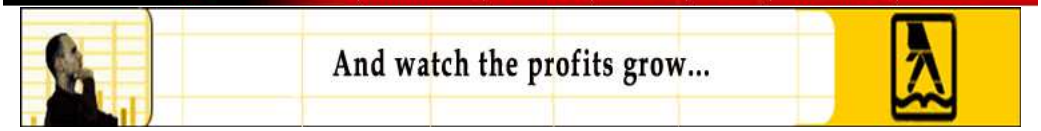

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Science

NASA finds possible wind energy sources

Washington | July 09, 2008 12:01:13 AM IST

The U.S. space agency says nearly a decade of satellite data is being used to reveal ocean areas where winds could be utilized to produce energy.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration scientists said efforts to harness the energy potential of Earth's ocean winds through offshore wind farms have gained an important new tool: global data from NASA's QuikSCAT satellite.

QuikSCAT, launched in 1999, continuously tracks the speed, direction and power of winds near the ocean surface to predict storms and enhance weather forecast accuracy.

Ideally, offshore wind farms should be located in areas where winds blow continuously at high speeds and NASA said the new research identifies such areas. An example of one such high-wind area is off the coast of Northern California near Cape Mendocino.

The protruding land mass of the cape deflects northerly winds along the California coast, creating a local wind jet that blows year-round, NASA said. Similar jets are formed from westerly winds blowing around Tasmania, New Zealand and Tierra del Fuego in South America, among other locations.

The research is reported in the journal Geophysical Research

(UPI)

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