

Press Brief on Mock Tsunami Drill. Exercise IOWave11. scheduled on October 12, 2011



Hyderabad 11 Oct 2011 (Hyderabad Deccan News) :India, along with 20 Indian Ocean Nations*, is participating in a major Indian ocean-wide mock tsunami drill on October 12, 2011 aimed at testing the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS). This drill, organized under the auspices of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, will also see responsibility for Indian Ocean tsunami advisories handed over to the Regional Tsunami Advisory Service Providers (RTSPs) of the region (India, Australia, Indonesia). UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova will mark the transition of the responsibility to the UNESCO Director-General with a video address to the authorities of Australia, India & Indonesia on 12 October (12.00 p.m., Indian Standard Time). The drill aims to evaluate the system's operational capacity, the efficiency of communications among the different concerned actors, and the state of preparation of national emergency services. The test will also include the evacuation of coastal communities in several countries (notably, India and Malaysia). At the national level, this drill is being coordinated by Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

The Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC), based out of the Indian National Centre for

Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Earth Sciences is one of RTSPs in the IOTWS setup. This state-of-the-art warning centre, operational since October 2007, has all necessary computational & computational infrastructure for reception of real-time data from seismic & sea-level networks, tsunami modeling, as well as generation and dissemination of tsunami bulletins for the entire Indian Ocean region. Starting from October 12, 2011, ITEWC along with other RTSPs (Australia & Indonesia), will take over the responsibility of providing tsunami bulletins to Indian Ocean countries. Currently these bulletins are being provided by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) & Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) and will continue to do so till end-2012, at which time the evaluation of the new regional advisory service will be carried out.

ITEWC will participate in this drill, both in its capacity as National Tsunami Warning Centre (NTWC) for India as well as one of the RTSPs for the Indian Ocean region. In preparation to this drill, ITEWC conducted 2 communication tests to test the communication channels, a training workshop and tabletop exercises for enabling the national stakeholders to streamline their SOPs for handling tsunami emergency response. A manual comprising specifics of conducting the tsunami drill, along with the detailed bulletins and feedback forms has also been prepared and circulated to the stakeholders.

The scenario established for the "Exercise IOWAVE 11" re-enacts the events of 26 December 2004, with a 9.2 magnitude earthquake off the North West coast of Sumatra (Indonesia), followed by an ocean-wide tsunami. This simulated wave will cross the Indian Ocean in 12 hours to strike the coast of South Africa.

During the drill, that will take place between 0630 Hrs to 1830 Hrs IST on October 12 2011, ITEWC will generate and issue 15 tsunami bulletins to both its National & Regional (IOTWS) contacts through GTS, email, fax, SMS as well as web. National participants in the drill include NDMA, MHA, Disaster Management Offices of all Coastal States/UTs, NDRF, Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy and Critical Coastal Installations (Ports, Power Plants, SHAR, etc.). During the drill, evacuation of coastal communities is also being planned in selected villages in Pondicherry, Maharashtra and possibly a few other states/UTs. Feedback from the participants after the drill is expected to identify and