

India gears up for Indian Ocean-wide mock tsunami drill

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India, along with 23 other countries, is participating in a major Indian Ocean-wide mock tsunami drill on September 9 and 10.

HYDERABAD: India, along with 23 other countries, is participating in a major Indian Ocean-wide mock tsunami drill on September 9 and 10 that is aimed at testing the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS).

The drill, organized under the auspices of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, is expected to increase preparedness, evaluate response capabilities in each country and improve coordination throughout the region, an official statement here said.

"The drill also aims at evaluating the system's operational capacity, efficiency of communication among the different concerned actors, and the state of preparation of national emergency services," it said.

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, would participate in this drill, both in its capacity as National Tsunami Warning Centre (NTWC) for India as well as one of the Regional Tsunami Advisory Service Providers (RTSP) in the Indian Ocean region.

The ITEWC, operational since October 2007, has all the necessary computational infrastructure for the reception of real-time data from seismic and sea-level networks, tsunami modeling, as well as generation and dissemination of tsunami bulletins for the entire Indian Ocean region.

Since October 12, 2011, ITEWC, along with other RTSPs (Australia and Indonesia), has taken over the responsibility of providing tsunami bulletins of Indian Ocean member countries, under the IOC/UNESCO's ICG/IOTWS framework, the statement said.

The mock drill would simulate tsunamis originating from two earthquake sources on successive days, one in the eastern Indian ocean and the other in the north-western Indian ocean.



A file photo of Marina beach in Chennai (TOI photo)

The first scenario simulates a magnitude 9.1 earthquake south of Java and Indonesia and would commence at 5.30 hours IST on September 9.

The second scenario simulates a magnitude 9.0 earthquake in the Makran Trench, south of Iran and Pakistan and would commence at 1130 hours IST on September 10.

On both days, the drill would run in real time for a period of 12 hours.

During the drill, ITEWC would generate and disseminate 15 tsunami notifications to both its National and Regional contacts through GTS, email, fax, SMS as well as web, the statement added.

The recipients at the national level include control rooms of NDMA, MHA, Disaster Management Offices of all coastal states/UTs, NDRF, Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy and critical coastal installations (such as ports and power plants).

The recipients have the choice to participate in the mock drill on either or both the days.

Based on their level of planning and preparedness, the recipients may decide to limit this drill to check the communication links between their institutions and INCOIS or (ii) activate their standard operating procedure (SOPs) and take it further down to institutional/state/district/community level.

"Feedback from the participants after the drill is expected to identify and fix any gaps in communication channels or the SOPs of all stakeholders," the statement said.

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