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India To Participate In IOWAVE 11



United Nations: India and over 20 other nations will participate next week in a full-scale exercise to test a United Nations-backed early warning system which will re-enact the events of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

The Oct 12 exercise, organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), aims to test the warning system's operational capacity as well as the efficiency of communication systems and national emergency

services.

The "Exercise IOWAVE 11" as it is known, will recreate the conditions that led to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004, which affected many Indian Ocean countries such as Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and India, resulting in more than 220,000 deaths and causing extensive damages to countries' infrastructures, economies and environment.

According to a news release issued by UNESCO Thursday, the test scenario will be based on a fictional 9.2-magnitude earthquake that leads to a massive wave that crosses the Indian Ocean in 12 hours and strikes the coast of South Africa.

As part of the exercise, coastal communities in India, Malaysia and other countries will be evacuated, and warning bulletins will be issued by the Regional Tsunami Service Providers in India, Australia, Indonesia and other warning systems in East Asia.

After the 2004 catastrophe, Indian Ocean nations decided to establish an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS) and requested that UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission establish an Intergovernmental Coordination Group to provide a governance mechanism for the new system. Since then, bulletins have been issued to 28 Indian Ocean nations by the Japan Meteorological Agency and Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre.

For the duration of the test however, full responsibility will be transferred to the new warning system and the transition will be marked by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova with a video address to the authorities of India, Australia and Indonesia.

The participating countries besides India to date include: Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Yemen.

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