

India participates in ocean-wide tsunami mock drill | Airtel News

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New Delhi:

India, along with 23 other Indian Ocean Nations today participated in a major Indian ocean-wide tsunami mock drill. During this drill, various departments of Indian coastal states along with Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Response Force evacuated thousands of people from the coastal areas Of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh Kerala and Bengal in real time as after getting a tsunami warning. The mock drill today covered the eastern coast of India while tomorrow it will cover the western coast area of the country.

As the country has still not forgotten the 26 December 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake causing a devastating tsunami in which over 230 thousand people were killed in 14 countries including in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The Ministry of Home Affairs along with various coastal states and the disaster management agencies conducted the mock drill to check the preparedness in case of a tsunami.

Speaking to India Today, Dr Srinivas Kumar Tummala, who is in charge of Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre, Hyderabad said, "In 2004, a 9.2 magnitude earthquake had triggered a massive tsunami killing 14 to 15 thousand people in India. Another tsunami had hit the country's west coast in 1945. As tsunamis are unpredictable natural calamities, we need to be prepared to minimise the casualties."

The mock drill, known as Indian Ocean Wave 16, is organized by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the UNESCO, which coordinated the setting up of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS) in the aftermath of the December 26, 2004 tsunami. India along with 23 countries of Indian Ocean namely Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor Leste, Yemen is participating in the two-day long mock drill.

What is more important this time is that 10 countries including India are conducting the drill in real time involving all of its departments are participating in this drill involving evacuation of people from the affected zones.

During the drill, two scenarios will be created in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Ocean. In the first scenario different agencies of the Indian Ocean countries will pass on information on an earthquake with a magnitude of 9.2 south of Sumatra, Indonesia, on September 7 at 0830 IST. While the next day, on September 8, agencies will simulate an earthquake with a magnitude of 9.0 in the Makran Trench, south of Iran and Pakistan at 1130 IST.

During both the scenarios, Indian Tsunami Early Warning Center will issue 15 tsunami bulletins to both national and regional stakeholders through GTS, email, fax, SMS as well as web. The agencies like NDRF Coast Guard Navy, SDRF, Civil defense are participating in this exercise evacuating the people from coast areas of eastern and western Indian coast.

"Over 40 thousand people will be evacuated during the drill from Indian ocean coast. It will provide us real time data and show our preparedness," said SSC Shenoai.

In India, IOWave16 is being coordinated by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) with support from National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the Coastal States/UTs. The drill will involve the evacuation of around 35,000 people from the coastal communities mostly in Odisha and also in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Gujarat and Karnataka.

International observers and media teams from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) are being deputed to India and Seychelles to report on the drill as well as to prepare a film for the upcoming Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR)-2016 in New Delhi (November 2-5, 2016) and 1st World Tsunami Awareness day on November 5, 2016.