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Tsunamis off coasts of Iran, Pakistan could reach Indian shores: INCOIS

With heights of several metres, they pose enormous challenges to existing tsunami warning systems

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The Indian Ocean is likely to be affected by tsunamis generated by earthquakes at two potential source regions, the Andaman-Nicobar-Sumatra Island subduction zone and the Makran Subduction Zone (MSZ), according to scientists at the Indian National Centre for Oceanic Information Services (INCOIS) here.

The MSZ off the coasts of Iran and Pakistan is poorly understood, especially the land/mud slides that can be triggered by the earthquakes. It is possible that the tsunami waves generated by a Makran source can reach the shores of India, Iran, Oman, Pakistan and nearby countries within few minutes with heights of several metres, posing enormous challenges to existing tsunami warning systems, they pointed out. It is for this reason that INCOIS is hosting a two-day meeting of experts for 'development of Probabilistic Tsunami Hazard Assessment (PTHA) for the Makran Region where about 14 delegates from six countries such as Australia, Germany, India, Iran, Oman and USA are attending, starting on Tuesday.

Participants at the international meeting on tsunami warning systems at INCOIS, Hyderabad. • ARRANGEMENT

The first ever such meeting is being held in light of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS) of IOC-UNESCO deciding to implement a multi-national project funded by UNESCAP Trust Fund to "Strengthen the tsunami early warning processes in the North West Indian Ocean (NWIO) region through regional cooperation". The project will help in better understanding of the Makran tsunami hazard and enhance preparedness to respond to a near-field tsunami threat in the region. The objective of this meeting is to agree on framework for development of a unified PTHA for the NWIO region, agree on principles of model construction, identify existing and required data sets for a community seismo-tectonic model and tsunami propagation models.

Indentification of the existing and required data sets, amplification factors, etc., are also to be used for the unified PTHA and future inundation modelling, said INCOIS scientists.