

All set for tsunami mock drill

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Scientists working at the Tsunami Early Warning Centre of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services in Hyderabad. *The Hindu*
Photo: M. Subhash

On September 9 and 10, emergency response services will be put to test

The Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC) is all geared up to participate along with 23 countries in a major two-day Indian Ocean-wide mock drill which will simulate tsunamis generated by two large undersea earthquakes on September 9 and 10 to test the emergency response services in the region.

ITEWC will participate in the drill as National Tsunami Warning Centre (NTWC) and also Regional Tsunami Advisory Service Provider (RTSP) for the Indian Ocean region, and would issue bulletins to all the 23 participating countries. Besides ITEWC, the national tsunami warning centres of Australia and Indonesia would act as RTSPs.

The mock drill, organised under the auspices of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, is aimed at testing the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS). It is expected to increase preparedness, evaluate response capabilities in each country, the efficiency of communication among different agencies and improve coordination.

The first scenario on September 9 will simulate a magnitude 9.1 earthquake south of Java, Indonesia, and begin at 0530 hours IST. The second one will simulate a magnitude 9 quake in the Makran Trench, south of Iran and Pakistan, and begins at 1130 hrs IST on September 10. On both days, the drill will run in real time for 12 hours.

During the drill, ITEWC will disseminate 15 bulletins to control rooms of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), coastal States, NDRF, the Coast Guard, the Indian Navy and critical coastal installations such as ports and power plants.

According to T. Srinivasa Kumar, in-charge of the National Tsunami Early Warning System, the mock drill would provide an opportunity to various agencies to test their preparedness and evacuate people during such an eventuality.

He said that ever since ITEWC became operational in 2007, about 37 undersea earthquakes with magnitude of above 6.5 had been recorded in the Indian Ocean. While technically, all the events could have generated tsunamis, ITEWC, through computational modelling, avoided false alarms. It issued warning to evacuate people in three islands in Andaman and Nicobar only once when a large undersea temblor of magnitude 8.7 occurred in April 2012.

He said a warning would be issued when a wave of more than two metres was expected to hit the coast within 60 minutes of the event.

Keywords: [Tsunami moc drill](#), [ITEWC](#), [Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre](#), [National Tsunami Warning Centre](#), [Regional Tsunami Advisory Service Provider](#)

