

Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC)
Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)
Ministry of Earth Sciences

Brief Note on Mega Mock Tsunami Drill scheduled on November 24, 2017

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, is capable of detecting tsunamigenic earthquakes within 10 minutes of their occurrence and issues timely tsunami advisories to disaster management officials as well as to the vulnerable communities. This state-of-the-art warning centre, operational since October 2007, has all necessary computational & communication infrastructure for the reception of real-time data from seismic and sea-level networks, tsunami modeling, as well as for generation and dissemination of tsunami bulletins for the entire Indian Ocean region.

The warning system would remain incomplete without bringing awareness to the community and preparing them well in advance to face the hazard. The end-to-end tsunami warning system begins with rapid detection of a tsunami wave and ends with a well prepared community that is capable of responding appropriately to this warning. As part of Tsunami awareness and preparedness activities, regular Tsunami mock drills, Communication Tests and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Workshops are being conducted by INCOIS, to ensure fail-safe dissemination of advisories, development or modification of SOPs and to improve the readiness of communities to tsunami warnings.

In coordination with Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), INCOIS is conducting “Multi-State Mega Mock Exercise of Tsunami for East Coast of India” on November 24, 2017. Participants in the drill include State Disaster Management Authorities of West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, NDMA and NDRF.

This drill provides an opportunity for disaster management authorities to exercise their operational lines of communication, exercise their SOPs, review their tsunami warning and emergency response procedures and to promote emergency preparedness. The drill will also include the evacuation of coastal communities in several areas for ex. Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) is preparing to evacuate around 6000 people from all 9 (nine) coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh.

The mock scenario established for the “Mega Mock Tsunami Drill” simulates an event with a 9.2 magnitude earthquake at Nicobar Islands, followed by an ocean-wide tsunami, in which a simulated wave will hit all coastal states of India with large wave heights. During the drill, that will take place between 0930 Hrs to 1330 Hrs IST on November 24, 2017, INCOIS will generate and issue 7 tsunami bulletins to its registered contacts through email, fax, SMS as well as web.

In preparation for this drill INCOIS has already conducted a training workshop and table-top exercise to enable the coastal state stakeholders to streamline their SOPs. A manual comprising specifics of conducting the tsunami drill, along with the detailed bulletins and feedback forms was also prepared and circulated to the stakeholders. Feedback from the participants after the drill is expected to identify and fix any gaps in communication channels and the SOPs of all stakeholders.

Around twenty observers from Pacific Island countries have been deputed to India and they will witness the mock drill in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.