

Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC)
ESSO - Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS),
Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India, Hyderabad

IOWave20 Exercise

India, along with several other Indian Ocean Nations, is participating in a major Indian ocean-wide tsunami exercise on 6th 13th & 20th October 2020. The Exercise, known as IOWave20, is being organized by the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS) of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), UNESCO.

The Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC), functions as one of the Tsunami Service Providers (TSP) for the IOTWMS and provides tsunami information to all the Indian Ocean rim countries. It will participate in IOWave20 exercise both in its capacity as National Tsunami Warning Centre (NTWC) as well as Tsunami Service Provider (TSP) for the Indian Ocean region.

The IOWave20 Exercise will comprise three scenarios: the first will simulate an earthquake with a magnitude 9.1 in Java Region, Indonesia on 6th October 2020 at 0830 IST, the second will simulate an earthquake with a magnitude of 9.2 in Andaman Trench of India on 13th October at 0930 hrs, and the third will simulate an earthquake with a magnitude of 9.0 in the Makran Trench off-coast of Pakistan on 20th October 1130 IST. All scenarios will be limited to 1-hour, during which time the ITEWC will issue 4 tsunami bulletins to both national and regional stakeholders through GTS, email, fax, SMS as well as on website.

Considering the present COVID-19 pandemic situation, it has been decided to limit the IOWave20 Exercise to test communication channels (COMMs test) instead of full-scale exercise. Disaster Management Organizations are encouraged to test their communications protocols and conduct a “virtual” tabletop exercise as a minimum to assess organizational SOPs, plans and policies for tsunami warning and emergency response. **There should be NO community engagement whatsoever that could interfere with physical distancing measures in place due to Covid-19.**

In India, IOWave20 is being coordinated by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) in close association with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). All the Disaster Management Organizations (DMOs) of coastal States/UTs, Navy, Coast Guard, NDRF, Critical Installations and Port & Harbors will participate in the exercise. DMOs of East coast of India and Andaman & Nicobar Islands will participate on 13th October 2020, and DMOs of West coast of India and Lakshadweep Islands will participate on 20th October 2020.

In preparation to this exercise, IOTWMS and Indian Ocean Tsunami Information Centre (IOTIC) of UNESCO organised a Webinar on “Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Tsunami Early

Warning and Emergency Response” during 28-30 September 2020. More than 150 officials from 23 Countries of Indian Ocean Region participated in webinar. From India, 46 officials of coastal States/UTs Coastal Disaster Management Organizations, Navy, Coast Guard, NDRF, Critical Installations and Port & Harbors participated in the Webinar. A manual comprising information on tsunami exercise, along with the detailed bulletins and feedback forms is also prepared and circulated to the stakeholders. Feedback from the participants after the exercise is expected to identify and fix any gaps in communication channels and the SOPs of stakeholders.