City to have Rs. 125-cr. tsunami warning system

Interim warning system functioning at INCOIS

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HYDERABAD: The likelihood of any area along the country's coast being battered by a tsunami in the event of a major undersea earthquake will be foretold once the Rs.125-crore Indian Tsunami Early Warning System becomes fully operational here by next September.

An interim early warning system is already functioning at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) here since March this year.

Based on the data received at the centre, scientists had discounted well in advance the possibility of a tsunami hitting the coast after a major earthquake had occurred in South Java a few months ago.

INCOIS Director Sailesh Naik told *The Hindu* that four imported bottom pressure recorders (BPRs) along with as many buoys would be installed by this month-end in the south Bay of Bengal. Another two would be placed before December.

The BPRs to be placed on the seabed would constantly monitor water level changes and transmit the data to a buoy, which in turn, would send it across to the centre via satellite.

The BPRs were tested by the Chennai-based National Institute of Ocean Technology.

Data within 15 seconds

"If the water level crosses a certain threshold value, we will receive data within 15 seconds," said another INCOIS official. Normally BPRs would send information every 15 minutes.

Apart from the six BPRs, four more would be installed as part of the total system in the coming months.

V-Sat facility

Mr. Naik said that a V-Sat facility would be set up at INCOIS to receive real time data from tide gauges in more than a dozen locations in the Indian Ocean.

As part of the complete system, 17 seismic sensors would be placed in as many places in the country, including Hyderabad and Andaman.

The Wadia Institute of Mines and Geology of the Department of Science and Technology had called for global tenders for purchasing broadband seismometers and other equipment needed for setting up the seismic network.

Prediction of tsunamis through modelling is another important feature of the full-fledged system.

The forecast is to be made depending on the location of the earthquake and the changes in water levels.