

Maritime Intelligence Section

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Tsunami test across Indian Ocean beginning 9 September

Commencing on the 9th September, 24 countries from Australia to South Africa will take part in a Un-backed tsunami simulation exercise, lasting a week to test their capacity to forecast and tackle such disasters.

The exercise, organised by UNESCO, will simulate a 9.1-magnitude earthquake south of the Indonesian island of Java beginning 9 September.

A second 9.0-magnitude quake will be simulated at the Makran Trench south of Iran and Pakistan.

"Both scenarios will simulate tsunami waves travelling across the Indian Ocean," UNESCO said in a statement.

The test is designed to examine an Indian Ocean tsunami warning system put in place after the 24 December 2004 disaster which killed over 230,000 people, displaced more than 1 million people, and left a massive trail of destruction along the coasts of the affected countries.

It will check the efficiency of communication flows between the 24 countries, general readiness and the efficiency of emergency procedures.

Many of the countries involved will also stage evacuation exercises for coastal populations. Warning notices, explaining the exercise, have been issued at resorts to ensure visitors do not panic.

An evaluation will be conducted after the exercise to identify gaps and weaknesses in the system.

The participating countries are Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, East Timor, the French overseas department of La Reunion, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand and Yemen.

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