

Taiwan to boost quake warning system

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This file photo shows Wu Chang Gong temple in Taiwan which was partially levelled by a powerful earthquake ten years ago. Taiwan plans to build its first undersea seismic station, designed to improve the island's early warning system and save valuable seconds when earthquakes strike, according to officials.

Taiwan plans to build its first undersea seismic station, designed to improve the island's early warning system and save valuable seconds when earthquakes strike, officials said.

The station, which is due to come into service in 2011, would help reduce the margin of error when monitoring undersea quakes and improve on the island's existing system of land-based seismic stations.

The new facility would provide a roughly 10 second warning ahead of

earthquakes and a 10 minute alert ahead of the impact of a tsunami, according to Kuo Kai-wen, the head of Taiwan's [Seismology](#) Centre.

"The few seconds extra will give people precious time to seek shelter and flee coastal areas in the case of killer quakes," he told AFP.

NEC of Japan won the 423 million [Taiwan](#) dollar (13 million US) contract to build the station, which will be situated some 45 kilometres off the northeastern coast, an area frequently hit by earthquakes, he said.

Taiwan's three-phase [earthquake early warning system](#) has slashed the time of quake detection from up to three minutes in 1992 to around 35 seconds today.

The island, which lies near the junction of two tectonic plates, is regularly shaken by earthquakes. A 7.6-magnitude quake killed about 2,400 people in September 1999.

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