

6.5 magnitude earthquake claims 9 lives in Japan, more aftershocks expected

15/04/2016 22:29 by admin

Tokyo: At least nine people were killed and hundreds injured after 6.5-magnitude earthquake struck Japan late on Thursday. The Japan Meteorological Agency, however, did not issue a tsunami warning but said that dozens of smaller aftershocks may be followed.

The earthquake struck at 9.26 pm and measured seven on Japan's seismic scale, the highest possible reading for an earthquake, marking the first time a temblor in Japan hit the peak on the scale since the devastating quake in Tohoku in 2011.

The town of Mashiki, in Kumamoto prefecture, located in southern Kyushu, was where the quake hit hardest and was logged at an intensity of 7. The quake, which was followed by 103 aftershocks according to the weather agency as of early Friday morning some measuring in the upper six range on Japan's scale, left nine people dead. Three of the deceased were men and the four were women.

As many as 765 people were injured in the quake and the aftershocks, officials said, as of 5 am, 53 of whom are suffering with severe injuries. Some 44,400 people were forced to evacuate their homes and take shelter in 500 temporary sites in the prefecture, officials also said.

The majority of Japan's nuclear power plants remain offline for regular safety inspections and in the wake of the earthquake-triggered tsunami in March 2011, that pummeled the Daiichi nuclear facility in Fukushima Prefecture, in Japan's northeast, leading to the worst commercial nuclear crisis in history.

Japan's National Police Agency has deployed 1,084 officers from 19 local police departments to the disaster-hit regions.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a press briefing that the government will do everything in its power to support the victims of the quake and ensure emergency provisions such as food, water and medical assistance are on hand to those who need it.

- AP