

Japan's strong earthquake triggers Tsunami, Fukushima nuclear plant ops affected

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Tokyo: A 6.9 magnitude earthquake off Japan's Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures has sparked tsunami waves of more than 1m.

Fukushima plant

The tsunami struck at 6:38 am (local time), a TEPCO official told a televised news conference after a magnitude 6.9 earthquake hit the region earlier.

A TEPCO spokesman told AFP that there were no reports of any problems as a result of the wave.

A tsunami of up to 1.4 metres had been observed around Sendai, about 70km north of Fukushima, with smaller waves hitting ports elsewhere along the coast, public broadcaster NHK said

Nearly four hours after the earthquake struck, Japan lifted the tsunami warning for its northeastern coast.

Television footage showed ships moving out to sea from harbours as tsunami warning signals wailed, after warnings of waves of up to 3 metres were issued.

“We saw high waves but nothing that went over the tidal barriers,” a man in the city of Iwaki told NTV television network.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii said the tsunami threat had now largely passed.

“Sea level fluctuations may continue along some coasts of Japan over the next few hours,” it said.

A strong earthquake with a magnitude of 6.9 magnitude struck northeastern Japan early on Tuesday prompting the country’s meteorological department to issue a tsunami warning for the region’s coast including Fukushima prefecture.

A some three metre tsunami could hit the northeastern coast, the agency said, including Fukushima – home to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, site of one of the world’s worst nuclear disasters.

The US Geological Agency said the quake, at a shallow depth of 11.3 kilometres, struck shortly before 6:00 am (local time) in the Pacific off Fukushima.

Three-metre tsunami warning was issued and so far no major damage or injuries were reported.

Japanese authorities urged residents of those northeast coastal areas to leave immediately for higher ground and to not return until warnings had been lifted. Tsunami waves of 1-3 meters (3-10 feet) are possible, according to the US Geological Survey, which said the quake struck 37 kilometers (23 miles) east-southeast of Namie at a depth of 11.4 kilometers (7 miles).

The nation’s meteorological agency had earlier estimated the quake’s magnitude at 7.3.

The temblor was centred in offshore of northeastern Fukushima prefecture which borders the Pacific Ocean and is to

the northeast of the nation's capital city of Tokyo.

Japan sits at the junction of four tectonic plates and experiences a number of relatively violent quakes every year.

A massive undersea quake that hit in March 2011 sent a tsunami barreling into Japan's northeast coast, leaving more than 18,000 people dead or missing, and sending three reactors into meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear plant.

In April, two strong earthquakes hit southern Japan's Kumamoto prefecture followed by more than 1,700 aftershocks, leaving at least 50 dead and causing widespread damage.

- AP inputs