Beat: Miscellaneous

Strong quake off Japan injures 3, triggers small tsunami

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USPA News - A strong earthquake struck off northeastern Japan on early Saturday morning, injuring three people and triggering a small tsunami that caused no damage, Japanese officials said. Hundreds of people were evacuated after a tsunami advisory was issued.

The 6.8-magnitude earthquake at 4:22 a.m. local time (1922 GMT Friday) was centered about 129 kilometers (80 miles) east-southeast of Namie, a coastal town in Fukushima Prefecture that was devastated by the 2011 earthquake-tsunami disaster and the resulting nuclear crisis. Saturday`s earthquake struck at a depth of just 10 kilometers (6.2 miles). An alert issued by Japan`s Earthquake Early Warning (EEW) system gave residents in northeastern Japan several moments to seek shelter before the tremor could be felt. The early morning earthquake was widely observed in the region, waking up many residents and briefly causing fears of a tsunami along the coast. Japanese broadcaster NHK said three people fell during the earthquake and were injured, but no serious damage was reported. Officials at Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) said there were no reports of irregularities at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima Prefecture. After the earthquake, tsunami advisories were immediately issued by the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) for Iwate Prefecture, Miyagi Prefecture, and Fukushima Prefecture, causing hundreds of people to evacuate. A tsunami advisory is the least serious out of three possible level of alerts, the other two being a tsunami warning and a major tsunami warning. The Japanese government said nearly 700 people living along the coast decided to evacuate after the earthquake struck, including 550 people in Iwate Prefecture, 60 people in Miyagi Prefecture, and 60 people in Fukushima Prefecture. Those who evacuated returned home several hours later after the tsunami advisories were lifted. The Japan Meteorological Agency said it observed only small tsunami activity after Saturday`s earthquake, the highest being a rise of 20 centimeters (7.9 inches) near the city of "funato in Iwate Prefecture. No damage was reported. Sea level changes were also observed near Kamaishi, Kuji-ko, Ishinomaki-shi Ayukawa, Iwaki-shi Onahama, and Soma. The region affected by Saturday`s tremor is still recovering from an enormous 9.0-magnitude earthquake that struck off the coast of northeastern Japan in March 2011, generating a devastating tsunami that wiped out entire communities and killed at least 15,887 people. A building housing the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant exploded and three of its nuclear reactors suffered a meltdown, triggering the world`s worst nuclear accident since the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

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