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# High-rise residents shaken

## People evacuate from buildings after tremors hit parts of peninsula

**KUALA LUMPUR:** People living in high-rise buildings fled their units as they felt the tremors from the massive 8.6-strong earthquake off the western coast of Sumatra.

A Fire and Rescue Department spokesman said they received numerous calls from the public.

"About 4pm, we were told that there were tremors at a condominium in Cheras, at the Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital in Pahang, the government quarters in Cameron Highlands and Precinct 16 in Putrajaya," he said yesterday.

He said there were no incidents of people being trapped in buildings.

Some 400 students at the Mahsa University College at Jalan Elmu here rushed out of their rooms after feeling the building shake.

Student N.M. Thamayanthi, 25, said she was having a nap and was woken up when she felt her bed shaking.

"At first, I thought it was just the construction work near our building but I panicked when I saw the furniture moving," she said.

In **JOHOR**, state Fire and Rescue Department director Datuk Ab Ghani Daud said the department received calls about the tremors especially at high-rise buildings in Johor Baru and Batu Pahat.

He said the department's first call was at



about 5pm from several locations in the city and Batu Pahat but there was no damage reported.

"However, I have ordered my men to be on stand-by for any aftershocks that might cause damage to buildings," he said.

Tremors were also felt in Ipoh, Beruas and Taiping.

Gerakan deputy president Datuk Chang Ko Youn said he felt the tremors for a few minutes while attending a political *ceramah* in Pengkalan Baru in Beruas at 4.43pm.

In **PENANG**, shopping malls closed early after being hit by the tremors.

The Sunway Carnival Mall in Seberang Jaya was closed at 7pm, the 1st Avenue Mall had its lights off and main doors closed at about 8pm, while Gurney Plaza shut off its lights and doors at 7.45pm.

Shops at Straits Quay also closed early while hotels along Batu Feringghi went on the alert after the tsunami warning was issued.

Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) Penang chairman Mary Ann Harris said the

**Safety first:** A Community Policing member helping clear Gurney Drive of people in George Town while patients at the Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital in Kuantan are being wheeled out of their wards as a precaution yesterday.

hotel guests were advised to stay off the beaches.

A Penang Bridge Sdn Bhd spokesman said the bridge remained open yesterday.

Earlier, people in high rises and shopping malls scurried out of the buildings.

Residents at Iramā Villa Apartments were shocked to find that cracks had apparently appeared in their building in Lintang P. Ramlee following the tremors.

Some 500 residents were asked to vacate the apartment block after the residents association committee members alerted the Fire and Rescue Department about the cracks.

Its chairman Zefree Zainol said a resident called the committee members at about 6.45pm when he found a crack which stretched about one metre at the third floor parking lot.



They were allowed to go back to their units after an inspection by firemen.

In **KEDAH**, about 1,000 people in five villages in Kota Kuala Muda were ordered to evacuate their houses at 5.30pm following the issuance

of the tsunami alert.

The villages – Kampung Masjid, Kampung Padang Salim, Kampung Keda Tepi Sungai, Kampung Tepi Sungai and Kampung Kepala Jalan – were badly hit in the 2004 tsunami.

## Quake strikes Indonesia

A huge earthquake and strong aftershocks struck off Indonesia, triggering an Indian Ocean-wide tsunami alert that was later called off.



Magnitude 8.6 quake 481km southwest of Banda Aceh. An aftershock measuring 8.2 hit later.

**1** December 2004: Magnitude 9.3 quake triggers massive tsunami around Indian Ocean, killing 230,000

**2** March 2005, Nias: 8.6 quake kills up to 1,000

**3** September 2007: Magnitude 8.4 undersea quake off Bengkulu, followed by 7.8 and 7.1 quakes south-east of Padang

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# Tsunami alert lifted by 8.36pm

**PETALING JAYA:** The tsunami alert for coastal regions in Malaysia was lifted some three hours after an earthquake struck off Aceh on the west coast of northern Sumatra.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre, which had put 28 countries, including Malaysia, along the Indian Ocean on alert after the first quake, removed the warning at 7.51pm.

As at 8.36pm, the alert for all the countries had been lifted.

Earlier, Malaysia had been told to expect tsunami waves in George Town at about 9pm, followed by Port Dickson shortly before 2am.

Immediately after the warning, many took to Facebook and Twitter to warn the public.

Radio DJ Jin Lim, who tweets at @JinnyBoy, wrote: "Please stay away from the coastal areas of Penang, Perlis, Kedah, Langkawi and Perak. A Tsunami Warning has been issued by the Met Dept."

Miszmunna, who tweets at @

nmua21, wrote, "Keep praying for everyone who is under tsunami alert. Hopefully, everyone is safe."

Meteorological Department director-general Datuk Dr Yap Kok Seng said it issued tsunami alerts to Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak.

However, he said that as at 6.05pm yesterday, the tsunami in Sabang, Indonesia, only measured 0.3m, adding that this was not high.

"The department is in touch with its Indonesian counterpart for updates," he said.

In **PUTRAJAYA**, the National Security Council ordered a temporary halt in ferry services in Langkawi, Kuala Perlis and Kuala Kedah and warned the public to stay away from beaches along the west coast.

Council secretary Datuk Thajudeen Abdul Wahab said all fishing boats in these areas were instructed to return, adding that the police were roped in to clear the beaches.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri

Kong Cho Ha said the Maritime Department was on "continual alert and observation".

The Civil Aviation Department was also informed by authorities in Bangkok that the airport in Phuket was closed with the possibility of some flights to Phuket being diverted to KL International Airport.

Meanwhile, Malaysian students in Aceh and Padang have been reported to be safe with education attache and first secretary (Education) at the Malaysian Embassy in Jakarta, Ludinada Misnun saying that the students had been moved to higher ground as a precaution.

The embassy and the Malaysian Consulate-General in Medan has set up an operations room to receive calls on the matter.

The operations room's telephone number in Jakarta is +6221-52904081 or +6221-5224947 ext. 3023 while in Medan it is +6261-4531342 or +6261-4536271.