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Tsunami: no evacuation orders issued in State

CHENNAI A general tsunami alert was issued following the earthquake in Sumatra, Indonesia, on Wednesday for all countries in the Indian Ocean. However, the Tamil Nadu Government did not take steps to evacuate coastal villages after being advised that a tsunami was unlikely to occur.

A Government representative said no evacuation orders were given after the State received the intelligence that pressure points embedded in the Indian Ocean between Indonesia and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands had shown no changes. But the administrative set-up in coastal districts was on full alert.

In Chennai, the police used the public address system to

warn residents close to the seashore about the possibility of a tsunami occurring after the high intensity quake in Sumatra, as did district administration officials in Cuddalore.

Cuddalore officials used the public address systems set up during the rehabilitation efforts taken in December 2004. Fishermen were warned against venturing into sea, though information centres set up in eight villages registered no increase in the height of the waves, water current and wind speed.

In Ramanathapuram, yet another coastal district, tourists were warned to stay away from the seashore. There were reports of people in a section of the villages, including Valinokkam and Erwadi being moved to safer places.