

MALAYSIA'S RESPONSE TO THE DECEMBER 2004 TSUNAMI

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On the 26th December 2004

At 0059 GMT, a massive earthquake registering 9.0 on the Richter scale struck off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.

Followed up by a series of more than 67 aftershocks.

The earthquake triggered a series of Tsunami waves of more than 500 km/hr.



Coastal areas affected:

Bangladesh

India

Indonesia

Kenya

Malaysia

Maldives

Mauritius

Myanmar

Reunion


Seychelles

Somalia


Sri Lanka

Tanzania

Thailand



On the 26th December 2004, at about 12.45 pm, three hours after a magnitude 9 earthquake shook Sumatra, the first waves of a Tsunami swept into Malaysian waters through the North entrance of the Straits of Malacca.



The Tsunami event of December 2004 challenged the disaster response mechanism of the Malaysian Government and added a new word to the vocabulary of the Malaysian Public.

The Tsunami became a new threat to be confronted with.




Worst natural disasters in modern times.


Over 200,000 people died.

> 1.5 million people lost their homes and livelihoods.

Losses estimated more than US\$7 billion.



The Tsunami affected only the states in the northern half of the Straits of Malacca namely Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak.



Tidal disturbances in the form of multiple rising and falling of the tide were observed.

There was consistency in most observations that it was preceded by a retreat of the tide well below lowest tide levels.



Relative to the devastation in Bandar Aceh, Sumatra, the tsunami impact on Malaysia was minimal.


Majority of damage were village houses, light traffic bridges, fishing boats and equipment.

In all 68 death were officially recorded in Malaysia.




The coastal bunds and revetments that protected the mostly agricultural hinterland were severely tested but not seriously damaged.

Some river banks collapsed due to the sudden drawdown of water during the return flow.



It was also observed that the damage was less where the coastal mangroves were dense.



Overall findings point to the fact that it was the **unknown danger that was the actual cause of deaths.**

Even as the killer waves were approaching, victims were seen standing and even walking towards the sea out of curiosity at a sight and sound they have never before seen or heard.



Malaysian rescue efforts were coordinated by the National Security Division of the Prime Minister's Department.

Ground activity involved the entire spectrum of enforcement, rescue and relief agencies.



Soon after tsunami, two factors became apparent to the government:

To respond in time, forward warning was needed.

Areas with thick coastal vegetation were less damaged than those without it.



Within a month after the disaster, the government announced the formation of two multi-agency task forces:

1- National Committee for the setting up of a Tsunami Early Warning System.

2- National Special Task Force for Rehabilitation of coastal forests.



Countermeasures:

Coastal Defence Structures

Coastal Planning

**Disaster Response
Mechanism**

Inculcate Disaster Culture

The USGS (United States Geological Survey)

record of the earthquake

Magnitude 9.0 - OFF THE WEST COAST OF NORTHERN SUMATRA 2004 December 26 00:58:49 UTC

Preliminary Earthquake Report

U.S. Geological Survey, National Earthquake Information Center
[World Data Center](#) for Seismology, Denver

A great earthquake occurred at 00:58:49 (UTC) on Sunday, December 26, 2004. The magnitude 9.0 event has been located OFF THE WEST COAST OF NORTHERN SUMATRA. (This event has been reviewed by a seismologist.)

Magnitude 9.0

Date-Time Sunday, December 26, 2004 at 00:58:49 (UTC)
= Coordinated Universal Time
Sunday, December 26, 2004 at 7:58:49 AM
= local time at epicenter
[Time of Earthquake in other Time Zones](#)

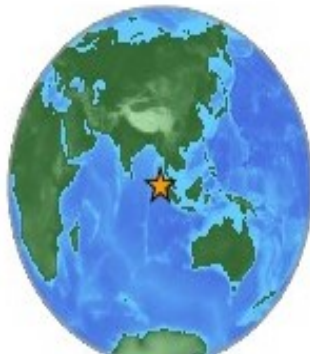
Location 3.244°N, 95.825°E

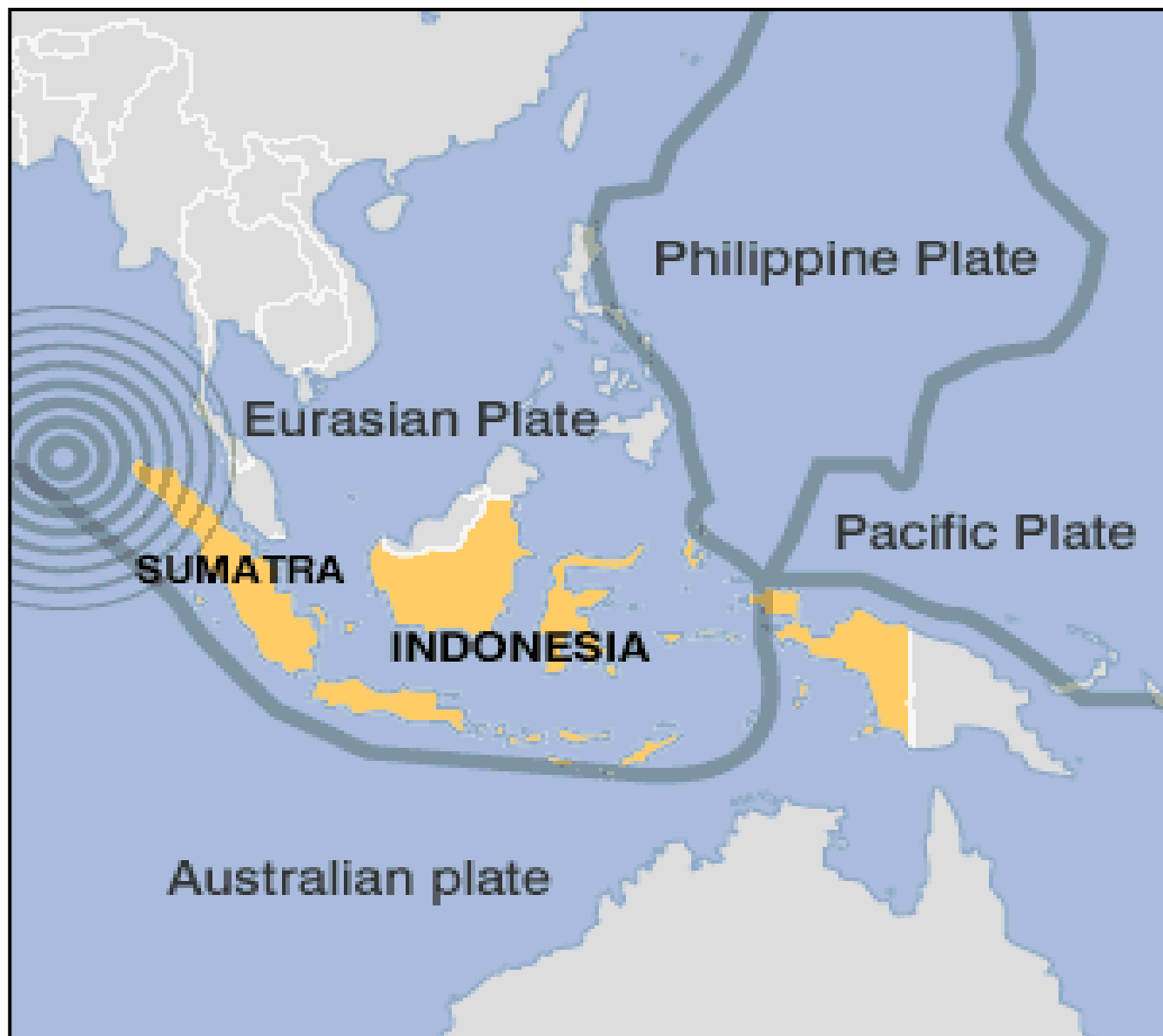
Depth 10 km (6.2 miles) set by location program

Region OFF THE WEST COAST OF NORTHERN SUMATRA

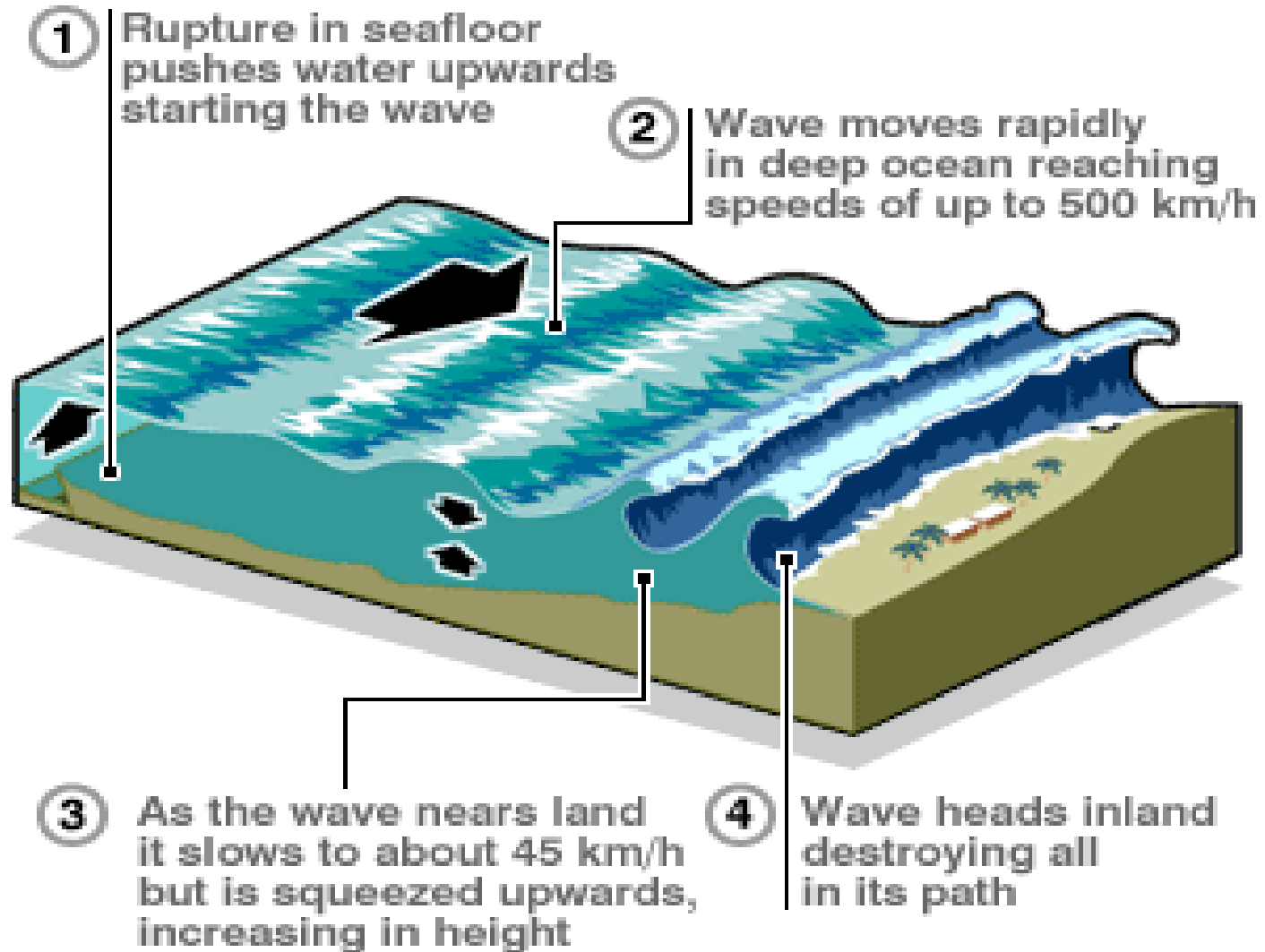
Distances

255 km (160 miles) SSE of Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia
315 km (195 miles) W of Medan, Sumatra, Indonesia
1260 km (790 miles) SSW of BANGKOK, Thailand
1590 km (990 miles) NW of JAKARTA, Java, Indonesia



















Low lying coastal areas were left obliterated and flooded as here in Aceh province in Sumatra, Indonesia

Current reports indicate that the north and west coasts of Sumatra have experienced the worst destruction





Whole villages were flattened as here in Sri Lanka



Fishing boats, which provide essential food supplies for local people here in India, have been washed ashore



Scenes which were repeated across the Indian Ocean

Sri Lanka



Phuket,
Thailand



Male in the
Maldives

Low lying areas have
been left flooded with
seawater which quickly
becomes contaminated
with sewage and
decomposing bodies



Banda Aceh in
Sumatra, Indonesia





Millions of people have been left homeless



Cuddalore, south of Madras, India

Penang, Malaysia



“Paradise Lost”





Now Hell on Earth

Phi Phi Island, Thailand



Beach debris at
Phuket, Thailand





All that remains of luxury
holiday accommodation on Phi
Phi Island, Thailand



The human toll is huge – on 30.12.04 it stands at 125,000



Scenes of grief in India,
Malaysia and Indonesia





Many children – foreign and local – have lost parents





In all affected areas survivors are hungry as food supplies run out





The evacuation of foreign tourists from the beach resorts begins

Many are severely traumatised





German relief workers prepare to depart for Sri Lanka



French relief workers from the Medecins Sans Frontieres organisation



Clean, bottled water supplies are assembled in Penang, Malaysia




In some areas relief supplies are piling up



Disruption of communications means that emergency supplies cannot be distributed efficiently



Coffins await transport to remote areas near
Phuket in Thailand



Co-ordination of relief efforts from throughout the world is proving to be a major challenge.

Four days after the tsunami many of the worst affected areas cannot be reached.



Associated Press on Thailand


Thailand, popular with foreign tourists, has built warning towers on beaches across its southern coast to blare sirens and broadcast evacuation warnings in several languages if regional agencies issue warnings.



Associated Press on Malaysia


Malaysia has positioned two buoys off its shores to give at least an hour's warning to coastal communities, and is capable of transmitting tsunami alerts to the public by TV, radio and mobile phone text messages, officials said.





“This is a human tragedy on a huge scale – for once caused by the action of Nature rather than Man”

William Rees Mogg 27.12.04



The tsunami has demonstrated
that Nature, and not Mankind, is
the real master.”

William Rees-Mogg 27.12.04