

Japan lifts tsunami alerts nationwide

(03/01/2010)

Tokyo, PAB-Online

Japan on Monday lifted all tsunami alerts nationwide, a day after authorities ordered large-scale evacuations as waves triggered by Chile's massive earthquake hit its Pacific coast.

"We lifted all alerts as of 10:15am (0115 GMT)," said Yoshiro Ota at the Meteorological Agency's earthquake and tsunami division.

On Sunday Japan had ordered the evacuations of more than 320,000 people as waves up to 1.20 metres high hit the archipelago's long Pacific coastline and flooded several port areas.

Seawater inundated buildings and left cars stranded in eastern harbours on the main island of Honshu and on far-northern Hokkaido, while white-crested waves raced from the ocean up coastal rivers.

Japan for the first time in more than 15 years issued a "major tsunami alert", a warning of three-metre waves, but downgraded it by nightfall. (AFP/CNA/IP)