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Quake in Indonesia causes panic in Vijayawada

Special Correspondent

Vijayawada is the only city in State coming under Earthquake Damage Risk Zone

The massive earthquake in Indonesia cause panic to the citizens of Vijayawada on Wednesday, apparently because it is the only city in Andhra Pradesh which falls within the Earthquake Risk Zone.

The Earthquake Zoning Map in India has divided the country into four zones – zones II, III, IV and V. Zone V is referred to the Very High Damage Risk Zone. This is followed by IV which is referred to as the High Damage Risk Zone, zone III is referred to as the Moderate Damage Risk Zone and II is referred to as the Low Damage Risk Zone. Vijayawada has been included in Zone III of the Earthquake Zoning Map.

Vijayawada is the only city in the State that is covered under the Government of India -UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme because it falls in Earthquake Risk Zone and has a population of more than five lakhs. The government has identified 38 cities that fall within these criteria. Vijayawada falls in Zone III along with cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune and Coimbatore.

While Delhi, the national capital is in Zone IV, Guwahati and Srinagar are State capitals that are listed in Zone V.

Likely occurrences

Experts of the Earthquake Engineering Research Centre, IIT, Hyderabad, have said that the city is likely to be hit by one or more earthquakes a year, taking into consideration the “irregularities” in the geology and “imbalances” in environment discovered by scientists in relation to the city.

Rocks of the hills and the alluvial soils brought by the river form perfect “liquefaction-prone” areas, and these areas are typically underlain by non-cohesive, low density soils, which easily lose substantial strength in association with water, during earthquakes, they said.

Seismic hazard analysis

The Earthquake Study Centre research assistant Manne Akhila and assistant professor D. Neelima Satyam, in a seismic hazard analysis, listed 26 faults and lineaments within a radius of 300 km.

Site characterisation

The experts underlined the need for carrying out detailed site characterisation using geological, geophysical and geotechnical data and also for making “ground response studies”.

The building activity in the liquefaction zones needed to be regulated as per norms.

The studies would be required by government organisations and builders to make earthquake resistant constructions.