

Magnitude-6.8 earthquake hits near India-Myanmar-Bangladesh border

Updated Mon at 8:59pm



PHOTO: The earthquake caused damage to a six-storey building in Imphal. (Instagram: Deepak Shigajurumayum)

A powerful magnitude-6.8 earthquake has struck South Asia, killing at least nine people and injuring nearly 200, with efforts to rescue those trapped in rubble hampered by severed power supplies and telecommunication links.

MAP: India

The US Geological Survey (USGS) said the tremor hit at 4:35am (local time), 29 kilometres west of the Indian city of Imphal, the capital of Manipur state which borders Myanmar and Bangladesh.

It said the quake was 55 kilometres deep and was initially reported to have struck inside Myanmar as a magnitude-6.8 quake.

The quake struck while many residents were asleep, and roofs and staircases of some buildings collapsed in the city of about 270,000 people.

"It was like being tossed around in a frying pan," said Joy Thanglian. "Then we ran outside."

Police and hospitals in Imphal said the toll had reached six dead, with 100 people injured, 33 of them seriously.

Rescue workers battled to find construction workers believed to have been buried beneath the rubble of a building under construction. They were unsure how many might be trapped.

Meanwhile, media in Bangladesh reported three people died of heart attacks, with police saying at least 90 were injured.

Police in Dhaka said 40 people were being treated at a major hospital in the Bangladeshi capital, including one university student who jumped from a fourth-floor balcony and was in a critical condition.

Residents near the epicentre said people fled their homes and power was down across Imphal.

Several buildings had been damaged, including the hospital, police said.

Photographs of the damage done to Ema Keithel, the main market in Imphal, showed concrete sheared from the wire frames of large pillars.

"It was the biggest earthquake we've felt in Imphal," disaster response worker Kanarjit Kangujam said.

People in Bangladesh and Nepal ran from their homes, and the quake was also felt as far away as the Myanmar capital Yangon, about 1,176 kms to the south, residents said.

The tremors were also felt as far away as India's Kolkata, about 600 kilometres away in the Indian state of West Bengal, where buildings shook.

An official at Myanmar's Meteorological Department in Naypyidaw said there were no reports of damage or casualties on the Myanmar side of the border.

Key points:

- Tremor hit 29 kilometres west of Imphal and was 55 kilometres deep, said USGS
- Reports six people have died in India's Imphal, three of heart attacks in Bangladesh
- About a 200 people were injured and several buildings damaged, including the hospital, police said



Quake sparks regional panic

There were similar scenes of people fleeing buildings in the northeast Indian city of Guwahati, the main commercial city of the mineral-rich state of Assam, where an AFP correspondent said residents were "in a state of shock" after being woken by the shaking.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that he had spoken to local authorities in Assam about the impact of the quake.

In its initial assessment, USGS said "some casualties and damage are possible and the impact should be relatively localised".

It said buildings in the area were largely "highly vulnerable to earthquake shaking".

USGS issued a yellow alert for casualties and damage, with a 35 per cent likelihood of between one and 10 deaths from the tremor.

India's seven north-eastern states, joined to the rest of the country by a narrow sliver of land, are located in an area of frequent seismic activity.

The border region is remote and sparsely populated on the Myanmar side.

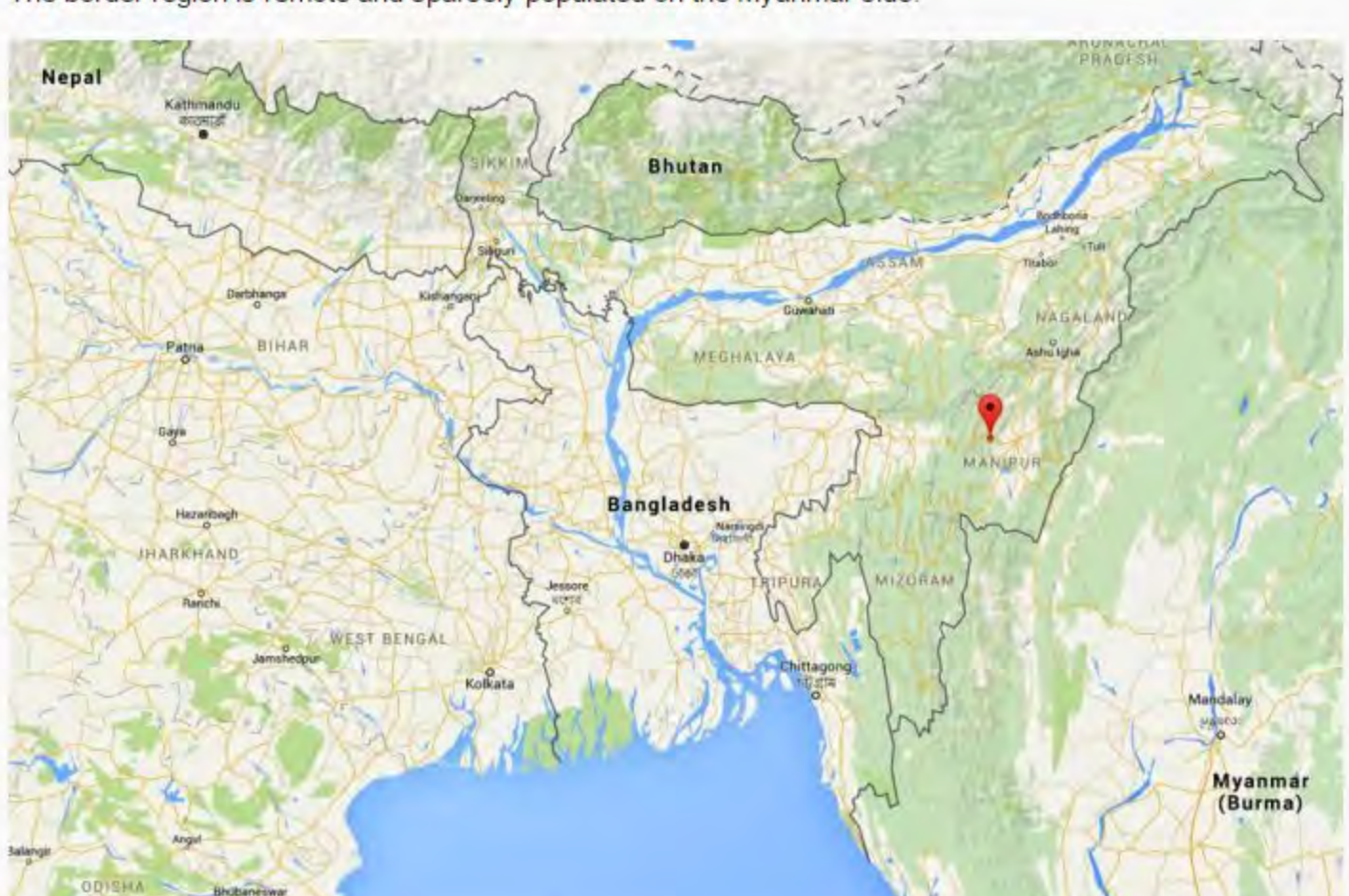


PHOTO: The earthquake struck near the borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh. (Google)

AFP/Reuters

From other news sites:

- **BBC:** Earthquake hits India's Manipur state
- **Yahoo!7 News:** Strong 6.8 quake hits near India-Myanmar border: USGS
- **India Today:** 6.8 magnitude earthquake strikes Myanmar-India Border Region
- **USA Today:** Major earthquake hits northeast India
- **NBC News:** 6.8-Magnitude Earthquake Recorded Near India-Myanmar Border

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First posted Mon at 5:45am

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