

Sikkim Quake

Powerful tremor rock western Bhutan

Full extent of damage not known due to a partial collapse of the communication system

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A wave of panic gripped people across the country when tremors from an earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale hit Bhutan last evening around 6.40pm.

They lasted for less than a minute and was felt more in western Bhutan. It sent people pouring outdoors and kept them out for hours in fear of aftershocks. According to reports, it was milder in the east.

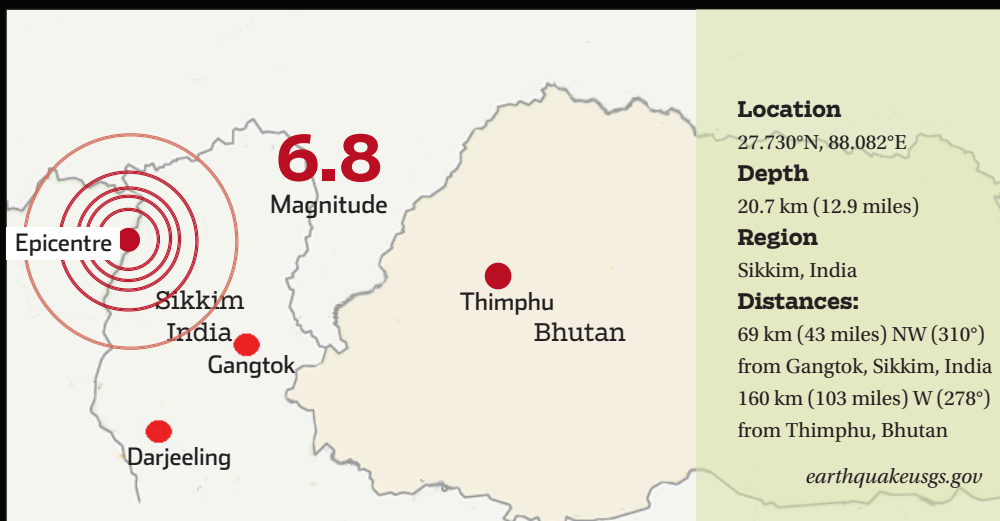
The quake's epicentre was 64km from Gangtok, Sikkim, India, the tremors of which were also felt 160km away in Thimphu. It's reported that at least 15 people are feared dead and 100 injured.

While no casualties have been reported so far in Bhutan, cracks to buildings were reported in some parts of the country.

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A portion of the Paro Ta Dzong wall come apart (more photos on Pg. 9)



His Majesty commands support to earthquake victims

Following the earthquake that shook the country yesterday evening, His Majesty the King has commanded all dzongdags, thompons, local government officials and the Royal Bhutan Army to assist any citizens and communities that may have been affected by the quake.