Beat: Miscellaneous

Strong quake destroys dozens of houses on Indonesia's Java island

-, 25.01.2014, 23:27 Time

USPA News - A strong earthquake struck off Indonesia`s most-populated island on early Saturday afternoon, destroying dozens of houses and sending terrified residents running from their homes, officials said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The 6.5-magnitude earthquake at 12:14 p.m. local time (0514 GMT) was centered about 37.7 kilometers (23.4 miles) southeast of Cilacap, a town in the southwestern part of Central Java province. It struck about 48 kilometers (29.8 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to Indonesia`s seismological agency (BMKG). "In Purworejo district, the earthquake was felt very strongly for about 30 seconds," said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, a spokesman for Indonesia`s National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB). "Houses collapsed and others were damaged in Krandengan village. Residents fled out of their houses and offices." Sutopo said there were no immediate reports of casualties, but dozens of houses had been reported destroyed or damaged by Saturday evening, and damage assessments were still ongoing. He said 17 houses had collapsed in Banyumas Regency, 2 houses were heavily damaged in Purworejo Regency, and a mosque and several houses were damaged in Kebumen Regency. Serious damage was also reported in Cilacap Regency, where at least three houses sustained heavy damage and 13 houses suffered minor damage. Two houses were also damaged in Magelang Regency, the spokesman said, adding that more information was expected on Sunday. The United States Geological Survey (USGS), which put the magnitude of Saturday`s quake at 6.1 on the moment magnitude scale, estimated that 7.8 million people on the coast near the epicenter may have felt `moderate` tremors. Computer models showed that 109 million others may have felt very weak to light shaking. Indonesia is on the so-called `Pacific Ring of Fire`, an arc of fault lines circling the Pacific Basin that is prone to frequent and large earthquakes. In December 2004, a magnitude-9.1 tremor, one of the most powerful earthquakes ever recorded, struck off the west coast of Sumatra, unleashing a massive tsunami that struck scores of countries in the region and killed at least 227,898 people. Most recently, in July 2013, at least 35 people were killed and more than 270 others were injured when a strong 6.2-magnitude earthquake struck the province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra. The tremors destroyed more than 1,900 homes in the region and damaged nearly 2,400 others.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1826/strong-quake-destroys-dozens-of-houses-on-indonesiaund39s-java-island.html

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619