Beat: News

Strong earthquake strikes off Guam, causing power outages

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USPA News - A strong earthquake struck the Pacific Ocean near the U.S. territory of Guam on Wednesday afternoon, causing power outages and minor damage but no casualties, authorities said. It was the strongest earthquake to hit the region in more than four years.

The 6.7-magnitude earthquake at 4:14 p.m. local time (0614 GMT) on Wednesday was centered in the ocean about 28 miles (45 kilometers) northwest of Piti, a village located on Guam`s western shore. It struck about 84.9 miles (136.7 kilometers) deep, making it a relatively deep earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The shaking caused minor damage - such as broken glass and a downed transformer - in various parts of the island, but there were no reports of serious damage. Power outages in southeastern villages were resolved in most areas within about two hours, according to the government`s Joint Information Center. "Emergency responders and dispatchers report no injuries related to the earthquake. There are no reports of major damage at this time from the Emergency Operations Center," the center said in a news release. "By all accounts, Guam was not affected in a major way by this strong earthquake." Guam Governor Eddie Baza Calvo dismissed rumors of school closures due to the earthquake, saying a fake notice was being circulated on social media. "At the very least, this hoax is irresponsible and reprehensible, if not illegal," he said. "We are alerting authorities to this forgery and this use of an official government entity to color this fake notice with any authority or credibility." Authorities briefly advised residents to avoid beaches, but no tsunami watches or warnings were issued following the earthquake, which was initially measured at a preliminary magnitude of 7.1. "A destructive tsunami was not generated because this earthquake is located too deep inside the Earth," the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said in a bulletin. Wednesday`s earthquake was the strongest earthquake to hit the area near Guam in more than four years, following a 6.9-magnitude earthquake which struck the region in August 2010, causing no casualties. A 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck near Guam in August 1993 injured 48 people and caused extensive damage.

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