Beat: Local

Two strong earthquakes strike Russia;s Kuril Islands, no casualties

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USPA News - Two strong earthquakes struck near several islands of Russia`s Kuril Islands on late Friday evening, seismologists and emergency officials said, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. No tsunami warnings were issued.

The first earthquake, at 11:53 p.m. local time (1253 GMT) on Friday, measured 6.0 on the body wave magnitude scale (Mb) and was centered about 101 kilometers (62.7 miles) northeast of Severo-Kurilsk, a town on the island of Paramushir in the northern Kuril Islands. It struck about 60 kilometers (37 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the Geophysical Survey of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The second earthquake, at 12:20 a.m. local time on Saturday (1320 GMT Friday), was slightly stronger and measured 6.2 on the body wave magnitude scale (Mb). It struck at the same location and depth as the first earthquake about half an hour earlier, the Geophysical Survey said. Using the regional moment magnitude scale (Mw), the United States Geological Survey (USGS) measured the strength of both earthquakes at 6.5. It estimated the depth for the first earthquake to be about 40.9 kilometers (25.4 miles) while the second quake struck at a slightly more shallow depth of 31.7 kilometers (19.7 miles). Russia`s Emergencies Ministry in Kamchatka Krai said residents throughout the region felt both earthquakes but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. "Currently, rescue workers and firefighters are checking houses and inspecting them for damage, but no damage has been reported," a spokesperson said. The back-to-back earthquakes follow a 6.6-magnitude earthquake that struck the same region just after midnight local time on Friday, also causing no damage or casualties. The United States Geological Survey measured that earthquake at 6.9 on the regional moment magnitude scale (Mw). The Kuril Islands, a volcanic archipelago which consists of 56 islands and many more minor rock formations, are 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. Volcanic eruptions also occur frequently.

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