

Quake in China's Tibet kills 32 with tremors felt in Nepal, India

AFP- A powerful earthquake in China's remote Tibet region killed at least 32 people and collapsed "many buildings" on Tuesday, state media reported, with tremors also felt in neighbouring Nepal's capital Kathmandu and parts of India.

Videos published by China's state broadcaster CCTV showed destroyed houses with walls torn apart and rubble strewn across the ruins in the aftermath of the earthquake.

The quake struck Dingri county with a magnitude of 6.8 near the border with Nepal at 9:05 am (0105 GMT), according to the China Earthquake Networks Center (CENC). The US Geological Survey reported the tremor as magnitude 7.1.

"Thirty-two people have been confirmed dead and 38 injured during the 6.8-magnitude earthquake that jolted Dingri County in the city of Xigaze in Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region at 9:05 am Tuesday," Xinhua news agency said, citing the regional disaster relief headquarters.

"Dingri county and its surrounding areas experienced very strong tremors, and many buildings near the epicentre have collapsed," state broadcaster CCTV said earlier.

Xinhua said "local authorities are reaching out to various townships in the county to assess the impact of the quake".

Temperatures in Dingri are around minus 8 degrees Celsius (17.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and will drop to minus 18 this evening, according to the China Meteorological Administration.

The high-altitude county in the Tibet region is home to around 62,000 people and situated on the Chinese side of Mount

Everest.

While earthquakes are common in the region, Tuesday's quake was the most powerful recorded within a 200-kilometre radius in the last five years, the CENC added.

– 'Shook quite strongly' –

As well as Kathmandu, areas around Lobuche in Nepal in the high mountains near Everest were also rattled by the tremor and aftershocks.

"It shook quite strongly here, everyone is awake," said government official Jagat Prasad Bhusal in Nepal's Namche region, which lies nearer to Everest.

But no damage or deaths had been reported so far and security forces had been deployed, Nepali Home Minister spokesman Rishi Ram Tiwari said.

Nepal lies on a major geological faultline where the Indian tectonic plate pushes up into the Eurasian plate, forming the Himalayas, and earthquakes are a regular occurrence.

In 2015, nearly 9,000 people died and more than 22,000 were injured when a 7.8-magnitude quake struck Nepal, destroying more than half a million homes.

Some tremors were felt in Bihar state in India but no injuries were reported.

Three people were killed and dozens injured after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck along the mountainous China-Kyrgyzstan border in January last year.

A quake in December 2023 in northwest China killed 148 people and displaced thousands in Gansu province.

That quake was China's deadliest since 2014, when more than 600 people were killed in southwestern Yunnan province.

In the December 2023 earthquake, subzero temperatures made the aid operation launched in response even more challenging, with survivors huddled around outdoor fires to keep warm.

AFP