

2 dead as strong earthquake hits Indonesia's Java island, tsunami warning issued

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Motorists are stuck in traffic as they try to reach higher ground amid fears of a tsunami, following an earthquake in Cilacap, Central Java, Indonesia on Saturday.

Jakarta: A strong earthquake shook Indonesia's densely populated Java island on Friday night, killing two people and severely damaging dozens of homes near the epicenter.

The quake struck at 11:47 pm and was felt across the island, including about 200 kilometers (124 miles) away in the capital Jakarta, where office towers and apartment buildings swayed. Powerful tremors lasted as much as 30 seconds in places.

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A 62-year-old man and an 80-year-old woman were killed in building collapses, said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho.

Damage was heaviest in the Tasikmalaya, Pangandaran and Ciamis regions of West Java Province near the epicenter.

More than 40 houses collapsed and about 65 suffered severe damage, said Nugroho.

The earthquake had a magnitude of 6.5 and was about 91 kilometers (56 miles) deep and located just inland, the US Geological Survey said.

It triggered a tsunami warning for parts of Java's coastline that was lifted about two hours later.

Several hospitals were damaged by the shaking and patients evacuated.

Indonesia sits on the "Pacific Ring of Fire" and has frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

- AP