

Massive earthquake strikes Myanmar and Thailand, over 140 dead



Published on March 28, 2025

Document Date: Sun, Jun 21 2026 10:45:40 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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A devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the quake's epicenter was 16 km (10 miles) northwest of Sagaing at a depth of 10 km, shaking regions as far as southwest China and Thailand.

Myanmar's military leader, Min Aung Hlaing, confirmed at least 144 fatalities and 732 injuries,

with numbers expected to rise. In Thailand, a partially built high-rise in Bangkok collapsed, leaving 81 construction workers missing and at least seven confirmed dead, according to Thailand's deputy prime minister.

Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city, suffered severe damage, with reports of roads buckling in the capital, Nay Pyi Taw. The military government has declared a state of emergency across six regions. A second tremor, measuring 6.4 magnitude, struck 12 minutes after the first, compounding the destruction.

Eyewitness accounts describe widespread panic. Yangon residents reported feeling the tremors for an extended period, fearing aftershocks. A BBC journalist in Bangkok described buildings swaying dangerously, noting the city's infrastructure is not designed for earthquakes.

Thailand's Prime Minister, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, visited the collapsed building site, overseeing search and rescue operations. Disaster centers have been established to assist victims.

However, relief efforts in Myanmar face additional challenges due to ongoing political turmoil following the 2021 military coup and the ongoing civil war, which has displaced 3.5 million people.

Myanmar's ruling junta has made a rare appeal for international aid, acknowledging the overwhelming need for assistance. The Sagaing region, near the epicenter, remains a conflict hotspot, complicating rescue and recovery efforts.

Authorities continue to assess damage while humanitarian organizations mobilize support in the wake of this catastrophic disaster.