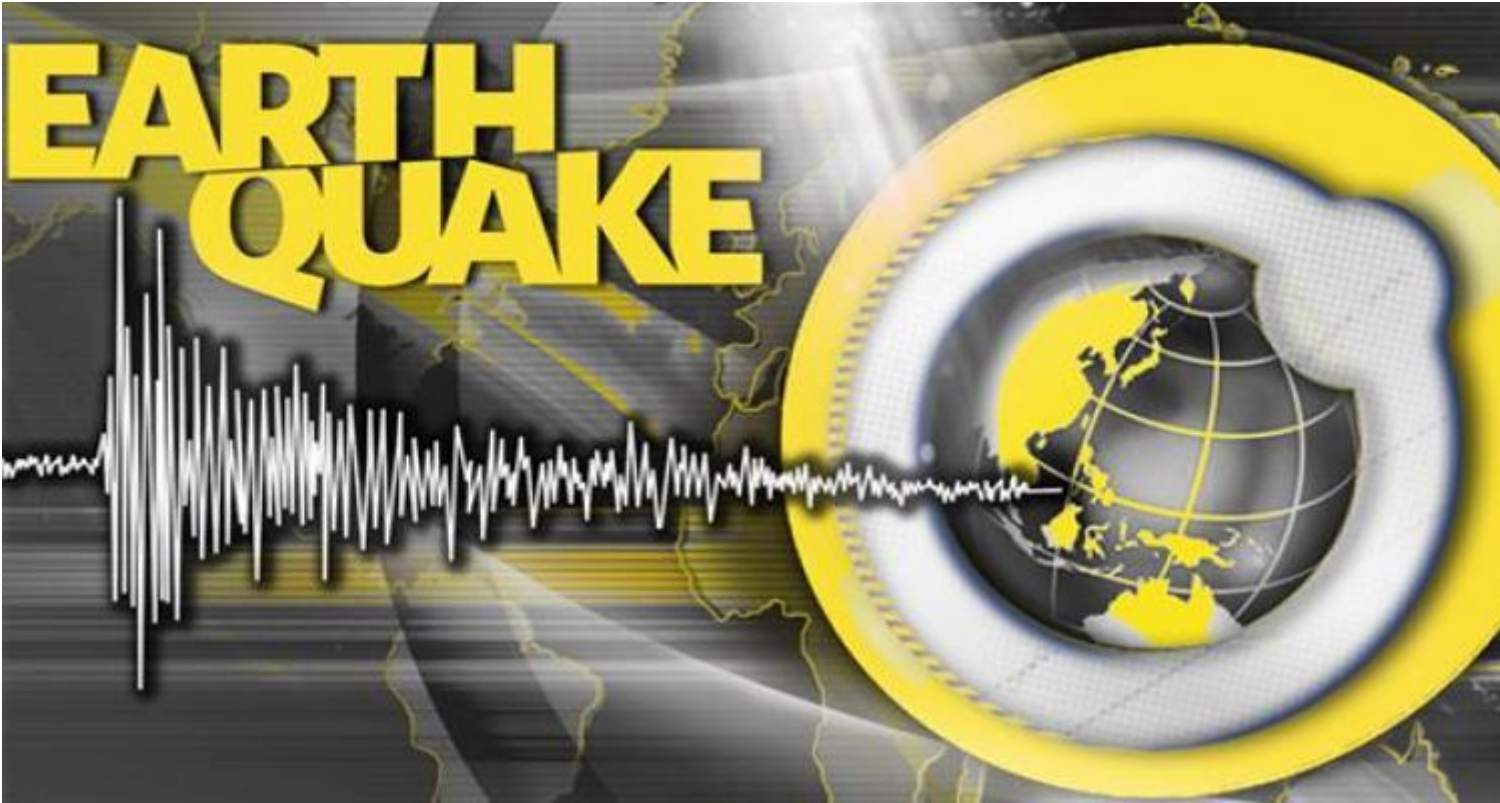


Powerful 6.8 Earthquake Shakes Chile



Santiago de Chile, November 7 (RHC)-- A strong 6.8-magnitude earthquake has struck central Chile, but no reports of major damage or injuries were immediately released.

The epicenter of the powerful tremor, which occurred early Saturday, was nearly 100 kilometers south of the port city of Coquimbo and about 300 kilometers northwest of Chile's capital of Santiago, the U.S. Geological Survey reported.

According to local press reports, the earthquake, which struck at a depth of 36 kilometers, caused office buildings in Santiago to sway. This is while Chile's emergency services office, Onemi, said it was assessing the situation following the quake to find whether there had been any damage. It first warned, but later cancelled the possibility of a small tsunami.

Chile is one of the most earthquake prone regions across the globe and buildings are designed to withstand frequent quakes. Moreover, the country has long established anti-seismic engineering systems that apply a technique known as seismic isolation to protect structures from the earth's judders.

The same region of the South American nation was struck by an 8.3-magnitude earthquake and tsunami back in September, leaving 15 people dead and more than 16,000 more homeless.

In 2010, meanwhile, another destructive 8.8-magnitude earthquake hit the nation and was recorded as one of the strongest ever. The devastating quake and the tsunami it unleashed killed over 500 people, destroyed 220,000 homes and washed away docks, riverfronts and seaside resorts.

Chile lies on what is referred to as the "Ring of Fire" -- an arc of fault lines that circles the Pacific Basin and is susceptible to recurrent earthquakes as well as volcanic eruptions.

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