

Earthquake causes panic in Bogota

A moderate earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale caused panic among thousands of residents in the Colombian capital, Bogota, Saturday.

There were no immediate reports of large-scale damages or injuries from the quake, with an epicentre some 55 km southeast of Bogota. Several buildings suffered cracks and telephone service was interrupted, Interior Minister Carlos Holguin said.

In Bogota and nearby cities in central Colombia, residents ran outside as the earth shook. The earthquake occurred at a relatively shallow depth of four kilometres, making its effects more easily felt, authorities said.

President Alvaro Uribe was surprised by the quake at a meeting in the city of Florida in the southwestern Valle del Cauca province, and the gathering was interrupted, reports said.

Colombia lies in a region prone to earthquakes, where the Nazca plate and the South American plate come together. In 1999, 1,200 people died in a quake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale.

(© IANS / India eNews)