

Magnitude 5 Earthquake Strikes Near Iran's Bushehr Nuke Plant

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A magnitude 5.0 earthquake struck near the Bushehr nuclear power plant in south Iran, the U.S. Geological Survey said on its website on Sunday.

The earthquake struck at 9:40 a.m. local time (06:10 GMT) on Sunday some 70 km (45 miles) southwest of Bushehr, with its epicenter registered at a depth of 10 km.

There were no reports so far of any casualties or damage to the nuclear power plant caused by the quake.

The deadliest quake in Iran was in June 1990, which measured 7.7 points on the Richter scale. About 37,000 people were killed and more than 100,000 injured in the northern provinces of Gilan and Zanjan. The quake devastated 27 towns and about 1,870 villages, according to IRNA news agency.

Bushehr, Iran's first nuclear power plant, is expected to go online on March 20, 2012.

The plant's construction began in 1975 by German companies. However, the firms stopped work after a U.S. embargo was imposed on high-technology supplies to Iran following the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent U.S. Embassy siege in Tehran.

Russia signed a contract with Iran in February 1998 to complete the plant.

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