

Earthquake Damages 500 Homes in Kemerovo Region

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Over 500 homes have been damaged in the village of Bachatsky as a result of an earthquake that struck the Kemerovo on Wednesday. It was the strongest earthquake to have struck the region in over 100 years and was felt 300 kilometers away in Novosibirsk.

The U.S. Geological Service said it registered a magnitude of 5.3 on the Richter scale, but Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry estimated it to be magnitude 4.3. It occurred at 3 a.m. Moscow time, RIA-Novosti reported Wednesday.

A local official confirmed preliminary reports that about 500 homes had sustained damage ranging from cracks in the walls to collapsed walls, ceilings and chimneys.

Power was cut off this morning, but has now been restored, while the water supply and communications links were not affected.

However, an official in Bachatsky village said the locals are afraid to enter their homes after the earthquake for fear of collapsing walls and are staying outside.

Viktor Seleznyev, director of the Geophysical Service at the Siberian chapter Russian Academy of Science's, said the earthquake was provoked by human industrial activity. The Kemerovo region has one of the largest coal basins in the country where coal is produced in open-pit mines. Explosives are frequently used to delve deeper into the ground, which could have triggered local tectonic processes, he said.

The nearby Bachatsky open-pit coal mine is gigantic: 11 kilometers long, more than two kilometers wide, with a depth of 350 meters. According to Seleznyev, the earthquake took place in the immediate vicinity of the mine, only 800 meters away from the mine's administration building.

Regional Governor Aman Tuleyev has ordered all work at underground mines in the Kemerovo Region, part of Russia's Kuzbass coal-producing heartland, to be suspended.

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