

Costa Rica ravaged by major earthquake

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica - Rescuers searched the rubble of buildings and international aid began pouring in Tuesday for victims of a powerful earthquake that killed at least 79 people, injured more than 800 and left thousands homeless.

The Monday night quake, which measured 7.4 on the Richter scale.

Officials said there were at least 50 confirmed deaths in Costa Rica and 29 in Panama's remote Atlantic province of Bocas del Toro, which had not registered an earthquake since 1916.

Panamanian President Guillermo Endara declared a "state of national emergency" and designated the Bocas del Toro province a disaster area eligible for government aid.

The government Civil Protection Agency said a preliminary survey showed at least 29 people died from the earthquake in Bocas del Toro, 300 were injured and about 730 homes were destroyed.

Bridges and roads throughout Costa Rica were destroyed or damaged by

the earthquake, making it difficult to assess the extent of deaths and damage. Neighboring Nicaragua sent helicopters to fly over areas cut off by landslides and road damage.

President Rafael Angel Calderon appealed for medicine and other humanitarian aid, and help quickly began arriving.

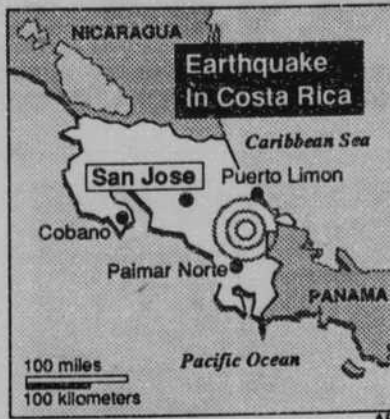
The epicenter was near Puerto Limon about 75 miles east of this Costa Rican capital.

Red Cross spokesman Miguel Orozco said hospital patients and those injured in the earthquake were being treated in a tent set up in the street near the hospital.

Thousands of people, fearful of aftershocks, slept in the streets around bonfires rather than go home.

When the quake hit, the sea receded 100 feet and some terrified Puerto Limon residents fled for higher ground, fearing a tidal wave. Similar scenes were reported in Panama.

In Panama, radio reports said freight cars derailed, blocking railroad access to the area reachable only by rail,



air and sea. The Pan American Highway linking Costa Rica to Panama reportedly was cut by damage to a bridge.

Capt. Eduardo Sanchez of the Red Cross said by telephone from Puerto Limon that the death toll was still rising. He said about 400 homes and other buildings were reported destroyed.

On the port's outskirts, a gasoline tank exploded, sending up a huge fireball at a government-owned refinery, the fire department said.

San Jose also suffered extensive damage, but there were no reports of deaths. The quake knocked out power for about four hours.

Acting on a hunch Court ups police power

WASHINGTON - An increasingly conservative Supreme Court gave police significant new power Tuesday to chase and apprehend people when officers have a hunch a crime was committed.

By a 7-2 vote, the justices reinstated the drug-possession conviction of a young California man identified as Hodari D., who fled at the sight of police and dropped crack cocaine during the chase.

The court ruled that the cocaine may be used as evidence because he had not been "seized" by police at the time he dropped the drug.

The Constitution's Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures, does not apply until an individual has been physically restrained or submits to police authority, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote for the court.

Justice John Paul Stevens, in a strongly worded dissent, said the ruling could "encourage unlawful displays of (police) force that will frighten countless innocent citizens into surrendering whatever privacy rights they may still have."

But Scalia said, "Street pursuits always place the public at some risk, and compliance with police orders to stop should therefore be encouraged."

James Lozenski, the Berkeley, Calif., lawyer who represented Hodari D., said, "It's a very sad day for civil rights in this country." He said the ruling gives police "an awful amount of authority to harass people."

In another decision, the court unanimously upheld a federal labor rule requiring hospitals to let their employees organize into eight separate collective bargaining units, according to their jobs.

The rule adopted by the National Labor Relations Board in 1989 applies to more than 4,000 acute-care hospitals nationwide.

The police-chase ruling is the latest in a series of decisions bolstering police powers and limiting the rights of criminal suspects and defendants.

A week ago the court narrowed the right of death row inmates to make repeated appeals in federal court, a ruling that could hasten many executions.

Meeting to put heat on Gorbachev

MOSCOW - Tens of thousands of striking workers filled the streets of Minsk on Tuesday, the eve of a Communist Party meeting to make Mikhail Gorbachev account for the popular discontent in the nation.

The strike in the capital of the southwestern republic of Byelorussia came amid labor unrest that began March 1 with a walkout by coal miners who want Gorbachev to resign as

president. The working-class anger at Gorbachev over the Soviet Union's crumbling economy is certain to be taken up at the Communist Party Central Committee plenum in Moscow on Wednesday.

Gorbachev, who also heads the party as general-secretary, will be asked to give the 410-member Central Committee an account of his

handling of the economic collapse and other issues troubling the nation.

The criticism is expected to be stinging, and there may be calls for his resignation as party leader. The plenum cannot remove him from either of his posts, but it could convene a party Congress and recommend his departure as general-secretary.

"I think the general-secretary will receive very harsh criticism but will

preserve his post," said Alexei Prigarin, a Central Committee member, in an interview with The Associated Press.

"There will be a real fight," said Zoya Krylova, another Central Committee member. "The plenum will be very heated. It's a huge country undergoing change and now we need to decide which way to go."

Iran painting insignia on Iraqi jets

TEHRAN, Iran - Iranian crews have begun painting their air force insignia on some of the Iraqi warplanes that were mysteriously flown into the Islamic republic during the gulf war, diplomats said Tuesday.

The claim, which could not be independently confirmed, indicates Tehran plans to keep at least some of the military aircraft that sought ref-

uge from the allied air offensive in neighboring Iran.

In another sign that Tehran plans to hold on to the planes, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Sunday that only 22 aircraft, including some airliners plundered from Kuwait, "would be returned when the crisis is over."

The rest, he said, either crashed or were shot down by allied jet fighters

before they could land.

He did not specify which types of aircraft were among the 22 cited, but stressed the fate of the planes would be decided by Iran and Iraq with the help of the United Nations.

Iraq insisted April 12 that 148 of its military and civilian planes had flown to Iran. U.S. military spokesmen said 137 Iraqi planes were in Iran.



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