

Sabah Experiences No Less Than 80 Earthquakes Since 1897

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 5 (Bernama) -- Sabah, particularly in the north and northeast of the state, has been experiencing no less than 80 earthquakes since 1897, with the latest occurring today.

Minerals and Geoscience Department director-general Datuk Yunus Abdul Razak said the earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale, with the center located 16 kilometres from Ranau, was the strongest earthquake recorded so far in Malaysia.

The magnitude of the previous earthquakes were between 3.6 and 5.8 on the Richter scale.

"Based on the position of the epicentre plotted on the seismotectonic map of Malaysia, today's quake was believed to be triggered by the Lobou-Lobou Fault Line," he told Bernama.

The tremor was also felt in most places in Sabah, including Ranau, Tambunan, Tuaran, Pedalaman, Kota Kinabalu and Kota Belud.

Asked on the possibility of such incidents to recur, Yunus said earthquakes were unpredictable.

"However, based on tectonic activities and active fault lines in Sabah, earthquakes could happen again in the future," he said.

For the peninsula, the possibility was still there but based on geological factors, the situation was seen more stable and secure.

He said following the tremor today, Sabah department of minerals and geoscience would carry out works to evaluate and record the effects.

Meanwhile, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia geostrategist Prof Dr Azmi Hassan concurred with Yunus that Ranau and Lahad Datu areas had active fault lines.

Head of Natural Resources and Environment Cluster of the National Professors Council Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Ibrahim Komoo said Ranau was identified as an active earthquake area and there had been about 10 earthquakes recorded in Sabah in recent years.

"Most of the earthquakes were between three and five on the Richter scale...today's tremor was the strongest ever recorded. This is clear evidence that the area is an active tectonic zone. It is also associated with an active earthquake zone in Sulawesi.

"There will be more earthquakes in the future. The development in the area near the epicentre and active fault lines should take into account the impact of the earthquake," he

said.

Sabah Meteorological Department director Abd. Malik Tussin believed that no large-scale earthquake would occur in the near future.

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