

Earthquake rocks Japan, triggering fears of tsunami

A magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck off northwestern Japan on Tuesday, triggering a two-hour tsunami advisory for three prefectures in the region.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said the quake struck Tuesday night at 10:22, or 9:22 a.m. EDT, 30 miles southwest of Sakata and more than 6 miles below the surface. Sakata is about 200 miles north of Tokyo.

Officials in Murakami, a city of 60,000 people in Niigata Prefecture, told Japan's Kyodo news service the quake rumbled for about a minute.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said several minor injuries were reported in Niigata and Yamagata, but no serious ones. He urged residents to be prepared for possible aftershocks.

City officials were moving coastal residents to higher ground as a precaution, Tsuruoka city crisis management official Takehiko Takahashi said.

Some train lines suspended operations, and Tohoku Electric said about 8,200 homes and businesses were without power. No problems were reported at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, a nuclear plant in the region.

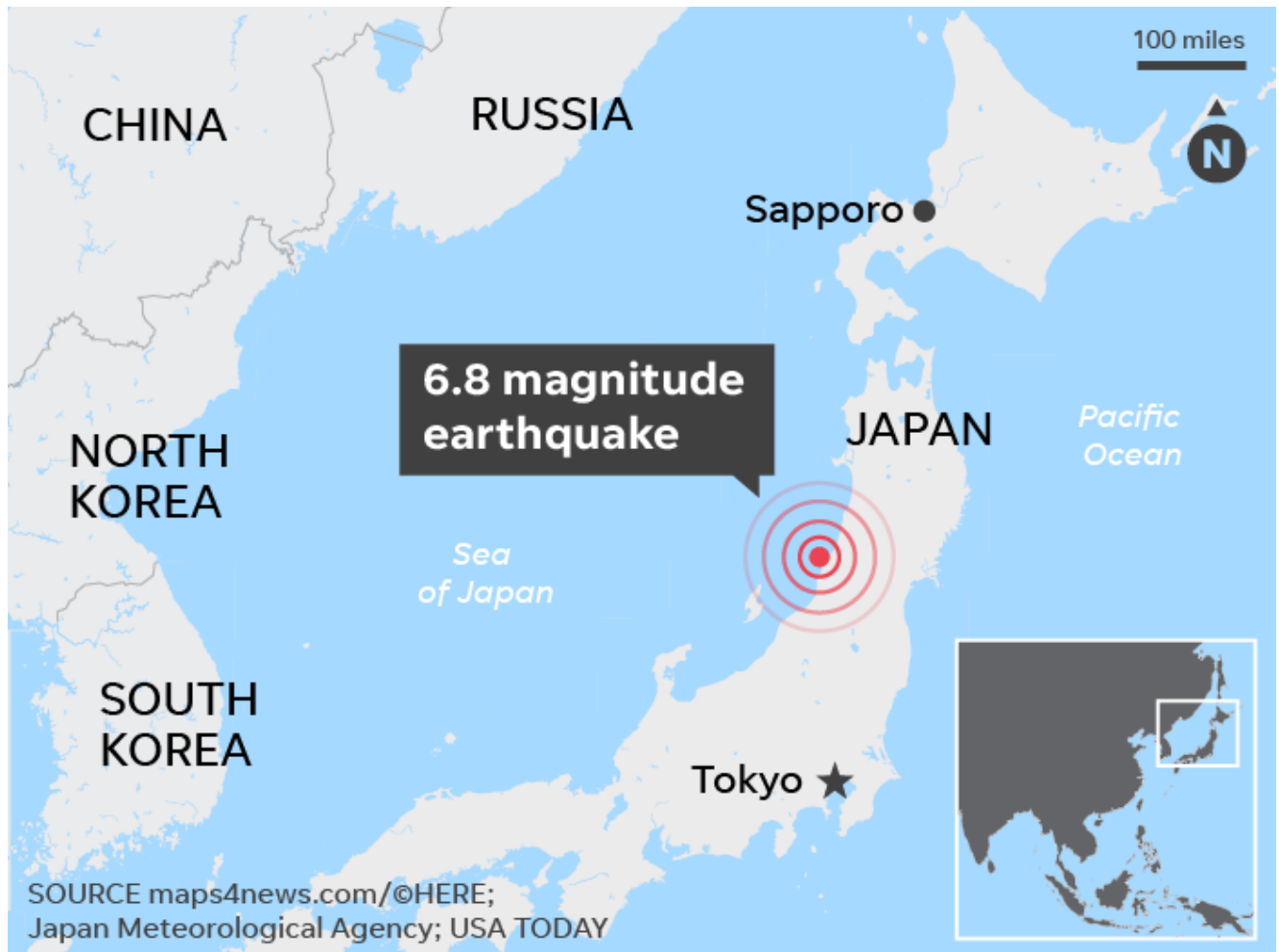
NHK TV station showed broken glasses and dishes scattered on the floor of a bar in Tsuruoka after customers rushed out, leaving behind their half-eaten food on the counter.

The tsunami advisory was for Yamagata, Niigata and Ishikawa prefectures. Japan Meteorological Agency said the first small wave of tsunami reached Awashima Island in Niigata Prefecture at 11:05 p.m. The wave reached Sakata in Yamagata Prefecture a short time later before the tsunami advisory was lifted.

Earthquakes are not uncommon in Japan, and the coastal region in Niigata has been shaken by major quakes in the past. A magnitude 6.6 quake in 2007 killed 11 people and injured 1,000.

In 2011, Japan was rocked by the magnitude 9.0 Great East Japan Earthquake. It

triggered a massive tsunami that flooded more than 200 square miles of coastal land. More than 15,000 died in the disaster, and two nuclear power plants were severely damaged and have not been in operation since.



Contributing: The Associated Press

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<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2019/06/18/tsunami-warning-earthquake-rocks-japan/1485687001/>

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