

New quake shakes traumatized Mexico

Mexico City

A new quake sowed panic in Mexico City yesterday, suspending rescue operations to free survivors from the earlier, more powerful earthquake this week that devastated parts of the capital.

The seismic disturbance, with a magnitude of 6.1, was smaller and farther to the south than the 7.1-magnitude one that struck on Tuesday, killing nearly 300 people and toppling 39 buildings in the capital. But

as an alarm sounded, hundreds of residents raced out into the street, some barefoot, some carrying children.

Trauma from the previous quake was evident.

"Oh God, have mercy," exclaimed Teresa Martinez, 74, who had run out in to the street for safety. She stood with other women, all crying.

Two women died of heart attacks as they tried to evacuate their homes, according to local media reports. One was in

her 80s and the other was 52, according to the website of the daily Reforma.

The quake rattled crockery and made buildings sway, but some didn't notice.

"This time we didn't feel the ground move... maybe since the last one we're getting used to them," said Pablo Martinez, who had run out of his central apartment block with his 6-year-old daughter in his arms.



Rescue workers embrace each other deeply moved after a seismic alert sounded in Mexico City

Iraq Kurd leader delays vote announcement



A Kurdish woman takes a selfie with a man as they take part in a gathering to urge people to vote in the upcoming independence referendum in the town of Bahirka, north of Arbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq

Erbil

Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani yesterday delayed a scheduled news conference on a controversial independence referendum he has called for next week as international pressure mounts for a postponement.

There has been uncertainty about whether the vote will go ahead on Monday as Iraq's key allies the United States and Iran, as well as powerful neighbour Turkey, have stepped up their opposition.

"The news conference will take

place on Sunday and the time and venue will be announced later," Barzani's office said without elaborating. On Friday, the Iraqi Kurdish leader had insisted that the vote would be held as planned, despite a warning from the UN Security Council that it was "potentially destabilising"

"The referendum is no longer in my hands, nor is it in those of the (political) parties -- it is in your hands," Barzani told a large crowd at a football stadium in Arbil, capital of the Kurdish region.

Kirkuk residents stock up ahead of independence referendum

Kirkuk

Residents of the multi-ethnic city of Kirkuk north of Baghdad were stocking up with supplies yesterday ahead of the planned controversial referendum on independence for Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region.

People fear the situation could deteriorate if the plebiscite set for Monday goes ahead, as the oil-rich province is disputed between the federal government in Baghdad and the regional government in Arbil. Iraq has called the referendum unconstitutional, with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi rejecting

it, "whether today or in the future".

"The price of food has gone up by 20 percent. What the politicians are doing only benefits businessmen, and it's the poor residents who suffer," market vendor Omran Khodr said. Kirkuk is not one of the three provinces that have been part of the autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq since 2003.

It is in an area disputed between Baghdad and the Kurds who claim it is theirs historically, since Iraq's former dictator Saddam Hussein chased them out and replaced them with Arabs. (AFP)

India at UN calls Pakistan 'export factory for terror'

United Nations

India's foreign minister took a swipe at Pakistan yesterday, telling the United Nations that its neighbour had given the world "terrorists" while India was producing top-notch doctors and engineers.

"Why is it today India is a recognised IT superpower in the world, and Pakistan is recognised only as the pre-eminent export factory for terror?" Sushma Swaraj told the General Assembly.

"We produced scholars, doctors, engineers. What have you produced? You have produced terrorists," she said.

Swaraj offered a response to an address earlier in the week by Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi who at the UN podium accused India of "massive and indiscriminate force" in Kashmir.

Relations between India and Pakistan have been tense in recent times, mainly over Kashmir, which is divided but claimed by both countries in full.

The two nuclear-armed nations have fought three wars since gaining independence from Britain



India Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj addresses the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York

in 1947, two of them over the disputed Himalayan territory.

Following Abbasi's speech on Thursday, an Indian diplomat took to the floor of the General

Assembly in a reply and branded the country "Terroristan".

India accuses Islamabad of training, arming and infiltrating militants into Kashmir, a claim that

Pakistan has denied.

On Friday, the Pakistani military said six people were killed and over two dozen wounded in firing by Indian troops near the Kashmir border. (AFP)