

Venezuelans trapped alive after twin quakes kill at least 164



People search through the rubble around a car trapped beneath the collapsed remains of a residential building following an earthquake in Catia La Mar, La Guaira state, about 30 km northwest of Caracas

● **United States Geological Survey said magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 quake hit northern Venezuela within a minute of each other.**

● **Offers of rescue support and aid flooded in from around the world.**

AFP | La Guaira, Venezuela

Desperate Venezuelans battled Thursday to rescue loved ones trapped alive beneath the rubble of collapsed buildings after two major earthquakes that killed at least 164 people.

Buildings cracked and crumbled and residents fled into the streets after the quakes, which the United States Geological Survey measured as magnitude 7.2 and 7.5, hit northern Venezuela within a minute of each other.

Offers of rescue support and aid flooded in from around the world as interim president Delcy Rodríguez reported at least 164 dead and over 970 hurt.

The state of La Guaira north of Caracas was hit particularly hard, and residents stumbled through debris calling out the names of loved ones or tried in vain to rescue the injured.

"There's a spot where a young woman named Jennifer, from the 11th floor, answers me. However, we don't have any tools; we have no way to help," said Antonio Bermudez, whose building collapsed in La Guaira.

Elsewhere in the rubble, a father and his son were using a pickaxe and a crowbar to try and pry away massive slabs to get to two of his other sons, said Bermudez.

"They're still alive... there's nothing more we can do. We're telling them not to strain their voices, to take short breaths, in the hope that at least the three of them who are there will be rescued."

The coastal city was without electricity, and many residents

spent the night in the streets or searching for their relatives, according to AFP reporters.

The strongest quake to hit Venezuela in 126 years will require "massive collective efforts," the United Nations aid chief Tom Fletcher said in a statement. He said the UN was "fully mobilised" to send aid.

Threatening to complicate relief efforts, the international airport near Caracas was closed due to "serious damage," Rodríguez said.

Tremors felt in Colombia, Brazil

Venezuela's northern coast sits on a boundary between Caribbean and South American tectonic plates. In 1812, a massive quake in the country killed an estimated 30,000 people.

Wednesday's 7.5-magnitude earthquake was the most powerful since October 29, 1900, when a 7.7-magnitude tremor struck offshore.

The quake was felt as far away as the Colombian capital of Bogotá, where alarms sounded and some residents evacuated buildings as a precaution.

'We need help'

Many residential buildings in La Guaira -- around 40 minutes from the capital Caracas

-- were left with large cracks or gaping walls. Dozens of others were destroyed.

"We thank God that... we are alive, but there are people suffering right now with family members trapped under the rubble or pinned down, unable to get them out," resident Yilmari Blanco told AFP.

"There are people alive in there, there are dead people," Paola Sanoja, 31, told AFP, pointing to a building left tilted with its apartments exposed, where one of her relatives was missing.

'We need help to come.'

Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello asked people to leave their homes, adding that gas supplies had been cut to some buildings as a precaution.

In Caracas, the quakes sent residents fleeing into the streets. Shoppers at a mall in the city screamed in panic.

"It was unbelievable, I don't even know how long it lasted," said shopkeeper Heidi Romero.

The strongest tremors in earthquake-prone Venezuela's recent history occurred in the northeast in 1997, killing 73 people, and in Caracas in 1967, when 236 people died.



Donald Trump to mark US 250th anniversary at Mount Rushmore

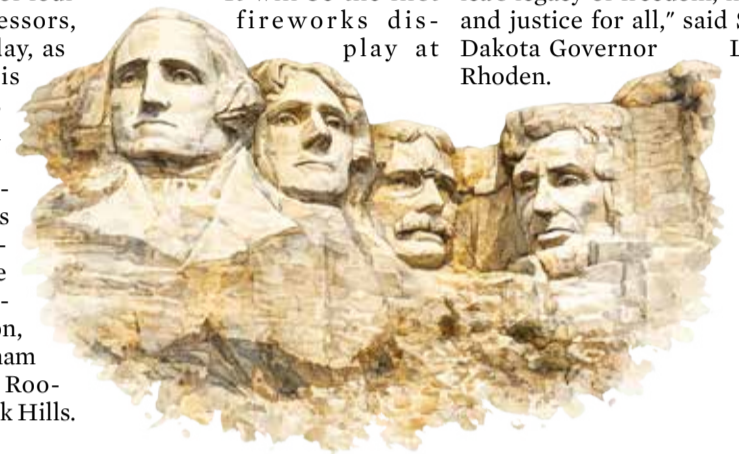
AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump will travel to Mount Rushmore next week for an Independence Day celebration beneath the carved faces of four of his revered predecessors, organizers said Thursday, as the Republican puts his personal stamp on events marking America's 250th anniversary.

Trump is due to headline a July 3 fireworks display at the South Dakota memorial, where the massive, granite likenesses of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt loom over the Black Hills.

The event is expected to feature military bands, flyovers, tributes to the armed forces and a speech by the Republican president on the eve of the July 4 holiday.

It will be the first fireworks display at



Mount Rushmore since 2020, when Trump also attended during his first term.

"Together, we will throw the biggest birthday party ever for our nation and celebrate America's legacy of freedom, liberty, and justice for all," said South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden.

Wants the deal, but not 'at any price'

TDT | agencies

Top US diplomat Marco Rubio warned on Thursday that a deal with Iran would not come at any price.

"While we want a deal, we don't want a deal at any price," Rubio told a Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in Bahrain.

"We want to ensure... that there is no part of this deal that's undertaken that in any way undermines the security, the stability, or the prosperity of any of our partners in the Gulf

region."

Rubio also sought to reassure the energy-rich Gulf that the Hormuz strait, which they have relied on for decades to export oil and liquefied natural gas, would remain toll-free.

Hormuz is a narrow



stretch of water between Iran and Oman that leads to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, making it a choke-point for crucial energy shipments out of the Gulf.

Switzerland records hottest ever June day at 38C

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

Switzerland registered its hottest ever June temperature yesterday, with 38C measured in the northern city of Basel, breaking a previous record of 36.9C set eight decades ago, the Swiss weather service said.

"Temperatures exceeded 37C for the first time in Switzerland during the



month of June, breaking a record set in 1947," MeteoSwiss said on X.

It highlighted that "a temperature of 38C was even recorded at the Basel weather sta-

tion" -- the same place where the 1947 record was logged.

Records have tumbled as an increasingly deadly heatwave leaves western Europe sweltering with weather hotter than parts of Africa, throwing up numerous challenges from transport to emergency response.

In Switzerland, the highest heatwave alert level is currently in effect across much of the country.