# Powerful 6.2-magnitude quake hits off Istanbul coast

AFP- A 6.2-magnitude earthquake hit the Sea of Marmara near Istanbul on Wednesday, with the impact felt across Turkey’s largest city where people rushed onto the streets.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, officials said, but the quake was followed by at least eight others, Turkey’s AFAD disaster management agency said.

“An earthquake of 6.2 magnitude occurred in Silivri, Sea of Marmara, Istanbul,” Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said on X, adding that it was felt in the surrounding provinces.

The initial quake struck at 12:49 pm (0949 GMT) at a depth of 6.92 kilometres under the sea, which lies to the south of the city, AFAD said.

It was followed by eight others with magnitudes of 3.5 to 5.9.

As buildings shook, people rushed onto the streets where crowds of worried-looking people stared at their mobile phones for information or made calls, an AFP correspondent said.

“I just felt earthquake, I’ve got to get out,” a shaken-looking decorator said while rushing out of a fourth-storey apartment where he was working near the city’s Galata Tower, who did not want to give his name.

Footage posted by the state news agency Anadolu showed the minaret of a mosque in the Beylikduzu district just west of the historic peninsula swaying during the inial quake.

But there were no reports of any buildings collapsing in the sprawling city of 16 million people, Yerlikaya told TRT public television.

“Until now, nobody’s called the emergency line to report their house collapsing,” he said, though the Istanbul governor’s office warned people to avoid any structures that looked like they might have been damaged.

Footage on Turkey’s NTV television showed one three-storey building collapsed in the Fatih district, also near the historic peninsula, with the broadcaster saying the building was empty and had been abandoned decade ago.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he was “following the developments closely”.

— ‘Nothing we can do’ —

“We all panicked and just ran. There’s absolutely nothing else we can do,” said Yusuf, a street seller.

The tremors could be felt as far away as Bulgaria, according to AFP journalists in the capital Sofia.

Silivri, on the megacity’s western outskirts, has made headlines in the past month as it is where Istanbul’s mayor Ekrem Imamoglu was jailed after his arrest in a graft probe that his critics say is politically motivated.

Also at the Silivri jail are a number of students detained for joining the mass protests that erupted nationwide over the move against Imamoglu, Erdogan’s biggest political rival.

Although they felt the quake, none were hurt, the Parents Solidarity Network said on X.

“The earthquake in Istanbul was most strongly felt in Silivri but our children are fine. There is no problem at the prison, no parent should worry,” the group wrote.

The last tremor to be felt in Istanbul was in mid-November, when a quake caused brief panic but no damage or injuries.

Turkish and foreign seismologists agree that Istanbul is likely to be struck by major earthquakes in the coming decades given its location of less than 20 kilometres from the North Anatolia fault line.

Around 20,000 people were killed in two massive quakes that devastated Turkey’s densely populated northwest – including parts of Istanbul – three months apart in 1999 as the eastern strand of the fault line ruptured.

AFP