



A cyclist looks at a shopping arcade destroyed by the earthquake in Kumamoto city, southern Japan Saturday. A powerful earthquake struck southern Japan early Saturday, barely 24 hours after a smaller quake hit the same region. Kyodo News via AP

Quakes kill at least 16 in south Japan; many trapped

MASHIKI, Japan (AP) — Two powerful earthquakes a day apart shook southwestern Japan, killing at least 16 people, trapping many others beneath flattened homes and sending thousands of residents to seek refuge in gymnasiums and hotel lobbies.

The exact number of casualties remained unclear as rescue efforts continued to unfold Saturday. Police said at least six were killed in a magnitude 7.3 quake that shook the Kumamoto region on the southwestern island of Kyushu at 1:25 a.m. Saturday. On Thursday night, Kyushu was hit by a magnitude-6.5 quake that left 10 dead and more than 800 injured.

The fire department reported at least seven dead from the early Saturday quake, according to Kumamoto Prefectural official Tomoyuki Tanaka.

A series of aftershocks ensued, including a magnitude-5.4 Saturday morning. The Japan Meteorological Agency said that the quake that struck earlier Saturday may be the main quake, with the earlier one a precursor. The quakes' epicenters have been relatively shallow — about 6 miles — and close to the

surface, resulting in more severe shaking and damage.

Japanese media reported that nearly 200,000 homes were without electricity. Drinking water systems had also failed in the area.

Hundreds of people were reported injured, although some of the injuries were minor.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, in an emergency news conference early Saturday, said more than 300 calls came in to the Kumamoto police and another 100 to police in nearby Oita, seeking help and reporting people trapped or buried underneath debris. He said 1,600 soldiers joined rescue efforts. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said damage from the magnitude-7.3 quake could be extensive.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority reported no abnormalities at Kyushu's Sendai nuclear plant.

Public broadcaster NHK TV showed stones tumbled from the walls of historic Kumamoto Castle, and a wooden structure in the complex was smashed. At the Ark Hotel, east of the castle, hotel guests woke up to strong shaking and a warning siren. Hotel staff told guests, including tour-

ists and journalists covering the quake, to evacuate their rooms and gather in the lobby for safety.

A bright spot, broadcast repeatedly on television Friday, was the overnight rescue of an apparently uninjured baby, wrapped in a blanket and carried out of the rubble of a home.

Saturday's quake hit residents who were still in shock from the previous night's earthquake and had suffered through more than 100 aftershocks.

Yuichiro Yoshikado said Thursday's quake stuck as he was taking a bath in his apartment in Mashiki.

"I grabbed onto the sides of the bathtub, but the water in the tub, it was about 70 percent filled with water, was going like this," he said, waving his arms, "and all the water splashed out." "It's as if all control was lost. I thought I was going to die and I couldn't bear it any longer."

Yoshikado, whose building was undamaged despite the intense shaking, checked the damage at his aunt and uncle's home nearby. Kitchenware was scattered on the floor, and a clock had stopped around 9:26 p.m., the time of Thursday's quake.

As clinic access tightens, group touts pregnancy-ending drug

NEW YORK (AP) — The tightening of restrictions on abortion clinics in many states has emboldened some abortion rights advocates to launch an outreach effort, reminding women they have relatively safe and effective means of ending a pregnancy on their own through use of a miscarriage-inducing drug.

Anti-abortion groups are wary of the phenomenon, disavowing any drive to prosecute women who self-abort but favoring crackdowns on illegal distribution of the drug. Even in the abortion rights community, the outreach effort has raised some concerns.

Dr. Hal Lawrence, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, says it's always preferable for a woman undergoing abortion to be under direct supervision of a medical professional.

Advocates of the new approach say they would agree, under ideal conditions, but they worry that many women — out of fear, poverty or lack of a nearby clinic — are not getting access to professional services and need accurate information if they're considering self-induced abortion. Notably, they want to highlight the option of using the drug misoprostol as a generally safe method for inducing a miscarriage within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

"There will always be people who need to do this for themselves, and they deserve to have the resources and information so they can do so safely and effectively, free from the threat of arrest," said Jill Adams, executive director of the Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at the University of California-Berkeley law school.

She is chief strategist for the Self-Induced Abortion Legal Team, formed this year by women from several legal organizations after consultations with reproductive-rights experts and activists.

The team's goals — outlined in a recent online document — include halting prosecutions of women for



In this 2015 file photo, Purvi Patel is taken into custody after being sentenced to 20 years in prison for feticide and neglect of a dependent, at the St. Joseph County Courthouse in South Bend, Ind. Lynn Paltrow, executive director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women, said it marked the first time a woman in the U.S. has been convicted and sentenced for attempting to end her pregnancy. Robert Franklin/South Bend Tribune via AP

self-induced abortions and expanding access to reliable information on how abortion medication can be obtained and used safely outside the formal health care system. Adams said a short-term goal is finding ways to increase access without breaking any laws.

"We're not here to incite unlawful activity, nor to reprimand anyone if they do step outside the law," she said. "We're here to equip our friends and allies with the information they've been asking for."

In the United States, misoprostol is legally available only through authorized medical professionals; it is commonly used in combination with another drug, mifepristone, as part of a nonsurgical abortion procedure with a strong safety record. In many Latin American and Caribbean countries, misoprostol is widely available, even over the counter in pharmacies in some countries, and has been used extensively for self-induced abortions in countries such as Brazil that have restrictive abortion laws.

Used alone, misoprostol is considered to be effective 75 to 90 percent of the time, according to the World Health Organization. That's lower than the rate of more than 95 percent for the two-drug combination, but reliable

enough that the WHO has circulated guidelines for how to use it alone.

"There are all kinds of reasons why it's better for women to have access to professional medical care," said Vicki Saporta, president of the National Abortion Federation. "But when that is not available, and there is a desperate situation, these drugs are very effective, and women can safely terminate a pregnancy."

There's no precise data on the extent of self-induced abortions in the U.S.; they are rarely reported to any authority or statistician. An informal barometer was provided by economist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, who calculated in a recent *New York Times* article that there were 700,000 Google searches for information about self-induced abortion in the United States in 2015.

John Seago, legislative director of Texas Right To Life, says he would support efforts by law enforcement to crack down on any illegal trafficking of abortion-inducing drugs, but he opposes prosecutions of the women who terminate their own pregnancies.

"By putting that type of law in place, we'd be dissuading her from seeking medical help afterward," Seago said.

BRIEFLY

U.S.: North Korean missile launch a failure

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A North Korea missile launch meant to celebrate the birthday of the country's founder ended in failure, U.S. defense officials said, an embarrassing setback in what was reportedly the inaugural test of a new, powerful mid-range missile.

"It was a fiery, catastrophic attempt at a launch that was unsuccessful," Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said Friday. U.S. officials are still assessing, but it was likely a road-mobile missile, given that it was launched from a location not usually used for ballistic missile launches, on the country's east coast, he said.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency carried an unsorted report that a "Musudan" missile, which could one day be capable of reaching far-off U.S. military bases in Asia and the Pacific, exploded in the air a few seconds after liftoff.

A U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters told The Associated Press that it appeared to be a Musudan missile but no definitive conclusion had been reached.

Despite the failure, the North has another Musudan loaded on a mobile launcher and Pyongyang will likely fire it, according to South Korean and U.S. authorities, Yonhap reported.

U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, speaking to reporters during a stop on the USS John C. Stennis aircraft carrier in the South China Sea, said that while the U.S. deemed the launch to be unsuccessful, it "was nonetheless another provocation by North Korea in a region that doesn't need that kind of behavior."

The UN Security Council issued a statement saying its members "strongly condemned" the North's firing of a ballistic missile, which it said constituted a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions although the launch was a failure.

Brazil's lower house begins impeachment debate

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — The lower chamber of Brazil's Congress on Friday began a raucous debate on whether to impeach President Dilma Rousseff, a question that underscores the deep polarization in Latin America's largest country and most-powerful economy.

If lawmakers approved the measure in a vote slated for Sunday, it gets sent to the Senate, where an impeachment trial could take place, prompting the president's suspension from office.

The atmosphere in the lower Chamber of Deputies was electric, as Rousseff's critics festooned themselves with yellow and green ribbons and brandished placards reading "Impeachment Now!"

Lawmakers backing impeachment allege Rousseff's administration violated fiscal rules, using sleight of hand accounting in a bid to shore up public support.

However, many of those pushing for impeachment face grave accusations of corruption themselves, prompting Rousseff and her supporters to decry the whole process as a bold-faced power grab by her foes.

Rousseff's defenders insist she did nothing illegal, pointing out that similar accounting techniques were used by previous presidents.



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