

Turkey-Syria earthquake affects historical sites

A Monitor Report

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Istanbul : Turkey and the northern part of Syria were devastated by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on February 6. Rescue operations have become quite challenging amid freezing weather conditions, snow, and damaged infrastructures. Meanwhile, the Turkey government informed that the earthquake destroyed over 3000 buildings across the country, including iconic cultural landmarks and historic sites.

Gaziantep Castle is one of the most magnificent structures in southeastern Turkey that has been destroyed by the earthquake. Built as a watchtower by the Hittite Empire during the second millennium BCE, reports claimed, in 2022, this castle was transformed into the Gaziantep Defense and Heroism Panoramic Museum in an effort to display artifacts from the Turkish War of Independence in the structure's walls.

Sirvani Mosque also suffered due to the earthquake. It is located next to the Gaziantep Castle. The eastern wall and the dome of the mosque collapsed during the quake.

The 19th-century Yeni Mosque (New Mosque) in Malatya was also damaged severely due to the quake. It is located in the city center of Türkiye's southeastern Malatya. As per reports, the mosque suffered, but survived, damages earlier during the earthquakes of 1894 and 1964. However, the mosque was restored, and minarets were installed, eventually opening for worship in 2022.

The ancient city of Aleppo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, also severely deteriorated in this earthquake. The structure's iconic Mamluk Tower Gate suffered havoc, and the minaret of its Ayyubid Mosque was also defaced.

The Cathedral in the southern Turkish city Iskenderun, was almost destroyed completely. The Catholic Church was originally built between 858-71. A fire took place and caused damage to the church once but was later rebuilt in 1901.