CALIFORNIA HIT

Terror quake strikes

LOS ANGELES (UPI/AP) — A severe earthquake rolled across Southern California yesterday, shaking buildings in Los Angeles, sparking fires and triggering landslides.

At least six people were killed, including a man who plunged to his death from a second-floor window.

The earthquake that jolted an area populated by 16.3 million people at 7:42 a.m. measured 6.1 on the Richter Scale.

It was followed by at least 16 aftershocks measuring 3.0 or higher, with the largest reaching 4.4.

Felt as far away as Las Vegas, 400 km to the east, it was Southern California's worst quake since a 6.5 temblor killed 64 people and caused more than $1 billion damage Feb. 9, 1971.

Yesterday's quake also resulted in at least 62 injuries, 55 heart attacks, 46 fires, 79 traffic accidents and 107 gas leaks in Los Angeles alone.

Throughout Southern California, the shaking, rolling, swaying and uncertainty of what was coming next sowed terror among people beginning their work day or still at home.

A man who used to be a top aide to former premier Peter Lougheed was also caught in the quake.

Ron Liepert, now director of Alberta's economic development and trade office in Los Angeles, was in his 35th floor office when the quake struck. Linda Liepert said her husband called the experience "the scariest one of his life. He told me the building was swaying back and forth, file drawers were opening and things were flying all over the place."