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# World and Nation

## One dead, 40 injured as fire guts 4 floors of Los Angeles high-rise

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A helicopter plucked office workers from the roof of California's tallest building as fire gutted four floors of the 62-story First Interstate Bank Tower and left one person dead and 40 injured early Thursday.

Damage was estimated at \$450 million, making the blaze the worst high-rise fire in Los Angeles history, fire officials said.

A sprinkler system was being installed in the 859-foot skyscraper but was not quite complete. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

"It looked like Dante's Inferno," fire Capt. Steve Varney said. "Everything that was burnable, burned down."

A small but undetermined number of people were working in the

office tower when the blaze broke out about 10:30 p.m. Wednesday. During the workday the building is occupied by 3,500 people.

Some workers fled down stairs in thick smoke. Others fled to the roof as the fire roiled around the 12th through 15th floors and rained glass and flaming debris on downtown streets.

Four helicopters with searchlights swooped around the rooftop, and one helicopter lifted 10 people to safety, officers said.

Firefighters wearing air tanks had to lug hoses down stairs from the roof and up from the ground to attack the flames. Some air tanks ran out, and firefighters had to do without them, said Fire Chief Donald Manning.

"They had 2,000-degree temperatures they were fighting," Manning said of the 300 firefighters. This had a potential of killing a lot of my people."

No damage estimate was immediately available. The cause of the blaze was under investigation, said fire Cmdr. Donald Anthony.

A preliminary inspection indicated the structural framework remained sound, said Frank Kroker, an official of the Department of Building and Safety.

A cleaning supervisor, Zora Imamovic, said that while she and five others made their way from the 58th floor to the roof to be flown to safety, she heard a man calling for help over her two-way radio.

"One of the men was saying 'Car

33' (a freight elevator) was in when an Israeli Arab shepherd Turmus A She called abs respond to the settle one and wo said. A reporte paper in A Jewish settle out of field working ne

## Pro-Iranian kidnappers free Frenchmen after three years

PARIS (AP) — Three Frenchmen freed by pro-Iranian kidnappers in Beirut came home Friday to a jubilant nation and families and friends who had awaited the day for three years. Premier Jacques Chirac hinted that France might restore diplomatic relations with Tehran.

Diplomats Marcel Carton, 62, Marcel Fontaine, 45, and journalist Jean-Paul Kauffmann, 44, arrived at the military airport of Villacoublay in a government jet.

An Iranian spokesman said its intervention brought about the release of the three. Tehran Television, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Ali Reza Moayyeri, a deputy prime minister for political affairs, as saying Iran interceded for humanitarian reasons.

French government officials denied they struck a deal for the hostages' release.

Fontaine said his cellmate was Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press.

"We survived," he told a reporter from the French television. "I passed the time playing dominoes and chess with my cellmate."

Asked who his companion was,

Fontaine replied, "The American, Terry Anderson."

Anderson, 40, is the longest held of the 18 remaining hostages. He was kidnapped March 16, 1985.

Carton, Fontaine and Kauffmann appeared ashen and shaky as they walked slowly down the airplane steps on arrival in Paris.

Kauffmann drew back uncertainly when his son, Alexander, 13, approached him. Then, when he recognized him, Kauffmann's expression changed to one of delight at how much the boy had grown.

Alexander put his hands on his father's shoulders and looked him in the face silently. Their eyes filled with tears.

"As we all know, the liberation of our hostages falls into the framework of our relations with Iran," said Chirac, who greeted the men at the airport. "It's the authorities in Tehran who intervened with the captors so that they would free our countrymen."

France and Iran broke diplomatic relations July 17 after an Iranian Embassy employee, Wahid Gordji, refused to submit to questioning about bombings in Paris in September 1986. Gordji was allowed to

leave Paris two days after two French hostages were freed in Beirut.

"It's an incredible day," Kauffmann told reporters. "But it's also a day which remains overshadowed because we are just three."

The journalist for the weekly magazine L'Evenement de Jeudi said earlier that Michel Seurat, the 39-year-old researcher captured with him on May 22, 1985, probably died of cancer, rather than having been executed, as claimed by the kidnappers.

Carton and Fontaine were kidnapped March 22, 1985.

Kauffmann praised Seurat's courage and said Seurat encouraged his companions during his early days in captivity.

"I'm a little ashamed to be here today," said Kauffmann, recalling the other 18 Western hostages, including nine Americans, held in Lebanon and leading what he called a nightmare life.

Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, who had supervised the negotiations, denied reports that France agreed to repay the remaining portion of an outstanding \$1 billion loan made by Iran's late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

**Fire damages Capitol office**

**House speaker**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Industrial broke out late Thursday in Capitol Hill office of the Speaker Jim Wright, D-Texas, and the blaze raged unimpeded for 10 minutes due to a bad fire hoses and alarms, says a fireman who was one of the at the scene.

Two U.S. Capitol Police officers were treated for smoke inhalation at the scene, but they not require further medical attention, said officer Dan Nicholas.

The fire in Wright's second floor corner office of the Northworth Building, across the street from the Capitol, was caused by an electrical problem, said a chief of Columbia Deputy Chief Jamelia Jackson. He estimated the damages at \$120,000 and said the offices will need extensive restoration.

Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., said the fire was able to spread for at least 10 minutes after it broke shortly after 6 p.m. because hoses which are supposed to be emergency cabinets through the building were missing.

## Refinery explosion kills 1, injures 42

NORCO, La. (AP) — A spectacular explosion and fire that ripped off roofs and doors rocked a Shell Oil Co. refinery Thursday, killing one worker, injuring 42 people and leaving six people missing, authorities said.

"It went boom, and then boom again," Adam Mashia, said of the plant that is less than a mile from his home.

"It knocked me to the floor and as I was getting up, it knocked me down again."

About 2,500 residents of nearby homes were evacuated while the fire raged out of control for 5½ hours, but most were allowed to return to homesites, some partially damaged, later in the day even though the fire was not completely extinguished.

The fire was under control but still burning at mid-afternoon. Shell officials said they felt that the best plan was to allow the fire to burn itself out.

Fred Foster, manager of the Norco-Shell complex, said that rescue workers would have to wait for the fire to go out and the rubble to cool to enter the refinery. He said there was no speculation on the cause.

The force of the blast left wide-

spread damage throughout town, and heavy black smoke hung in the sky. Virtually all windows were shattered. Other damage included doors being blown out of their frames and roofs being lifted out of place.

Ikey Lucas, director of the St. Charles Emergency Operations, said, "I've never seen so much damage in Norco, even when hurricanes have hit."

The shock wave from the blast shattered plate-glass windows as far away as New Orleans, 20 miles down the Mississippi River. People 45 miles away said they felt the blast.

Shell spokesman Phil Schwin said that the damage at the refinery complex alone was expected to run into the millions of dollars. The accident ruptured the catalytic cracker, which converts crude oil to gasoline, and seriously damaged control rooms and other facilities.

It also damaged the water system, which hampered firefighting efforts, officials said.

The refinery sits amid the heavily industrialized corridor along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Next to it is the Shell chemical plant, which had broken windows from the blast.

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP) — Federal aid was sought Thursday for this city rocked by explosions at a space shuttle fuel plant that killed two workers, including a polio-stricken man unable to run for his life, officials said.

The man, whose body has not been found since the blast Wednesday, had stayed behind to call the fire department, said an official at the Pacific Engineering and Production Co. of Nevada plant.

The blasts leveled 12 buildings at the Pacific plant and a marsh-mallow factory. Steel girders were twisted like pretzels and cars parked nearby were barely recognizable chunks of melted metal.

Concussions from the blasts shattered windows 10 miles away in Las Vegas, jolted airliners in flight, peeled off roofs, upended cars and threw workers through walls. Broken windows and

cracked foundations were common in Henderson.

More than 255 people were injured, four critically.

The body of Bruce Bertram Halker, 56, vice president of operations at Pacific, was identified Thursday. Pacific officials had concluded a second worker, Leroy Westerfield, died as well.

"Mr. Westerfield had passed some time ago and had difficulty moving rapidly," said company attorney Keith Rooker. Employees at the meeting said Westerfield couldn't run. "It's my understanding that a number of people asked Mr. Westerfield to call and he said no because he had called the fire department," Rooker said.

The fire and explosions caused by an equipment malfunction, said Pacific President Gibson Jr.

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