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Texas rocked by major earthquake after experiencing three others in less than 12 hours

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By [STACY LIBERATORE FOR DAILYMAIL.COM](#)

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Texas has experienced four **earthquakes** in less than 12 hours, the largest of which measured 4.6-magnitude Tuesday morning.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) detected the latest tremor in Culberson County around 7am ET.

The first quake, a 2.9-magnitude, hit Monday night at 11pm near Mentone.



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It was followed by a 3.4-magnitude at 3am Tuesday and a 2.5-magnitude about 1.5 hours later.

The latest seismic activity was felt as far north as Roswell, **New Mexico**.

The swarm comes just days after a 5.0-magnitude quake hit about 40 miles north of the latest cluster, causing a natural gas pipeline in the Permian Basin to rupture.,

The epicenter of the February 15 earthquake was located 33 miles west of Toyah and 53 miles south of Carlsbad.

These towns are just miles away from those hit by the recent seismic events. However, officials have not linked the events as of yet.

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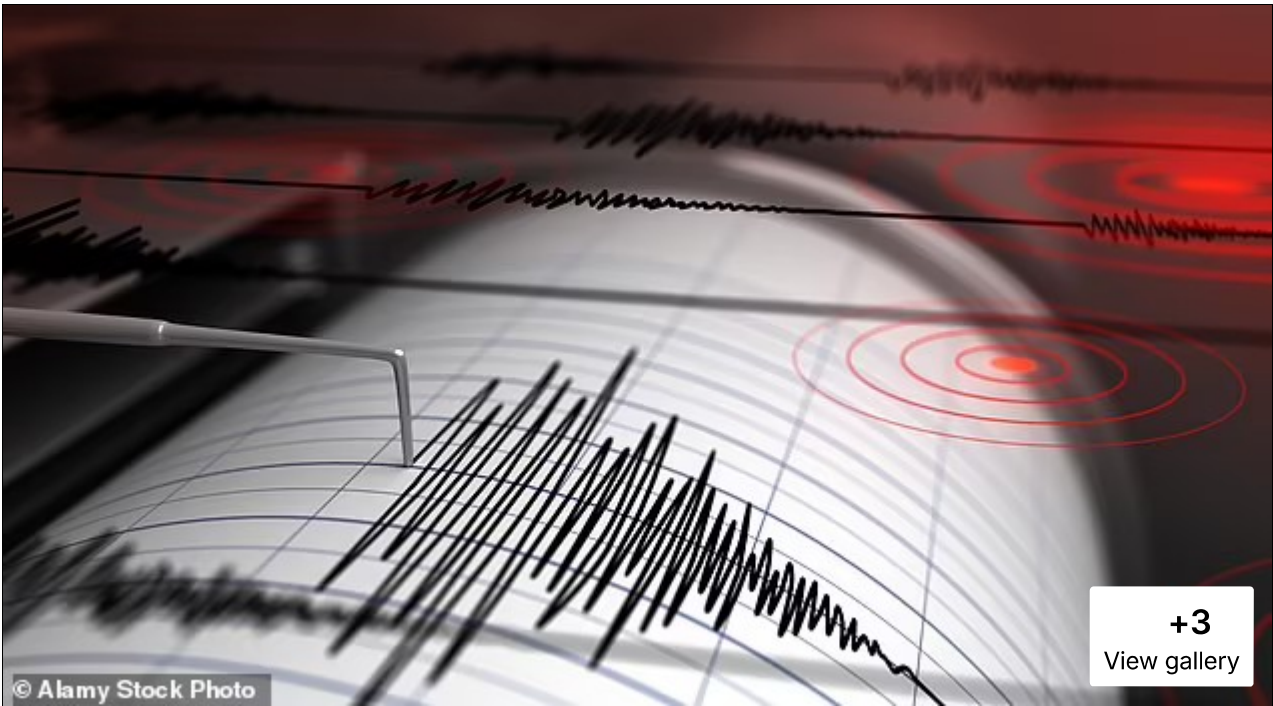
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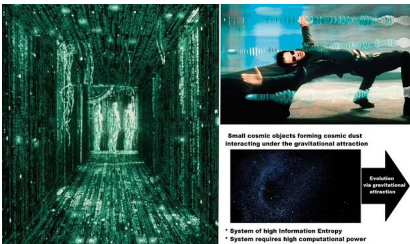
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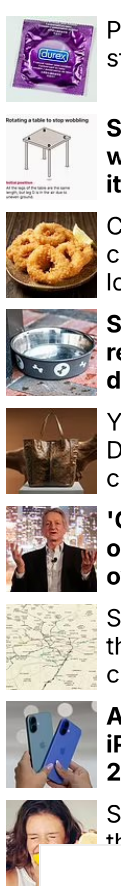
West Texas is not home to a single major fault line, but contains several faults.

That includes the Permian Basin fault zone and the Balcones Fault Zone, making the region more prone to earthquakes.

However, seismic activity in the region is primarily caused by human activity related to oil and gas production, including fracking and wastewater disposal.

More than 3,600 earthquakes have been reported in Texas since 1900, with more than 70 reaching a magnitude 4 or higher and seven over a magnitude 5.

The 4.6-magnitude had a shallow depth of just four miles, suggesting it was felt widely throughout West Texas, southern New Mexico and northern Mexico.



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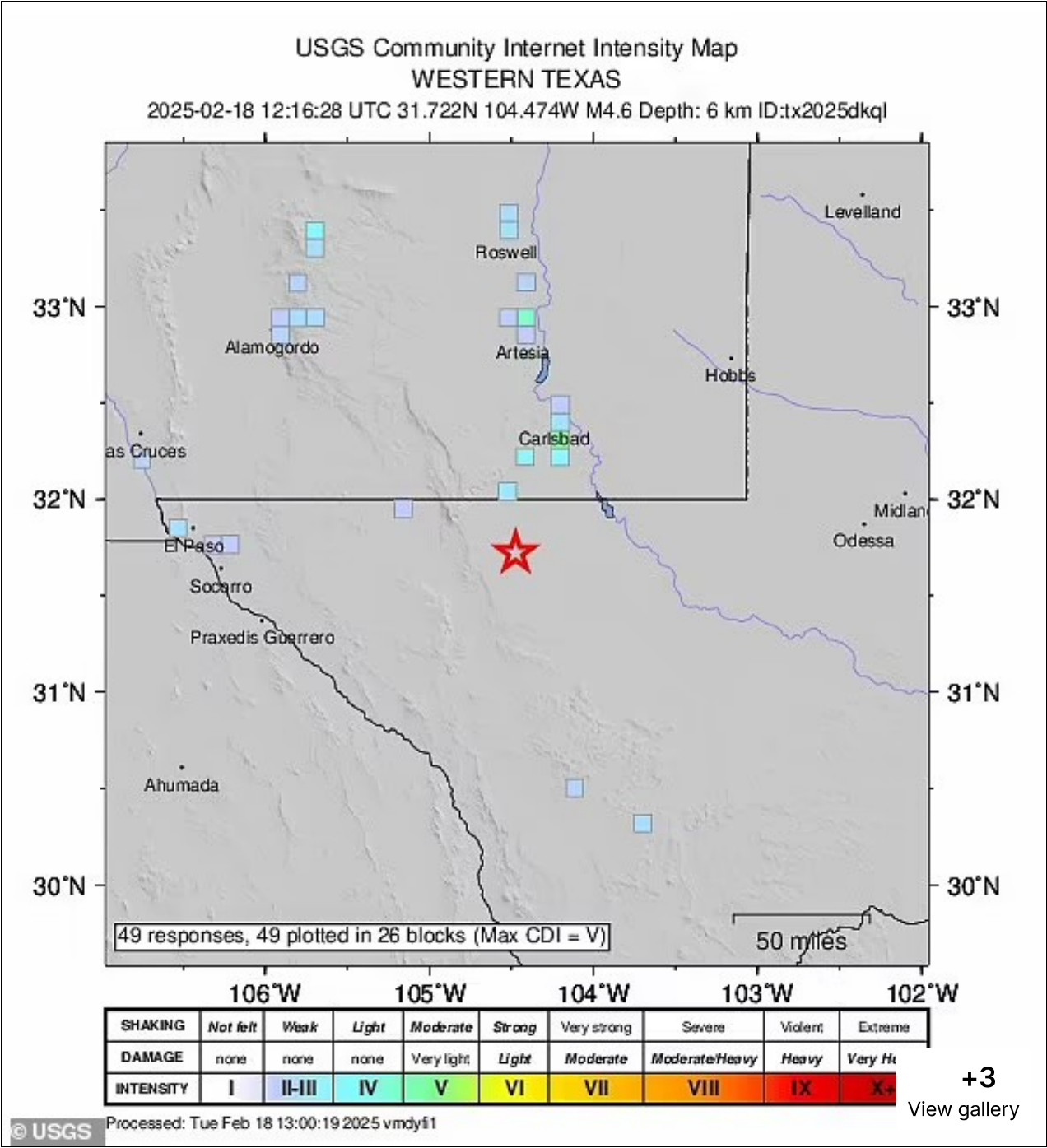
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No significant damages or injuries have been reported at this time.

The USGS shows a 39 percent change of a 3.0-magnitude or above aftershock hitting within the next week and a 12 percent change of another 4.0-magnitude or more.

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There is a two percent change of a major 5.0-magnitude quake.

The major 5.0-magnitude quake that hit over the weekend was followed by at least 16 aftershocks, ranging in magnitudes from 1.4 to 3.8, [The Watchers](#) reported.

The rupture is the second in eight months, sparking concerns that there is a link between fracking activities and seismic events in West Texas.

Fracking involves miners drilling deep into the earth's surface and releasing high-pressure water that creates a small explosion to release natural gas and oil that can be used to create energy.

Texas is listed as the number one state for fracking, and as of February 2017, it was home to 279,615 oil and gas wells but by 2023, that number had increased to 373,133 active wells.

The action brings groundwater to the surface and when it is injected back into the ground, it puts pressure on fault lines, resulting in more earthquakes.



Texas is listed as the number one state for fracking, and as of February 2017, it was home to 279,615 oil and gas wells but by 2023, that number had increased to 373,133 active wells

'The practice of deep injection of oil field wastewater, known as saltwater disposal, has the strongest tie to the increase in the rate of earthquakes and to the strongest earthquakes that have occurred in recent years,' said Peter Hennings, research professor at The University of Texas's Bureau of Economic Geology.

Researchers from Southern Methodist University in Texas found in 2015 that the state's earthquakes were due to fracking.

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They looked at 84 days from November 2013 to January 2014, finding 27 magnitude two or greater earthquakes hit around Azle that is home to fracking practises.

Matthew Hornbach, a Southern Methodist University geophysicist, said the timing and location of the quakes correlates better to the drilling and injection than any other possible reason.

'There appears to be little doubt about the conclusion that the earthquakes were in fact induced,' USGS seismologist Susan Hough, who wasn't part of the study team, said.

'There's almost an abundance of smoking guns in this case.'

Massive amounts of brine taken out of the ground with the gas, said study co-author William Ellsworth of the USGS. Removing the saltwater changes the underground pressure.

But the deep injection of the wastes still is the principle culprit, Ellsworth said.

Azle sits atop the large underground Barrett Shale natural gas formation.

Texas

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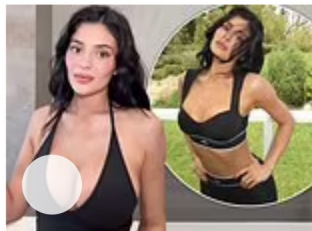
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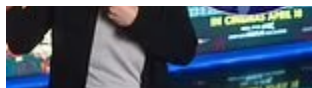


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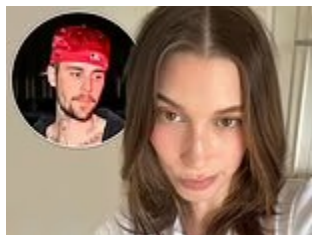
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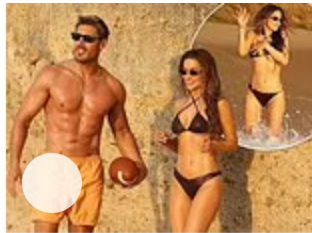
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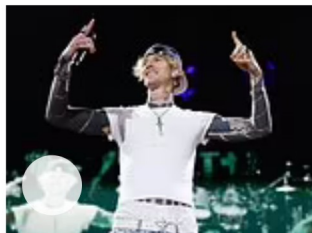
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