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UNC records shock of quake in Mexico

By SARAH WEST Staff Writer

A major earthquake that injured more than 100 persons in Mexico City Wednesday was one of the largest quakes ever recorded by the UNC Geology Department's seismic station.

Seismic station CEH three miles south of Chapel Hill measured the quake 7.8 on the Richter scale, seismograph assistant Ken Taylor said. Any earthquake that registers above 7 on the scale is designated a major schock.

The National Earthquake Information Service in Colorado said the earthquake. which struck at 2:53 p.m. EST, was centered 300 miles southeast of Mexico City. The initial tremor was followed 12 minutes later by a shorter quake, and about an hour later by another strong tremor. Tremors continued into the early evening.

The quake jolted Mexico City and much of southern Mexico. The tremors shattered windows, shook buildings and sent people fleeing into the streets. Several buildings in the heart of Mexico City were destroyed and at least four fires were started. More than 100 persons were reported injured, but a Red Cross spokesperson said there were no deaths

Taylor said although Mexico City is located 300 miles away from the center of the quake, it is vulnerable because of its location. "Mexico City is located on a

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lake bed-that's not a very stable surface," said Taylor. "Therefore, when the quake waves go through it, the buildings on that surface will shake more than if they were on a solid surface.

"When an earthquake occurs, the waves travel out from the center and keep going until they disperse." he said. "For example, when our instruments recorded the quake, the ground under Chapel Hill was actually shaking from the waves, although we didn't feel it." Taylor added in a quake of such magnitude, the waves would travel around the world at least once.

Seismic station CEH was established in 1953 by the late Dr. Gerald R. McCarthy of the geology department. Taylor, who has been a seismographic assistant for four years, said his duties include maintenance of the station, monitoring the instruments for quakes and calling in findings to the National Earthquake Information Service.

"Our instruments can pick up any quake in the world registering 5.5 and up on the Richter scale," said Taylor. "That means we can catch any significant earthquake."

The station's instruments are located at McCarthy Geophysics Laboratory. Data recorded by the instruments are sent over the telephone lines to the geology department where they are recorded on paper.

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News in Brief

Shah opponents hold wildcat strikes

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) -Opponents of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi pressured Iran's military government Wednesday with a wave of wildcat strikes aimed at disrupting the oil-rich nation's battered economy and keeping the country on edge.

The walkouts, the latest in a string of stoppages and slowdowns, came amid fears that the labor troubles will soon spread into the streets during the Moslem holy period of Moharram that starts later this week.

Firms fined in hotel collapse

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)-Two firms engaged in demolition work on the Joplin hotel that collapsed on Nov. 11 and killed two workers were cited and fined by a federal agency Wednesday for willful safety violations.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration charged that the firms failed to perform engineering studies of the building before doing their work.

Soviet Union announces defense budget

MOSCOW (AP) The Soviet Union announced Wednesday a 1979 defense budget of 17.2 billion rubles-about \$26.4 billion-which it said was necessary to counter "aggressive imperialist circles" attempting to achieve military superiority.

Western experts, however, estimate that the Kremlin's real military budget is probably five times the reported amount, most of it said to be hidden elsewhere in the budget, which for 1979 will total 268.8 billion rubles, or \$413.9 billion.

Murder suspect in psychiatric custody

RALEIGH (AP) - A Raleigh woman, charged with first-degree murder in connection with the stabbing death of her husband Tuesday night, was ordered into the custody of psychiatrists at Dorothea Dix Hospital Wednesday.

Helen Stewart Matof is charged in the death of Bernard S. Martof, a zoology professor at North Carolina State University.

'Boat people' called big business

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)-The mounting exodus of Vietnamese "boat people" across the South China Sea to Malaysia is big business involving racketeers and perhaps even the Vietnamese government, Malaysian officials claimed Wednesday.

Ghazali Shafie, the country's home affairs minister, addressing a dinner of Southeast Asian security officials, said refugees paid about 15 ounces of gold, or about \$3,000, to get out of Vietnam.

وكالالحكم والتحديد والمحاوم

GUEST LECTURE

U.S. trade deficit rises; growth index shows gain

WASHINGTON (AP) A sharp decline in exports of food, chemicals and gold pushed the nation's trade deficit to \$2.1 billion in October the worst in three months, the government said Wednesday.

Both the U.S. stock market and world currency markets reacted negatively to the news. The Dow Jones industrial averages was down by 9.70 points to 794.44 in the first lew hours of slow trading, while the dollar eased against most other major currencies.

Meanwhile, the index of economic indicators increased by a moderate 0.5 percent in October, pointing to continuing economic growth even though it was below the 0.9 percent advance in September.

The index is designed to indicate future economic trends. A big increase in contracts and orders for plant and equipment was the major contributor to the October gain.

The U.S. trade deficit now totals \$24.8 billion for the first 10 months of 1978. Along with inflation, it has been a major cause of the steep decline in the dollar during the past two years.

Officials estimate there already are about \$500 billion in U.S. dollars held abroad, most of them from past trade deficits. As the supply of dollars outpaces foreign demand, which it has, the value declines.

Chairman G. William Miller of the Federal Reserve Board said Wednesday the decline in the dollar has added about 1 percent to the nation's inflation rate in 1978, and will raise it even more in 1979.

The dollar decline alone, he said, is costing Americans between \$10 billion and \$15 billion a year in lost purchasing power.

The October trade deficit followed two months of shrinking deficits and was the worst since a deficit of just under \$3 billion in July. The deficit for September was \$1.7 billion.

U.S. officials sought to put the best possible face on the figures. Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal said they were "consistent with, if not below, our expectations."

Exports in October declined \$415 million or 3.1 percent to a total of \$13 billion, down from \$13.4 billion in September, while imports were virtually unchanged at \$15.1 billion.

The size of the decline in exports was the largest in 10 months. But Blumenthal said much of this was due to a \$224 million decline in gold exports that reflected what he described as erratic. overseas purchases of U.S. gold, which were up sharply the previous month.

"Importantly, our balance of trade in the area of manufactured goods and industrial materials is continuing to show substantial improvement." he said.

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Announcements

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