

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Earthquake strikes off Alaska coast

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A severe earthquake struck off the south-central Alaska coast, shaking Anchorage 270 miles away.

There were no immediate reports of injury or damage, but thousands of coastal residents awakened by sirens and police loudspeakers fled homes in low-lying coastal communities.

The quake struck at 2:36 CST, and had a preliminary Richter scale magnitude of 6.9, said Alec Medbery of the Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer.

The U.S. Geological Survey at Golden, Colo., said it recorded the quake at 6.8 on the Richter scale.

Officials issued a tidal wave warning for most of the Alaska and British Columbia coasts. Although it was later canceled, coastal communities are being evacuated.

Food airlift may be only hope for Ethiopians

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Emergency airlifts of food are the only hope for tens of thousands of drought victims in northern Ethiopia whose relief pipeline has been disrupted by rebel attacks, the chief of U.N. relief efforts said Monday.

"We had hoped to avoid the colossal expense of an airlift, but most relief agencies agree that an immediate airlift is needed," said Michael Priestley, in charge of the United Nations relief program in Ethiopia.

Priestley said he hoped airlifts could begin in the next couple of weeks to Tigray province, where 75 percent of the crop has failed and 1 million people face starvation.

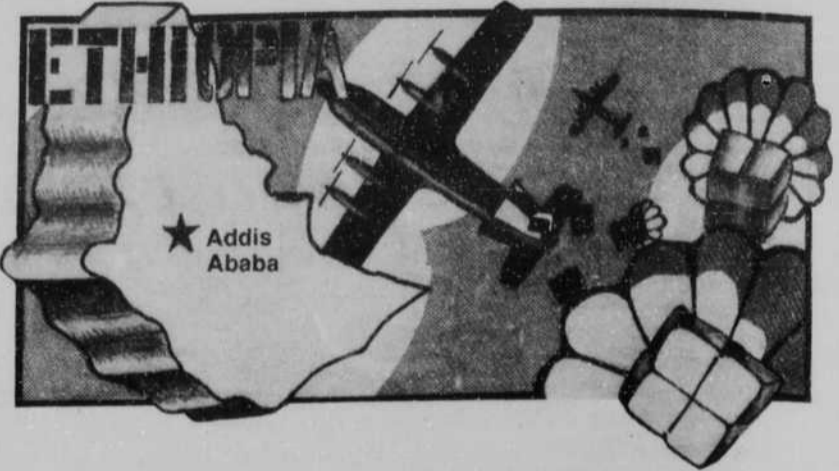
In neighboring Eritrea, crops are a total loss and another 1 million

people are at risk.

Attacks on truck convoys by rebels in Eritrea have prompted the government to close intermittently the main road to Tigray, choking off supplies. Eritrea still is able to get food from the provinces' Red Sea port of Massawa.

Trucks, already scarce in the north, were destroyed by the dozens in the attacks, including 23 U.N.-flagged trucks.

Normally this would be the height of the harvest in Ethiopia. But fields stand plowed and unplanted in some areas because the rains failed in June. In other areas, too little rain produced stunted crops of wheat and sorghum. Livestock now graze on food intended for people.



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

Some dismiss report as partisan indictment

WASHINGTON — The congressional Iran-Contra report paints a picture of a Reagan administration at odds with the law and the Constitution, but minority Republicans dismissed it Tuesday as a partisan indictment of the president that ignores foreign policy questions raised by the affair.

The report says President Reagan flirted with constitutional crisis by creating a White House atmosphere that encouraged evasion of legal requirements and flouting of proper procedures for reaching foreign policy goals.

It also says the administration violated the Constitution by going

to third counties to solicit donations for Nicaragua's Contra rebels at a time when Congress barred even indirect military aid to them.

And it is sharply critical of Attorney General Edwin Meese III, questioning why he delayed launching a criminal investigation of the affair when it became public a year ago.

The voluminous document, reviewing in detail the story of how administration officials sold arms to Iran in hopes of freeing Americans held hostage in Lebanon, then diverted some \$4 million of the profits to the Contras, is due to be released today.

Officials continue budget battle

WASHINGTON — White House officials and congressional leaders, pledging to conclude a deficit-cutting deal this week, met into the night Tuesday; but agreement remained elusive.

"We have no choice but to put it together," said Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. "We have to show that the president and Congress

can work together. Otherwise, the psychological fallout on the financial markets will be very bad," he said.

White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker said everybody wanted to agree, and even though it was "sort of a moving target and (sometimes) it seems like it recedes," success was "certainly a possibility."

The goal is to reduce the deficit for fiscal 1988 by at least \$23 billion.

Gorbachev asked to address Congress, Cabinet Dec. 9

WASHINGTON — Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has been invited to address a joint meeting of Congress during his summit with President Reagan next month, House officials announced Tuesday.

The White House said Reagan should be accorded "the same oppor-

tunity" to address the Soviet people.

Gorbachev is expected to address Congress and the Cabinet at the joint meeting at 10 a.m. EST on Dec. 9, said Wilson Morris, a spokesman for House Speaker Jim Wright. Gorbachev would be the first communist leader to be accorded the honor.

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