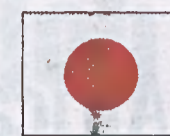


NEWS IN BRIEF

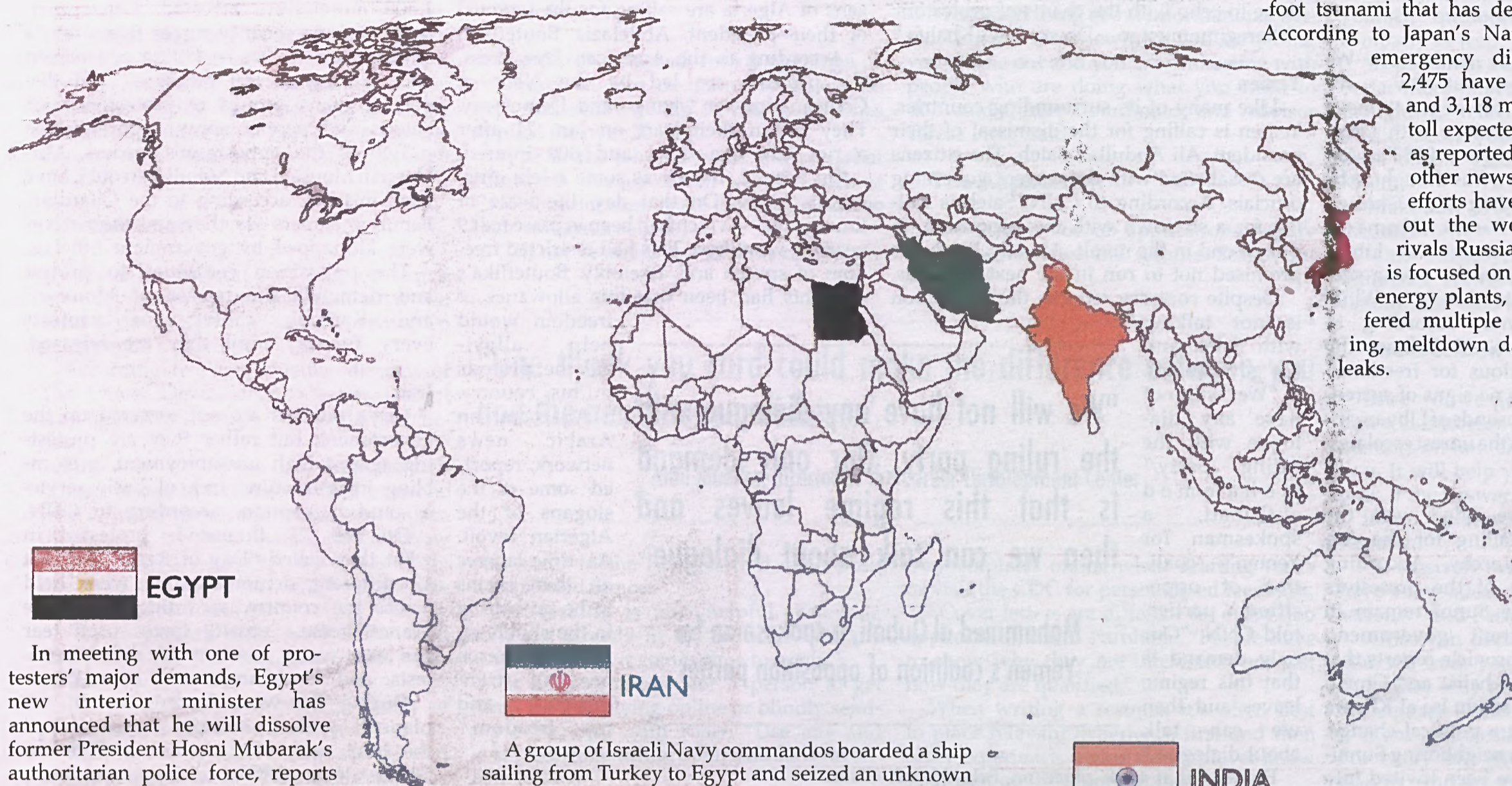
STORIES BY ALEX MILLER

GRAPHIC BY BRÉE SHEPARD



JAPAN

A magnitude 8.9 earthquake struck off the coast of Japan on March 11 and caused a 23-foot tsunami that has devastated the country. According to Japan's National Police Agency emergency disaster headquarters, 2,475 have been reported dead and 3,118 missing, with the death toll expected to rise above 10,000, as reported by the Guardian and other news sources. While relief efforts have been made throughout the world, including from rivals Russia and China, attention is focused on the country's nuclear energy plants, one of which has suffered multiple explosions, overheating, meltdown dangers, and radiation leaks.



EGYPT

In meeting with one of protesters' major demands, Egypt's new interior minister has announced that he will dissolve former President Hosni Mubarak's authoritarian police force, reports The Wall Street Journal. Following a protester raid of the agency's offices and subsequent seizure of evidence of their intrusive monitoring of civilians, Egypt's general prosecutor arrested the agency's head and 47 officers who are accused of shredding and burning documents. The move has received praise from throughout Egypt and the international community.



IRAN

A group of Israeli Navy commandos boarded a ship sailing from Turkey to Egypt and seized an unknown amount of weaponry, reports Aljazeera. According to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the weapons originated in Iran. They were being smuggled to Hamas in the Gaza Strip and were "destined for use against Israel," reports The New York Times. The ship, named Victoria, was intercepted 200 miles off the coast and had spent time in a Syrian port where two Iranian warships are docked after having sailed through the Suez Canal in recent weeks—a move considered aggressive by Israel.



INDIA

In a trend breaking from tradition, countries throughout the world have stepped up their role in fighting piracy. According to the Associated Press, 17 countries have prosecuted over 850 pirates in the past two years, including five sentenced to life in prison in the U.S. and 61 currently facing trial in India. In response to growing violence perpetrated by pirates, the Indian government is considering including armed guards on merchant ships traveling throughout the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden, reports the Hindustan Times.

North Carolina population growth surged over decade

By Chris Roe
STAFF WRITER

A population surge has brought a flood of social changes in North Carolina, with business, retiree and demographic changes being affected significantly.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that North Carolina's population grew by 18.5 percent over the last decade.

"Traditionally, we have viewed population growth as essential to economic growth, which has been viewed as key to improving our economic well-being," said Professor of Economics Bob Williams in an e-mail interview. "More people and families mean more customers for our businesses and more employees to meet the increased sales."

Rapid immigration of various ethnic groups contributes to the state socially, culturally and economically.

"(Immigrants) have impacted the cultural offerings in our community

as well," said Williams. "Many are relatively unskilled and work in low-pay positions, while some have the resources to start successful businesses."

Within the increase of ethnic groups in North Carolina, Hispanics are at the forefront. According to USA Today, North Carolina's Hispanic population boomed by 111 percent, placing the state eleventh highest in the nation for Hispanic population at 800,120.

North Carolina does not rely on any one ethnic group, and all ethnicities are positively affected by economic growth and education, according to USA Today.

The population growth may also play a role in the state's politics.

According to Associate Professor of Political Science Kyle Dell, the state's growth contributes to increased diversity, which has

the potential to grab Democrats' attention.

"As some of these racial groups tend to be historically reliable votes for Democrats, it is possible that Democrats could see this as an

"More people and families mean more customers for our businesses and more employees to meet the increased sales."

Bob Williams, professor of economics

advantage," said Dell in an e-mail interview.

Still, counting these votes to be in favor of the Democrats is not exactly certain.

"As these groups grow, move from

other places or other countries, and settle in new patterns throughout the state, I would hesitate to count these votes as reliably in one party or another," said Dell.

Ideology, according to Dell, is not enough to determine someone's vote, as this is not consistent. North Carolina politics have shifted over the years, with Democratic President Barack Obama winning the state in 2008 and voters painting the political canvas Republican red in the 2010 Congressional elections.

Growth in Greensboro slightly exceeds the state's average, with a population growth of 20 percent, totaling 269,666 people, according to the News and Record.

For Guilford County, the News and Record reported ethnic proportions to be 58.4 percent white, 33.3 percent black and four percent Asian, with Hispanics at 7.7 percent.

Guilford County saw a population increase of 16 percent over the past 10 years — the state's third largest. In 2008, CNN Money placed Raleigh — which experienced the highest rate of population growth in the state — twentieth in the "100 Best Places to Live and Launch" and described the expanding city as having a "thriving tech industry, central location amid major research and business centers."

However, expansion is not without cons. CNN Money also noted that Raleigh's infrastructure is "struggling to keep up with its population growth."

Asheville, the fastest-growing city in North Carolina's west, is experiencing exceptional growth. According to the website of Asheville's Citizen Times, State Data Center Coordinator Bob Coats said the growth reflects people leaving the Northeast for better climates and jobs in the South.

In the last decade North Carolina has witnessed a surge in its population.