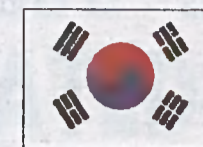


NEWS IN BRIEF

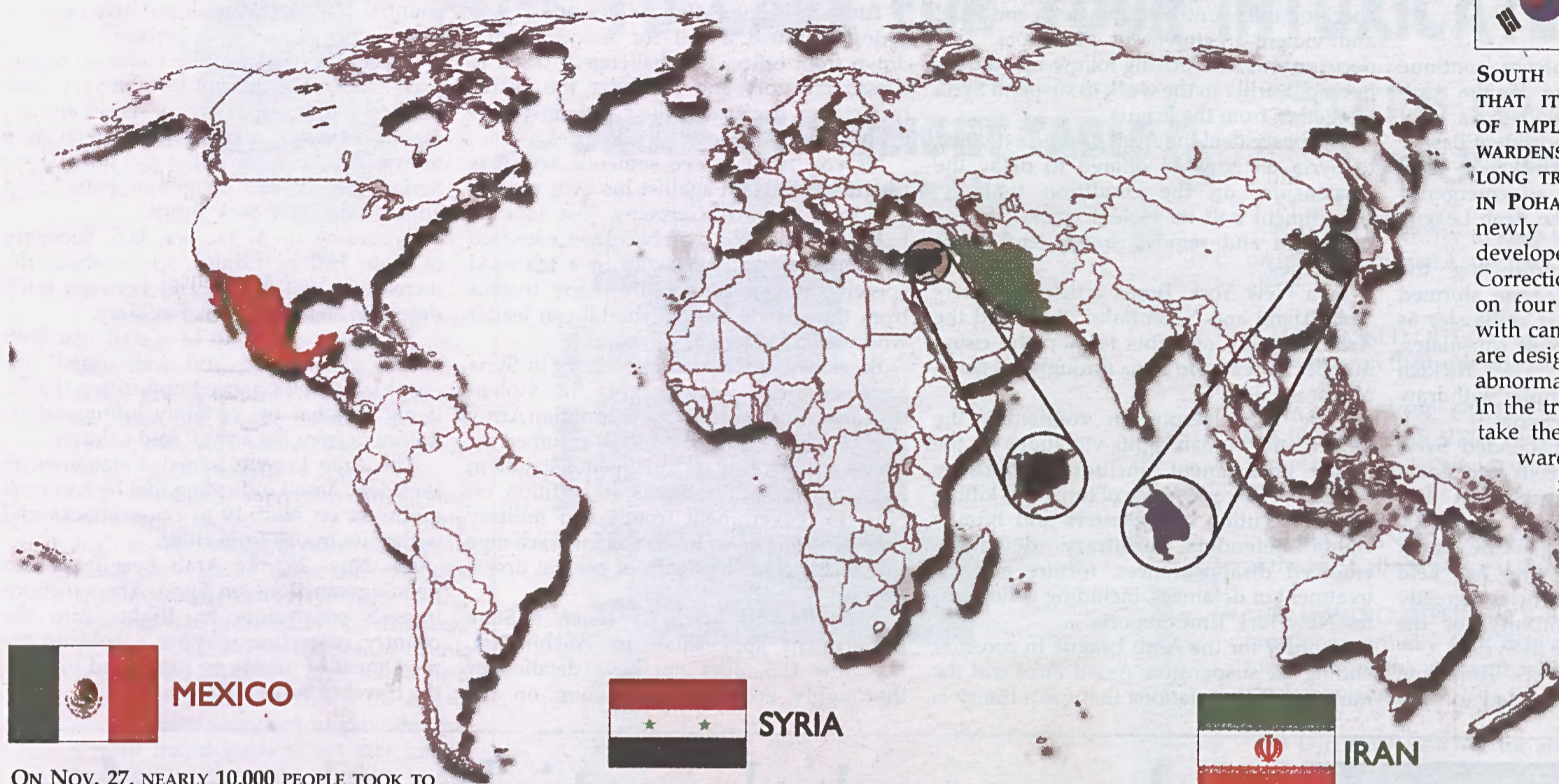
STORIES BY BECCA HELLER

GRAPHIC BY DANIEL VASILES



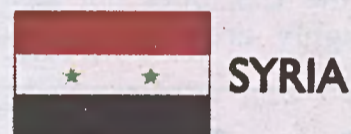
SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL BEGIN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING ROBOTIC PRISON WARDENS IN MARCH, WITH A MONTH-LONG TRIAL TAKING PLACE IN A JAIL IN POHANG. According to BBC, the newly designed robot wardens, developed by the Asian Forum for Corrections, are five feet high, move on four wheels and are equipped with cameras and other sensors that are designed to allow them to detect abnormal behavior among prisoners. In the trial, three "automatons" will take their place among the prison wardens, monitoring inmates for risky behavior and alerting human guards if a problem is detected. The trial, which cost \$1bn, is the latest in a series of investments by the South Korean government, which aims to be a world leader in the field of robotics.



MEXICO

ON NOV. 27, NEARLY 10,000 PEOPLE TOOK TO THE STREETS OF MEXICO CITY WEARING ELABORATE AND GRUESOME MAKEUP IN WHAT ORGANIZERS ARE CALLING "THE BIGGEST ZOMBIE WALK EVER HELD." According to BBC, the previous record was held in 2010 by Asbury Park, where 4,093 zombies marched in 2010; a group in Brisbane, Australia also claims to have held the record with 8,000 people joining a zombie walk in October. The popularity of zombie walks has grown significantly more popular in recent years. Across the globe, television, movies, video games and literature have fueled the craze for dressing up. BBC reports that many cultural critics link the phenomenon to economic austerity or a critique of consumerism, but participants usually say they are driven simply by a desire for fun and, of course, brains.



SYRIA

ON NOV. 30, FOLLOWING ITS EXPULSION FROM THE ARAB LEAGUE, SYRIA WAS HIT WITH A STRICT SET OF NEW SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT. The sanctions, which include freezing government assets, suspending loans and banning all military sales, are aimed at convincing Syrian President Bashar Assad to halt the bloody crackdown on citizens, which has gone on for more than eight months and has resulted in over 3,500 deaths. "Every bullet fired, every bombed mosque has eliminated the legitimacy of the Syrian leadership and has widened the gap between us," Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said in a news conference in Ankara, according to the L.A. Times. "Syria has squandered the last chance that it was given."



IRAN

ON NOV. 30, THE U.K. ANNOUNCED ITS DECISION TO EXPEL ALL IRANIAN DIPLOMATS FOLLOWING THE ATTACK ON THE U.K. EMBASSY IN TEHRAN THE DAY BEFORE. The storming of the embassy followed Britain's decision to impose sanctions on Iran, which came as a response to the alarming progression of Iran's nuclear development. On Nov. 30, U.K. Foreign Secretary William Hague demanded that the Iranian embassy in London be closed immediately and called for the evacuation of all diplomatic staff in Tehran, BBC reports. While the relations between the U.K. and Iran have now reached their lowest level, the U.K. has not yet completely severed relationships with Tehran. "We will discuss these events and further action which needs to be taken in the light of Iran's continued pursuit of a nuclear weapons programme," Hague said to BBC.

APEC strives for green growth and sustainability

By Bryan Dooley
STAFF WRITER

Each year an increasing amount of greenhouse gases is emitted into the atmosphere, both naturally and through human activities. This increase has become a global issue. Therefore, one of the leading economic forums has decided to address the issue.

On Nov. 13, in Honolulu, Hawaii, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation announced an initiative to stimulate green growth and sustainability, as reported in Reuters.

APEC is the leading economic alliance between 21 countries in the Asia-Pacific region including the U.S., Russia, Japan and China. The cooperation's main goal is to ensure sustainable economic growth. The most measurable proposal is a plan to lower the tariffs on environmental goods to five percent by 2015.

The APEC countries comprise a majority of the fastest-growing economies in the world and also some of the biggest producers of greenhouse gases; this includes China and the U.S., who are the top two.

"APEC has traditionally been a laboratory for some of the best and newest ideas in global

commerce," said U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Ron Kirk in a statement about the new announcement. "We believe the outcomes of this year will keep APEC's agenda on the cutting edge for the next 20 years."

According to an article from Reuters, the agreement is cutting-edge because APEC

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is a major economic alliance that accounts for "about 60 percent of current trade in environmental goods and services."

One major obstacle for the agreement is that it hinges on voluntary compliance, which means all of the countries have to cooperate with each other to accomplish green growth.

"Generally speaking, if you only have voluntary goals with no way to back them

up, very rarely are they met," said Angie Moore, associate professor of geology.

Another major goal of the cooperation is to cut the energy intensity of all APEC countries by at least 45 percent by 2035, according to The Japan Times. Scientists defined energy intensity as "a measure of energy consumption based on gross domestic

product."

China is important in this agreement because they are the largest producer of solar panels and their technology is the most advanced in the world.

"China is probably the most influential player in this game," Moore said. "If they decide not to go along with it, the initiative will be highly ineffective."

Skepticism towards the plan is not limited to the fact that the plan is restricted to voluntary involvement.

"Reducing tariffs on China's environmental products such as solar panels weakens the U.S. efforts to increase domestic production," said H. James Morrison, a junior studying sustainability in public policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "The plan solidifies China as a major player in domestic economy."

Some critics have said the APEC agreement puts the U.S. in a hypocritical position regarding environmental issues.

"We have not been able to do anything domestically, and we never signed the Kyoto Protocol," Moore said. "We do not have national renewable energy standards or any profound investment in renewable energy."

Despite the U.S.'s failure to address environmental issues domestically, as critics suggest, supporters of the APEC agreement see it as a major step forward in the greening of the global community.

"The fact that APEC is a primarily economic organization that is actually looking at this concept of greening and thinking about it in terms of revenue generation and trade is kind of exciting," Moore said.