

## NEWS IN BRIEF

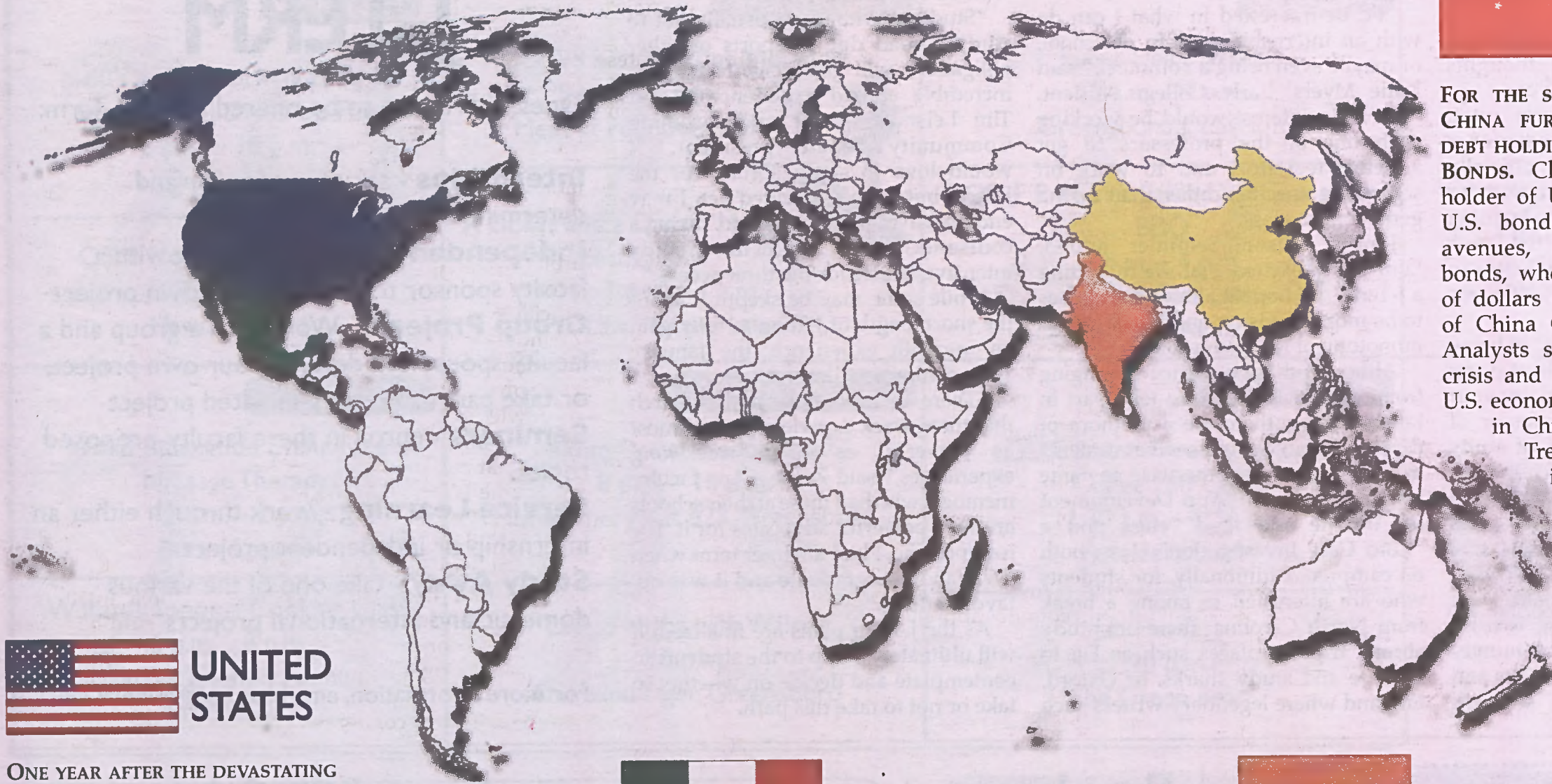
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CHINA

FOR THE SECOND MONTH IN A ROW, CHINA FURTHER INCREASED ITS U.S. DEBT HOLDING, BUYING \$12.7BN OF U.S. BONDS. China, already the largest holder of U.S. debt, now holds over U.S. bonds. "There are not many avenues, other than government bonds, where one can invest billions of dollars every day," Charles Chaw of China Consulting told the BBC. Analysts suggest that the Eurozone crisis and the gradual upturn of the U.S. economy has likely played a part in China's decisions to buy U.S. Treasuries. "Given the situation in the the eurozone, the U.S. Treasuries are a much safer bet," said Mr Chaw.



UNITED STATES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE DEVASTATING BP OIL SPILL, FISHERMEN, SCIENTISTS AND SEAFOOD PROCESSORS ARE REPORTING DISTURBING NUMBERS OF MUTATED SHRIMP, FISH, AND CRABS COMING OUT OF THE GULF OF MEXICO AND SURROUNDING WATERS. In addition to seeing a general drop in the population of many underwater species, fishermen report unsettling deformations including eyeless shrimp and crabs without claws. "We are also seeing eyeless fish, and fish lacking even eye-sockets, and fish with lesions, fish without covers over their gills, and others with large pink masses hanging off their eyes and gills," said lifelong Louisiana-native fisherman Darla Rooks to Al Jazeera. "They are still alive, but you open them up and they smell like they've been dead for a week." There seems to be no doubt in peoples' minds that these bizarre mutations are a direct result of the BP oil spill. "We've fished here all our lives and have never seen anything like this," fisherman Sydney Schwartz told Al Jazeera.



MEXICO

MEXICO'S NATIONAL DISASTER PREVENTION CENTER RAISED THE VOLCANO ALERT TO "YELLOW STAGE THREE" — THE THIRD-HIGHEST LEVEL — AS FEARS GROW THAT VOLCANO POPOCATEPETL MAY SOON ERUPT. Popocatepetl, Mexico's second-highest peak, has begun to spew steam and ash, and several schools within the volcano's radius have been closed in precautionary measures, BBC reports. Evacuation shelters are being prepared, but officials from the National Disaster Prevention Center have said the alert could remain in effect for weeks or even months until the volcano's activity decreases. "We can hear the roar of the volcano," said local resident Concepcion Perez to AFP. "Sometimes we can feel its force."



INDIA

ON APRIL 18, INDIA ANNOUNCED ITS PLANS TO TEST A NEW LONG-RANGE MISSILE THAT COULD POTENTIALLY CARRY A NUCLEAR WARHEAD AS FAR AS BEIJING, CHINA. "If you are in a hostile environment, power respects power," said defense expert Commodore C. Uday Bhaskar to the Washington Post in explanation of India's decision. Sandwiched between nuclear-armed rivals, India seeks to improve its strategic capabilities and level out the playing field by possessing a nuclear threat equal to that of China. "It is India's dream missile — I call it a game changer," V.K. Saraswat, head of the Defense Research and Development Organization, told TimesNow television. "It is going to completely change the scenario with respect to our strategic defense."

## AUTISM

## Study links obesity in mothers to child autism: Will your health impact the future of your child?

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(DNA) and gene expression (protein production)."

It has also been suggested that autism is a genetic disorder. However, parental age, premature birth, and failure to take prenatal vitamins are also contributing factors.

Recently, the CDC came out with a study stating that one in 88 U.S. children have autism; this is up from one in 110 in a 2009 report. The other correlating statistic to this is that a third of U.S. women who are in the age range to reproduce are considered obese.

It is important to note that women who are obese are at a greater risk of having diabetes and/or high blood pressure, in addition to their risks of having an autistic child. According to the study done by the CDC, insulin resistance is a factor in how

obese mothers could have children with autism.

"When insulin isn't made or used properly by the body — as can be the case in some

may have a particularly potent effect on fetal brains, which are known to need a lot of sugar."

The bigger significance of this new

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obese people — it alters how sugar, which serves as energy for the body, is produced and transported to tissues including the brain," the study reported. "Such disruption

research is the alarming statistics of obesity in women in the U.S. and what that means. This research should be heard as an outcry to the nation. To a certain extent, women that

plan to have children are responsible for the health of their child and, consequently, the health of themselves.

There is no quick fix or easy solution to obesity. While it can be perpetuated by genetics, it can be somewhat controlled by physical exercise and maintaining a balanced diet.

"Obviously, nutrition and exercise are important," said Men's Soccer Coach Jeff Bateson.

This is something that we've all grown up hearing, and yet the statistics show that the problem of obesity is becoming more serious each year.

It is likely that the solution, while requiring individual discipline and awareness, will also require a complete shift in the way our society views health, nutrition, exercise and convenience.