

Friday on the facebook

From: **Project BPM at International Islamic University, Islamabad**

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Business and Politics in the Muslim World (BPM) refers to a study funded by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, and is conducted at the International Islamic University (IIU), Islamabad.



Who are we?

Friday on the Facebook is the weekly e-letter of the project: Globalized Business and Politics: A View from the Muslim World". The e-letter is a snapshot of the detailed data gathering and analysis which our research team does each week.

Why should one add another e-letter to many similar exercises already underway? We have pondered this question and here is what we believe to be our possible contribution or *Competitive Advantage*.

- ◆ We make the e-letter a multi-layered presentation: in other words Friday on the Face-book provides clicks to deeper levels of information; for comprehension (Maps and Data) as well as for elaboration and analysis (complete weekly Events data, supplementary commentaries and related links).
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter is grounded in a thorough Analytical framework of Relocation of Power in the 21st Century.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter is targeted to produce an annual synthesis of Global Trends. Each issue will serve as an input for the annual analysis.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter is designed to become a teaching tool for class-room instruction in courses dealing with global political sociology or related fields.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter is designed to build a theoretically inclined community of political sociologists.

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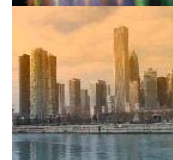
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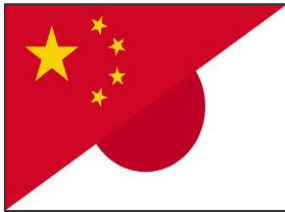
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Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of 23 surveys. 3 of these are multi-country surveys & the rest are national surveys. 9 polling organizations have been represented.



Topic of the week:

On Japan China Relations

- This page is devoted to opinions of countries whose polling activity is generally not known very widely or where a recent topical issue requires special attention .

Commentary: Views On The Island Dispute With China And The Recent Fishing Vessel Collision.

In the wake of the recent China fishing vessel collision incident most Japanese favor a hard line against what they consider a violation of Japanese proprietary rights.

On Japan China Relations- Views on the Island Dispute:

Q-. In regards to the collision of a Chinese fishing vessel in Japanese territorial waters at the Senkaku Islands , prosecutors have decided to release and not press charges against the captain without “planning ahead and taking into consideration the future of Japan-China relations.” Do you think this decision was appropriate or not appropriate?

Appropriate	19
Not appropriate	72
No answer	9

Should deepen its alliance with theU.S.	71
Not necessary to deepen its alliance with theU.S.	19
No answer	10

On Japan US Relations-

Q- To address issues surrounding the Senkaku Islands in the future, do you think Japan should deepen its alliance with the U.S. or is it not necessary to deepen its alliance?

On Foreign Policy Of Current Government-

Greatly feel anxious	39
Somewhat feel anxious	45
Somewhat do not feel anxious	11
Do not feel anxious	3
No answer	3

Q- Do you feel anxious or not anxious about the DPJ administration's foreign and security policies? Please choose one from the following four answers:



Support for Current Government-

Q- Do your support or not support the Kan cabinet?

Support	53
Do not support	37
Other	6
No answer	4

SOURCE: <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/2010/poll-10-31.htm>

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

► MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA;
NORTH ASIA; EAST ASIA

► SOUTHEAST ASIA

Philippines Have High Expectations of President Noyonoy Aquino (Click for Details)

An **SWS- Social Weather Survey** poll found 44% of **Philippines** expecting Pres. Noyonoy Aquino to keep most/all of his promises in his July 26, 2010 State of the Nation Address (SONA), compared to only 19% who expected Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to keep most/all of her promises in her July 23, 2001 SONA, based on the September 2001 survey.

13 October 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)

Four in Ten Philippines Dissatisfied With Government Handling of Hostage Crisis (Click for Details)

The Third Quarter 2010 **Social Weather Survey**, conducted from September 24-27, 2010, found a plurality of 41% in **Philippines** dissatisfied with the National Administration's performance in resolving the August 23, 2010 hostage crisis that led to the death of eight tourists from Hongkong.

16 October 2010

Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings

► **EAST ASIA**

Japanese Do Not Trust China (Click for Details)

A recent **Yomiuri Shimbun** poll shows that public in **Japan** does not trust China and the majority is not happy with the Japan's government actions on dealing with the recent ship crisis with China. But a majority of almost 50 % showed confidence in their government.

October 2010

Foreign Affairs & Security » Regional Conflicts/ Issues

Multi-Country Poll- Worldwide, Financial Comfort Grows More Important With Age

(Click for Details)

Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being

Multi-Country Poll- Entrepreneur Mindset More Common in U.S. than in EU, China

(Click for Details)

Economy » Enterprise/ Investments



Africa zone

► WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTHERN AFRICA

► **SUB SAHARAN AFRICA**

2011 General Elections: Free and Fair? (Click for Details)

In a recent **NOI** polls an overwhelming majority of **Nigerians** said that they believe the 2011 Presidential elections will be free and fair.

October 2010

Domestic Politics » Elections

Multi-Country Poll- Worldwide, Financial Comfort Grows More Important With Age

(Click for Details)

Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being



Euro Americas zone

► EAST EUROPE; WEST EUROPE; NORTH AMERICA;
LATIN AMERICA & AUSTRALASIA





EUROPE

▶ WEST EUROPE

Britons Reject Joint Tory/Lib-Dem Campaign in Next General Election (Click for Details)

A majority of [Britons](#) reject the notion of the two parties currently involved in the Coalition Government contesting the next General Election in unison, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

October 15, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Political Parties](#)

Most Britons Want to Elect the Members of the House of Lords (Click for Details)

Many people in [Britain](#) are voicing support for a process that would allow them to elect the members of the House of Lords, and very few endorse the status quo, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

October 11, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Elections](#)

Scottish Public Spending Poll II (Click for Details)

An [Ipsos MORI](#) poll for BBC [Scotland](#) shows that Scots do not want to see cuts made to the NHS or increases in council tax when public spending cuts bite. Instead, they would prefer the Scottish Government to address the budget deficit by reforming universal services such as free bus travel and personal care for the elderly, as well as by freezing public sector pay and introducing charges for drivers on major roads.

October 13, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Financial systems & Institutions](#)

EU Children Relatively Free But Want More Respect (Click for Details)

A recent study published by [Eurobarometer](#) shows that children in [EU](#) countries have relatively greater freedom from responsibility and pressure and they have opportunities, support and the ability to have fun. The areas they complain about include adults not having enough confidence in them, the pressure to succeed, bullying, the risk of addiction and mental and physical threats to well-being, insufficient activities to occupy their leisure time etc.

October 2010

[Society](#) » [Family](#)



AMERICAS

▶ NORTH AMERICA

Obama Job Approval Up Again To 49% (Click for Details)

Both [American](#) President Barack Obama and Democratic Congressional candidates continue to consolidate support from party members, as Obama's job approval is back up to 49% and the party remains tied with Republicans on the question of which party's candidate voters plan to choose on Nov. 2. [Zogby Interactive survey](#)

October 11, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)

Political Allegiance Shaped by Stance on Moral Issues in U.S. (Click for Details)

[Americans](#) of all political stripes have a similar moral compass on issues such as contraception, divorce and infidelity, but some striking differences become evident when their party allegiance is assessed, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

October 11, 2010

[Society](#) » [Morality, Values & Customs](#)

Obama Performing Well Relative to Congress' Low Ratings (Click for Details)

Since he took office, President Barack Obama's job approval ratings have averaged 26 percentage points higher than Congress' approval ratings in surveys where both were measured at the same time. This is a greater presidential approval edge than what [Gallup](#) found for four of the previous five presidents, with the exception being the elder George Bush

October 15, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)

Americans Disagree on How to Fix Entitlement Programs (Click for Details)

More than three in four [Americans](#) believe the cost of the government's major entitlement programs, including Social Security and Medicare, will create major economic problems for the U.S. in the next 25 years if no changes are made to them. At the same time, Americans do not provide a mandate for raising taxes or cutting benefits to address the situation. [Gallup USA](#)

October 15, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)

Americans Still Trust Own Judgment More Than Politicians' (Click for Details)

[Americans](#) continue to have more trust in themselves to make judgments under the country's democratic system than they do in the men and women who are in political life, with 69% of Americans expressing "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of trust in the former, and 47% in the latter. [Gallup USA](#)

October 14, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [National Image/ Trust](#)

Americans' Views Vary on How Active Government Should Be (Click for Details)

[Americans](#) are essentially equally divided in their views of the role of the federal government, with one-third tilting toward a preference for a government that actively takes steps to improve the lives of its citizens, one-third preferring a limited government that performs mostly basic functions, and the remainder in the middle.

[Gallup USA](#)

October 12, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Governance](#)

Majorities in U.S. View Gov't as Too Intrusive and Powerful (Click for Details)

Record- or near-record-high percentages of [Americans](#) are critical of the size and scope of government, as measured by four [Gallup](#) trend questions updated in September. This sentiment stretches to 59% of Americans now believing the federal government has too much power, up eight percentage points from a year ago.

October 13, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Governance](#)

[Domestic Politics](#) » [National Image/ Trust](#)

Americans Choose Middle over Extremes on Gov't Functions (Click for Details)

[Americans](#) are more likely to choose middle-ground responses rather than extremes when asked about the degree of responsibility the federal government should take for a number of social and economic functions it could in theory perform. For only two functions -- protecting Americans from foreign threats and protecting consumers from unsafe products -- does a majority say the government should be totally responsible. [Gallup USA](#)

[Gallup USA](#)

October 13, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Governance](#)

Americans' Image of "Federal Government" Mostly Negative (Click for Details)

More than 7 in 10 [Americans](#) use a word or phrase that is clearly negative when providing a top-of-mind reaction to the federal government. Overall, 72% of responses about the federal government are negative, touching on its inefficiency, size, corruption, and general incompetence, with the most common specific descriptions being "too big," "confused," and "corrupt." 10% of responses are clearly positive, using words such as "good," while the remaining 18% are neutral or mixed. [Gallup USA](#)

October 11, 2010

Domestic Politics » National Image/ Trust
Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings

GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS

**Britons Call for Hunting Ban; Americans and Canadians Reject It** (Click for Details)

People in [Britain](#) are definitely more alarmed about animal cruelty than those in the [United States](#) and [Canada](#), a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found. When asked whether five specific actions amount to cruelty to animals, respondents in Britain are at odds with their American and Canadian counterparts. Four-in-five Britons (79%) believe killing animals for their fur amounts to cruelty to animals, compared to 64 % of Americans and 55 % of Canadians.

October 13, 2010

Society » Environment/ Disasters

Worldwide, Financial Comfort Grows More Important With Age (Click for Details)

Worldwide, financial comfort becomes a better determinant of life evaluation with age. Among adults surveyed in 125 countries who say they are "living comfortably" on their current incomes, those aged 55 and older rate their lives higher than those who are younger. However, among adults who are "finding it very difficult" to live on their current incomes, the opposite is true -- older respondents have lower life evaluation.

[Gallup USA](#)

October 15, 2010

Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being

Entrepreneur Mindset More Common in U.S. than in EU, China (Click for Details)

Majorities in the [U.S.](#), the [European Union](#), and [China](#) associate themselves with attitudes often ascribed to entrepreneurs. Americans, however, are more likely than those in the European Union and China to see themselves as risk takers, competitive, and confident they can accomplish difficult tasks. [Gallup USA](#)

October 12, 2010

Economy » Enterprise/ Investments

CYBERWORLD

**Gadget Ownership** (Click for Details)

A recent [Pew Research Center](#) report shows that more than 8 in 10 [Americans](#) own at least one type of modern communication device like Cell Phone, laptop, desktop, ipod, ebook reader, or any other.

October 14, 2010

Society » Media/ New Media

Video Calling and Video Chat (Click for Details)

Almost a fifth of [American](#) adults (19%) have tried video calling either online or via their cell phones. That figure comes from adding up the number of adults who said they either had made a video or teleconferencing call online (17% of adults have done that) or made video calls on their cell phones (6% of adults have done that). [Pew Research Center](#)

October 13, 2010

Society » Media/ New Media

Election Blogging (Click for Details)

The top stories in the *blogosphere* are often an eclectic mix of topics from technology and pop culture to science and war. But last week, with the 2010 midterm elections looming, each of the top five subjects focused on the election or a closely related subject -- the economic issues helping define the campaign. [Pew Research Center](#)

October 14, 2010

Society » Media/ New Media§

Events of the week in

Asia zone

► MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA;
NORTH ASIA; EAST ASIA

TURKEY**Political Front:**

In **Turkey** operations that began after a deadly clash between suspected members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and security forces continued this week.

Higher Education Board, or YÖK, head Özcan recently directed female students dismissed from university classes for wearing headscarves to contact the board and personally guaranteed the education rights of students with & without headscarves. His remarks have created controversy for legal experts since **Turkey's** constitution bans wearing of headscarves.

Turkey has become a popular destination for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world, but troubles faced by these groups mostly still exist despite a government pledge to provide them with broader rights.

Geo-strategic Front:

A **Turkish** aid group moved Israel ship attack case to International Criminal Court. Lawyers representing the **Turkish** victims of *Israel's* deadly storming of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla urged the International Criminal Court in The Hague to pursue those responsible. In the meantime **Turkish** prime minister has reiterated a call on *Israel* to make an official apology over the Jewish state's deadly raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla last May, demanding compensation as well for the relatives of the victims.

Turkish PM paid a visit to *Pakistan* and announced to help the nation in dam building in flood areas. Meanwhile **Turkey** has been providing military training to *Kazakh* troops in order to enhance military cooperation between the two countries.

Noam Chomsky said that Resistance to **Turkey's** membership in the European Union on grounds that it lags behind fulfilling human rights criteria is not fully unjustified. He however regarded racism to be the main reason behind European resistance.

Syria has reiterated its readiness to resume *Syrian-Israeli* proximity talks but only under **Turkish** auspices.

China and **Turkey** took a landmark step in developing their bilateral relationship, being referred to as a "strategic partnership." Meanwhile *Chinese* Premier Wen Jiabao was the target last week of a protest by some 100 Uighur expatriates who gathered outside his hotel in **Turkey** to protest *China's* treatment of the Muslim *Turkic*-speaking population in its *Xinjiang* region.

Economic Front:

The crisis in meat prices that hit **Turkey** a few months ago has given rise to new opportunities of cooperation for entrepreneurs. **Turkey** and *China* have signed eight agreements on commerce, culture and transportation to increase the trade volume between the two nations.

Turkish bakers have announced an increase of as much as **15 %** in the price of bread that indicates increase in inflation. The increase in exports of fresh vegetables – which totaled nearly \$1.44 million – was up **6 %** in volume and **16 %** in value with a turnover of \$585.49 million, while the exports of fresh fruits reached \$853.6 million.

Turkey has been placed **26th** on a list of the 32 most debt-ridden countries by total foreign debt, with Standard & Poor's, an international rating agency. **Turkey's** current account deficit has increased by a massive **387 %**, nearing \$3 billion, in August on the same month a year ago. The government has increased its growth target from 3.5 % to 6.8 % for the year end for 2010 as recent rosy figures from major macroeconomic indicators have urged **Turkey** to revise its targets for the middle term.

Meanwhile the number of tourists that came to the southern **Turkish** province Antalya via airway has exceeded 8.5 million since the beginning of the year.

Social Front:

According to reports a recent survey showing high levels of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment in *Germany* alarms the country's **Turkish** community, which fears such beliefs could flare into violence.

GCC

Geo-strategic Front:

Arab Gulf states have decided to exchange data on newly-arriving foreign workers who are deported after being diagnosed with an infectious disease. The idea behind sharing the database is to make sure that after a worker has been deported from one **GCC** state, he or she cannot enter another.

The North-South railway project, currently under construction in **Saudi Arabia**, has been regarded as a key component in a regional rail network linking the **GCC** with *Europe* via *Turkey*.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz have discussed regional affairs by telephone amid tensions over *Iraqi* and *Lebanese* politics and a Gulf arms buildup. Further more **Saudi Arabia** and **Egypt** have emphasized greatly on the need to establish a unity government in *Iraq*, representing all groups and parties and ensuring them equal rights and responsibilities. Meanwhile **Saudi Arabia** has continued to send relief supplies to *Pakistan* for the victims of the recent devastating floods that displaced around 20 million people.

Economic Front:

Dubai's non-oil exports have surged 40 % and re-exports by 20 % in the first seven months of 2010 against the same period of 2009. **Qatar's** economy grew a hefty 20.4% at current prices in the second quarter to QR98.4bn (\$ 27bn). A World Bank report released at the annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund showed that while both **Middle East** and **North Africa** (MENA) have largely avoided a catastrophic recession during the global economic and financial crisis, the regions economy is growing at a weak pace. In particular, **GCC** countries and other OPEC member states faced oil producing restraints that curtailed economic growth.

Social Front:

Three people died in the past two weeks from swine flu in **Saudi Arabia** but threat of new cases seems to have faded away according to the health Ministry.

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) has called upon individuals in **Saudi Arabia**, civil groups and the media to stand against the marriage of minors, describing the marriage of young girls to older males as a “violation of children’s rights found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child of which the Kingdom is a signatory”.

FERTILE CRESCENT

Political Front:

In **Egypt** the ruling National Democratic Party's (NDP) selection of its candidates for November's parliamentary elections entered a new stage this week. According to NDP Secretary-General 1.5 million party members began last week to vote in the internal polls that will complete the selection process. A march planned by supporters of President Hosni Mubarak (who want him to stand for another term of presidency in 2011 elections) turned into a brief gathering, when less than 30 people turned up.

Meanwhile the Muslim Brotherhood's decision to participate in, rather than boycott, November's parliamentary elections added a dash of spice to the otherwise insipid political climate. Muslim Brotherhood has

revealed that 154 MB members including 23 students have been arrested in just one week following the group's announcement that it will participate in the elections. Over seven thousand students, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood movement, staged a protest against a decision to ban their colleagues from running in upcoming student elections. Members of an internal opposition front within the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) movement have challenged recent statements by MB leader Mohamed al-Badie that 98 % of the group's Shura council has been in favor of participating in next month’s parliamentary elections. The new body, called The **Egyptian Alliance for Election Monitoring** will use more than 1,000 observers to monitor the ballot boxes in 254 constituencies.

Hundreds of followers of cleric Sayyed Moqtada al-Sadr took to the streets in **Iraq** to show support for their leader's decision to nominate Nuri al-Maliki as prime minister for a second term.

Member of the Knesset of the National Union fundamentalist party in **Israel** stated that the “solution” for the conflict is to consider the Hashemite Kingdom of **Jordan** as the future Palestinian State. “*Jordan* is the Palestinian State...and anyone who attempts to take parts of *Israel* to create a *Palestinian* state will be bringing death to the country.”

Geo-strategic Front:

Former **Iraqi** Prime Minister Ayad Allawi accused Iran of working to destabilize the Middle East.

Iraq and **Iran** held high-level security talks in Baghdad. The talks covered border issues, the fight against crime and narcotics and the flow of *Iranian* goods, pilgrims and passengers to **Iraq**. Meanwhile Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, the *Iranian* president, has arrived in **Lebanon** for a visit that has split opinion among **Lebanese** politicians, highlighting internal divisions and underlining *Iran's* influence in the country. *Israel* however looked at **Iranian** President’s visit with suspicion.

The leaders of **Syria** and **Saudi Arabia** met to discuss rising tension in **Lebanon** that threatens to break apart that country’s coalition government and spark unrest in one of the most volatile corners of the Middle East.

Syrian President has strongly denounced the new Israeli citizenship law requiring all non-Jews in the country to pledge allegiance to Israel as a “Jewish democratic state”. *Israeli* Ambassador in Washington, Michael Oren, confirmed that the United States granted *Israel* further guarantees and incentives in return for



Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak

renewing the freeze on settlement activities for two or three more months. Meanwhile the *Israeli* Prime Minister has accused *Palestinian* side for staling peace talks, and claimed that renewing the construction of settlements in the occupied West Bank should not have any effect on peace talks.

Economic Front:

The authorities in the southern **Iraqi** Province of Wasit have accused Ministry officials for their involvement in corruption and embezzlement hence have warned the government that they would declare their province an autonomous region if it did not replace these officials.

Social Front:

In **Egypt** the April 6 Youth movement has organized a protest in front of the Education Ministry demanding the immediate investigation of the assaults on the Azhar female students and the expulsion of the university guards on the grounds that the girls were violently beaten by baton wielding officials.

Also in **Egypt** the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE) has filed a lawsuit against the government's decision to impose restrictions on companies that send out mass text messages. The decision, issued by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, obliges mass text messaging companies to pay hefty fees in order to obtain licenses. It also establishes monitors who will review each message before it is sent to the public.

Meanwhile the government of **Egypt** has endorsed a number of amendments dealing primarily with assigning a quota including 64 seats for women in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Under a new government program, jobless **Iraqis** have been entitled to purchase cars at lower prices if they used them as taxis.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front:

Five political parties received enough votes in **Kyrgyzstan's** October 10 elections to win parliamentary representation. Now they're engaged in negotiations to form a governing coalition. In the meantime former **Kyrgyz** President has refused to support any party.

Kyrgyz elections went smoothly however small scale protests were launched after the announcement of election results. The United **Kyrgyzstan** party has also announced to launch nation wide protests against election results.

The **Tajik** government has offered an amnesty to armed groups fighting government troops in the east of the country if they declare a cease-fire.

Geo-strategic Front:

Iranian Defense Minister arrived in Baku, **Azerbaijan** on a two-day visit last week to discuss expanding bilateral military cooperation and regional security.

The **Tajik** government has formally asked the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to send a fact-finding mission to look into a railroad dispute between **Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan**.

Uzbek authorities have officially explained why security forces raided a South Korean-owned golf club in Tashkent.

Social Front:

Muslims in the Northern **Azerbaijani** district accused police of harassing them because of having a beard.

Kazakhstan's Supreme Court has agreed to rule on an appeal by jailed opposition activist. The website of a Vienna-based **Turkmen** human rights group was hacked and was inaccessible for several days.



Meanwhile the government of **Turkmenistan** has announced to allocate funds in the amount of US \$ 10 million with the view of strengthening the material-technical base of scientific research institutions of the country.

IRAN

Geo-strategic Front:

German Foreign Minister in a meeting with his **Iranian** counterpart has asked Tehran to show Islamic kindness and compassion and free the two *German* nationals detained in **Iran**.

Member of the Majilis Energy Committee has called **Iran's** OPEC presidency a great diplomatic victory and said **Iran** got its right after 36 years.

Meanwhile a senior **Iranian** foreign ministry official dismissed foreign solutions to the ongoing crisis in *Afghanistan*, reiterating that settlement of problems and challenges in the country is possible only through a regional approach.

President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad's recent visit to *Lebanon* reinvigorated unity and integration among different *Lebanese* groups and movements. The President held talks with Hezbollah Secretary General Syed Hassan Nassrollah during his visit to *Lebanon*. The **Iranian** President has also received an honorary doctorate from a leading *Lebanese* university.

Meanwhile **Iran's** Foreign Minster Manouchehr Mottaki has flown to the *Belgian* capital, Brussels, to attend a key gathering of 26 countries meant to look at the impact of recent flooding on *Pakistan*.

Economic Front:

Iran has called for the creation of an Islamic fund and an increase in mutual trade among member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Social Front:

Iran's Deputy Interior Minister for social and cultural affairs has warned the NGOs for not being involved with the political affairs and said the NGOs must watch their communication abroad.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front:

In **Bangladesh** the parliamentary committee on constitutional review has recommended the government to reprint constitution in line with the Supreme Court directives. Meanwhile main opposition **Bangladesh** Nationalist Party (BNP) chief Khaleda Zia has apparently lost a legal battle to retain a posh residence in a military barracks after a High Court verdict ordered her to vacate the facility in a month's time.

Nepal's Parliament failed to elect a new Prime Minister in its 12th attempt. A high-profile taskforce comprising top leaders of major political parties — Unified CPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum, **Nepal** — have nominated Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" its coordinator. The seven-member taskforce was constituted with the mandate of evolving a common base for the new constitution and narrowing down differences on key constitutional issues among the parties.

The **Tibetan** government-in-exile has asked the United



Nations and the Amnesty International to help **Tibetans** living in **Nepal** in conducting their elections. The appeal came days after the **Nepalese** government disrupted the general election of **Tibetans** in **Nepal** by allegedly confiscating ballot boxes during the first round of voting on October 3.

Geo-strategic Front:

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) have exchanged the lists of criminals of the bordering areas of the two countries at a sector commander level border coordination meeting.

Meanwhile expressing concern over **Nepal's** failure to elect a new Prime Minister for nearly three months, **India** has asked all the political parties in **Nepal** to come forward and form a larger consensus. The United States of *America* has also expressed its concern over **Nepal's** failure to elect a new prime minister for nearly three months while voicing its confidence that a new government will be formed.

Sri Lanka President met **Indian** Prime Minister in New Delhi and held discussions on bilateral issues. **India** has urged **Sri Lanka** to act decisively evolve powers to Tamils, which would help in maintaining permanent peace in the country.

Economic Front:

The textile industry of **Bangladesh** has been facing challenges due to the rise in prices of raw materials in the domestic as well as international markets.

Indian finance minister Pranab Mukherjee has instructed concerned officials to ensure early shipment of 300,000 tonnes of rice and 200,000 tonnes of wheat to **Bangladesh**.

According to reports **Nepal's** budget surplus stood at Rs 4.97 billion in the first month of fiscal year 2010-11. A high growth of revenue mobilization relative to government expenditure is ascribed to such a budget surplus.

Social Front:

Trafficking different types of intoxicating drug through **Bangladesh** has increased in recent days which has become a major source of concern for the government.

Bangladesh's main Chittagong port remained paralyzed for two days due to a strike by dock workers. Meanwhile **Bangladesh** Telecommunications Company (BTCL) has reduced call charges to India by 40 % to Taka 12 per minute.

SOUTH INDIA

Political Front:

Maoist sympathizer and revolutionary leader balladeer Gadder launched his new outfit of *Telangana* Praja front (TPF) to advocate a separate state of *Telangana*. The formation of TPF outfit is to exert pressure on the central government to table a bill in the winter session of parliament for granting statehood to *Telangana*. He pointed out that for 60 years the parties fighting for *Telangana* could not achieve anything because their struggle was not mass-based. *Telangana* comprises 10 districts of *Andhra Pradesh*, including *Hyderabad*. In the meantime senior Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader Kodela Siva Prasad demanded a referendum in the twin cities of *Hyderabad* and *Secunderabad* over creation of a separate *Telangana* state.



Party president Sonia Gandhi has urged the cadres in *Tamil Nadu* to strengthen its base and make it the "party of the future". *Tamil Nadu* Chief Minister and DMK President M Karunanidhi hinted that the ruling DMK would come back to power after the ensuing Assembly polls, which was due in six to seven month's time. Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa won the second 'Trust Vote' in the State Assembly of

Karnataka after 106 MLAs voted in favor of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Government, but the fate of the Government would depend on the verdict of the Karnataka High Court in the case relating to disqualification of the MLAs.

Economic Front:

Andhra Bank has increased interest rates on domestic term deposits with effect from October 8. For one year to less than two years, the interest rate has been enhanced to 7.5 % from 7 % per annum irrespective of the amount of deposit.

Hyderabad-based Nuclear Fuel Complex has decided to induct robots in the fuel fabrication process for new reactors - indigenous as well as imported.

Social Front:

In a first case of Swine Flu death in *South Tamil Nadu*, a 30-year-old woman succumbed to the dreaded disease.

CHINA

Political Front:

Chinese Vice President has encouraged younger officials to work at the grass-roots level so they might "learn from the public masses" and "shape character." More than 100 members of a Communist Party committee released a petition backing Wen Jiabao's promises of political reform.

The **Chinese** mainland has offered to open talks on military issues with *Taiwan*.

Meanwhile the 17th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) opened its fifth plenary session in Beijing to discuss the nation's next five-year development plan.

Geo-strategic Front:

China has emphasized on the need to boost ties with *Belarus*. **China** and the Democratic People's Republic of *Korea* (DPRK) have lauded traditional friendship and agreed to step up cooperation between the two countries and two armed forces to a higher level.

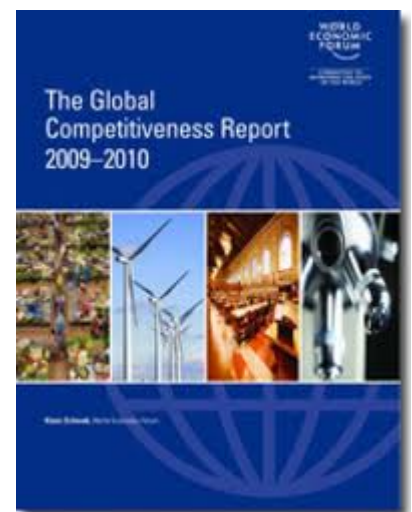
Chinese Defense Minister has urged *Japan* to properly handle sensitive issues in bilateral relations so as to make the relationship back to normal track at an early date. *China* also invited U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to visit Beijing at an earlier time in 2011, in an apparent good-will gesture to improve military relations between the world's two powerful countries, and Mr. Gates accepted the invitation. The U.S. and **Chinese** militaries have finished two days of talks on maritime security, the first such discussions since **China** broke off military contact to protest the U.S. sale of arms to *Taiwan*.

China has mounted a strenuous diplomatic campaign to block the publication of a U.N. report that claims that **Chinese** ammunition has been shipped into Darfur in the past year.

Economic Front:

The Global Competitiveness Report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) issued recently cites *Sweden*, *Switzerland*, *Singapore*, the *United States* and *Germany* as the top five in the WEF competitiveness ranking. Meanwhile, **China** is ranked the 27th in the Global competitiveness Review (GCR), compared with the 29th place a year back.

China has become the eighth largest wine consumer market in the world. Meanwhile the value of Yuan, **China's** currency Renminbi, hit new high against U.S. dollar as the central parity rate of the Yuan was set at 6.6732 per U.S. dollar. The White House has postponed a decision on whether to accuse Beijing formally of using its currency to gain unfair trade advantages against the US.



Meanwhile **China's** exports rose 25.1 % in September compared to the same period last year as imports climbed 24.1 %, leaving a trade surplus of nearly 17 billion U.S. dollars. Also **China-Africa** trade is expected to bounce back to "pre-crisis levels" and is on track to hit a record high of more than \$110 billion this year.

Social Front:

China has questioned the intentions of foreign governments supporting the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize going to Liu Xiaobo, who had been in jail for 11 years in Beijing, saying those governments had no right to interfere in **China's** internal affairs.

The World Association of Newspapers and Journalists' Association recently issued the list of the 2010 Top 100 world daily newspapers by circulation in Paris. **China** had 26 newspapers on the list, including 25 from Chinese mainland and one from **Taiwan** region, which is the same as the previous year.

A new land resources survey found a total of more than 900 mineral deposits in **China**. As of the end of September this year, **China's** mobile phone users reached 292 million, accounting for more than 66 % of the general Internet users.

JAPAN

Geo-strategic Front:

China has released the last of four **Japanese** employees of Fujita Corp. detained since Sept. 20 for allegedly entering a military zone in Hebei Province without permission and videotaping facilities. **Japan** and **China** have agreed to hold a meeting between Defense Minister and *Chinese* counterpart in Hanoi.

A cargo vessel operated by **Japanese** shipping company NYK-Hinode Line Ltd. lost contact after issuing an emergency signal off *Kenya*.

Meanwhile **Japanese** and *U.S.* defense chiefs agreed in their talks that their countries will jointly respond in line with a bilateral security pact toward stability in areas in the East *China* Sea covering the Senkaku Islands that came into the spotlight in disputes between **Japan** and *China*.

Japan has submitted a draft resolution calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons to a disarmament committee of the ongoing U.N. General Assembly.

Economic Front:

Differences over currency management persisted after a weekend meeting of global finance ministers who left without resolving what to do. They did agree, however, that the 187-nation International Monetary Fund was the organization best suited to deal with rising global currency tensions that risk overshadowing next month's summit meeting of the Group of 20 nations in *South Korea*.

Bank of **Japan** Governor has called for the **Japanese** government to promote structural reforms to ensure an economic recovery, without making pointed reference to it after the central bank played its part by significantly easing the country's monetary conditions.

In **Japan** cigarette sales in September jumped 88.0 % from a year before to 37.4 billion cigarettes as the largest-ever tobacco tax hike on Oct. 1 spurred last-minute buying.

Social Front:

A study by the World Economic Forum revealed that **Japan** ranks 94th in gender equality, a minor improvement from 2009 when it ranked 101st. According to reports about 9 out of 10 women who fall victim to groping aboard trains do not alert authorities.



KOREA**Geo-strategic Front:**

The chief of **Korea's** arms procurement agency held talks with Moscow on the transfer of *Russia's* key arms technology.

The *United States* has called for more openness in **North Korea** and promised to normalize ties with the reclusive communist state once it is rid of nuclear weapons. **South Korea** and the *United States* kicked off a joint air force training exercise to increase interoperability among the airmen of the two allies.

Economic Front:

The **South Korean** government has announced plan to create about 70,000 public-sector jobs for young adults over the next two years to help recent university and high-school graduates find work amid the protracted tight job market.

A group led by **Korea's** Hyundai Engineering & Construction Co. made the lowest bid to design, build, operate and maintain a bridge in *Kuwait*, one of the country's biggest infrastructure projects.

Meanwhile **South Korea** announced a bold plan to invest 40 trillion won (\$36 billion) over the next five years in developing renewable energy sources and nurture them into new economic growth engines.

Social Front:

South Korea's population has officially reached the 50-million mark.

North Korea's government used one of its most visible propaganda tools -- mass performances in a Pyongyang stadium -- to demonstrate its closeness to *China*.

Foreign scholars and experts, who were invited by the **South Korean** government to evaluate the quality of the nation's higher education, have pointed out that a lack of English language proficiency still holds back **Korean** students from becoming more proactive in the classroom.

World Food Organization has claimed that **North Korea** is in need of about 1.5 million tons of food this year to feed its 24 million people. §

Events of the week in

Africa zone

▶ WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTHERN AFRICA

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: Nigeria: The Federal Government last week tightened security at the busy Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, a day after the militant group; the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) threatened an imminent attack in the nation's capital.

In its determination to stop corrupt politicians from participating in the 2011 general elections, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, in **Nigeria**, identified 54 corrupt aspirants on the platform of the Peoples' Democratic Party, PDP.

Nigeria needs to move quickly to establish a new election timetable and get on with registering voters if it is to hold credible polls next year, a group of international observers said.

Liberia: Unveiling its first arsenal for 2011 campaign, including a fleet of vehicle, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has warned the opposition, 'There is no stopping us now.'

Ivory Coast: Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo is the most popular candidate in elections set for Oct. 31, with 46 % of voters intending to vote for him in the first round, according to a TNS Sofres opinion poll obtained by Reuters. Meanwhile President Laurent Gbagbo officially opened his election campaign last week in the rebel-held west, pledging to industrialize the West African nation by putting a cocoa factory in every growing region.

In Guinea; Campaigning began quietly last week for the delayed final round of what would be Guinea's first free presidential election, scheduled for Oct. 24. Meanwhile **Guinea's** two rival presidential candidates have agreed to include each other in government whoever wins a delayed Oct. 24 runoff aimed at returning the country to civilian rule, according to a senior minister.

East/Horn of Africa:

In Somalia, Over 1 million people have been affected by the expulsion by Al Shabaab militants of international organizations that provide support in areas such as agriculture and livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, the United Nations reported in its latest update.

Meanwhile **Somalia** President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed last week appointed 48-year-old American-Somali Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed as the country's new Prime Minister.

The continental organization has chosen former **Ghanaian** president Jerry Rawlings as its new envoy for **Somalia**. According to reports Mr. Rawlings will help promote peace and reconciliation, as well as focus more international attention on the war-ravaged country.

Sudanese officials rejected the deployment of *United Nations* peacekeepers on the border between the northern and southern **Sudan** saying such request is unacceptable and contrary to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Meanwhile **Sudan's** foreign minister told the **U.N. Security Council** last week that his government is "fully committed" to holding a referendum that could result in the south of the country seceding from the north.

A **Tanzanian** political science professor has told VOA the entire population seems well-educated and equipped to make informed decisions in the upcoming general election scheduled for 31st October.

While in **Ethiopia** Meles Zenawi is expected to appoint new ministers after being sworn in as Prime Minister by parliament last week, four months after a disputed landslide election win.

Central Africa: The recently released *United Nations* Mapping report on the **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC), sparked anger amongst Senators and Deputies, who were angry by flaws in the controversial document. The report accuses the **Rwandan** army of committing atrocities in the former Zaire.

Also the news said the head of the *United Nations* peacekeeping mission in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC) cautioned that military operations alone in the restless eastern region cannot ensure long-term security in the area, stressing the need to build the capacity of the country's military, justice system and the police force



The International Criminal Court says *French* authorities have arrested a senior leader of a **Rwandan** rebel group accused of mass rapes in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**.

In **Rwanda** Justice Minister said his government is pleased with the arrest of a former rebel leader accused of masterminding genocide and violating human rights against **Rwandans** and **Congolese** villagers in 1994.

According to reports Human rights groups and the **Rwandan** government have hailed France's arrest of a suspected rebel leader whose group is blamed for atrocities in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**.

The fifth session of the **Rwanda Zambia** Joint Permanent Commission (JPC) will open in the **Zambian** Capital. It was revealed officially that JPC is expected to review co-operation in various areas of trade and industry, communications and transport, agriculture, mining and culture as well as refugees and immigration.

South Africa: **Zimbabwe:** After months of putting an optimistic face on his power-sharing deal with President, Robert Mugabe, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai erupted last week with frustration at his rival and the country's troubled progress toward democracy.



Zimbabwe- Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: **Nigeria:** The Chinese Construction and Engineering firm, CCECC has announced its inability to deliver **Nigeria's** rail project on schedule. It attributed its inability to torrential rains this season and promised to deliver all the rail jobs in March about six months hence.

As the number of children known to have been poisoned by lead continues to mount in Northern **Nigeria**, a UN team has recommended the government help communities clean up the informal gold-mining sector, rather than quash it altogether.

Nearly 700 people in a small town within **Lagos, Nigeria**, will be moved to a relief camp due to heavy flooding that has plagued the region since September, according to a state governor.

Gambia: Drug smugglers in **Gambia** will face the death penalty after a law passed last week toughened sentences for narcotics offences in the West African nation.

The emergence of a new meningitis vaccine, rather than a large-scale outbreak of the disease, has prompted the current vaccination drive across **West Africa**. Health officials say the vaccine marks a "revolution" in preventing the highly contagious and fatal disease.

Ghana: The incidence of algal bloom in **Ghana's** territorial waters along the western coast has been linked to activities of factories in neighboring **Cote D'Ivoire**.

China, criticized in the West for overlooking human rights abuses in its business dealings with poverty-stricken **Africa**, will encourage commercial banks to lend more to the continent, a *Chinese* trade official said.

South Africa: **African Parliament** (PAP) sitting in **South Africa**, discussed climate change as well as Africa's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In **Swaziland** abortion is not legal. So police is clamping down on people who practice backstreet abortion; meanwhile according to reports the culprits are easily assisted at the Mbabane Government Hospital without the involvement of the police.

Swaziland is one of very few African countries where hunger has become more widespread during the last decades, new evidence shows. But **Swazi** authorities tried to manipulate data to the UN, saying the opposite.

Zimbabwean economic refugees are struggling to become legal in **South Africa**, a long and difficult process for many **Zimbabweans** who fled from home during the past 10 years.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: According to reports 240 million people are undernourished in Africa. Now, for the first-time, small African farmers have been properly consulted on how to solve the problem of feeding sub-Saharan Africa. Their answers appear to directly repudiate a massive international effort to launch an African Green Revolution funded in large part by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Meanwhile **Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana** and **Mozambique** have seen the greatest successes in fighting back hunger during the last 20 years, a new report reveals. At the same time, the situation in **Burundi, Chad, the DRC** and **Eritrea** deteriorated severely.

For development in **Africa**, Rural Africa needs to wake up to climate change, which is threatening food security, people's resilience to cope with natural disasters, and economic growth, participants were told at the Seventh **African** Development Forum which ended in Addis Ababa last week.



POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa:

Ghana: Ghana's inflation eased for the 15th month in a row in September, data showed last week, but analysts put much of the latest fall down to seasonal effects and were cautious on prospects of fresh interest rate cuts. **Ghana** is also said to be losing millions of dollars in tax revenue from expatriate workers employed by the oil companies, including Tullow Oil and other partners in the Jubilee Oil Fields. Meanwhile the liberalized Skies Policy in the aviation sector has led to the increase in frequency of some airlines operating into **Ghana**, and admission of new ones.

The government of **Ghana** is developing a trade and investment program dubbed the "Middle East Strategy" to engage the Arab World to tap experience for **Ghana's** economic growth. The strategy is also to engage *Saudi Arabia* and the Arab countries in **Ghana's** economic development planning in areas of trade and commerce, agriculture and oil and gas management.

Nigeria's government approved the sale of the state telecommunications company to *Dubai's* Minerva Group and its partners, eight months after they bid \$2.5 billion for the company at an auction.

Liberia: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf last week met with oil giant Chevron Corporation's corporate responsibility team, which visited **Liberia** to assess needs and to identify potential areas of social investment.

Togo: Togo, whose port capital Lome is an export hub for coffee and cocoa, turned on a 100 Megawatt triple fuel power plant last week in a move the West African state said made it self sufficient in energy.

Ivory Coast: The U.N. Security Council renewed last week arms, financial and travel sanctions on the **Ivory Coast** for six months, as well as a ban on trade in rough diamonds from the West African country.

South African coal exports to China plunged in September while shipments to *India* increased from a month earlier, said Injunction Services Ltd., a web-based trader.

Meanwhile *Beijing* pledged \$10 billion (R69bn) in "preferential" loans to **Africa** last year, but Ministry of Commerce official Zhong Manying said that was not enough. In view of **Africa's** demand for funds, the \$10bn is too limited," Zhong told a news briefing.

East Africa/Horn of Africa

Kenya's economy grew at the rate of 5.4 % in the second quarter of the year powered by improved productivity in key agriculture, construction and financial services sectors.

With the help of the government, *Indian* industry is implementing a strategy to compete with *China* and *European* countries for capturing markets in growing **African** economies, particularly in East Africa.

South Africa: The economic improvement in **Zimbabwe** is attracting workers under 18-years-old to the now busy mining town of Shurugwi, about 350km south of the capital Harare in Midlands Province.

International investors are showing a growing interest in **Africa's** retail market. American retail giant Wal-Mart is in preliminary talks to buy **South African** wholesaler Massmart for more than \$4 million. And the *Dutch-based supermarket* network SPAR recently opened a new outlet in **Nigeria**.

In Swaziland: The European Union (EU) has rejected a request from the Swazi government to finance the kingdom's budget. The EU says there are no plans to channel funds into the **Swazi** national budget in the near future. Meanwhile officials from the *International Monetary Fund* are expected to arrive in the country at the end of this month to embark on a fact-finding mission on the country's Fiscal Adjustment Roadmap.

Zambia is set to become the regional focal point for agricultural research support in *southern Africa* as the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) picked the country to host its **Southern Africa** Administrative Hub to assist its R4D activities in the region. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

► WEST EUROPE; EAST EUROPE; NORTH AMERICA; LATIN AMERICA & AUSTRALASIA

WESTERN EUROPE

Political Issues

Noam Chomsky told *Zaman*, a Turkish magazine that objection to **Turkey's** EU bid are simply racist and even if Ankara completes all requirements, **Europe** might still refuse it. Chomsky's criticism of the **EU** came amid the growing far right-wing across **Europe** and the comment made by **German** Chancellor Angela Merkel that multiculturalism has utterly failed, an indication to the failure of Turks and Arabs integration.

Noam Chomsky's view tallies with the new decision made by Centre-right **French** MPs that intends to stop **France** from paying money due for **Turkey** to help it on the path to **EU** membership. They argue that "Turkey is not in Europe. This is evident both geographically and historically."

Power struggle is taking a toll on the **European** Union. The debate is to what extent MEPs can be part of EU delegations to multilateral and bilateral meetings and negotiations with other countries. The Parliament wants to have its representatives guaranteed participation in all multilateral, but also bilateral agreements "of particular political importance" for instance on trade or fisheries.

The **European** Parliament has won the right to look into the nitty gritty of spending in foreign delegations in the EU's new diplomatic service European External Action Service (EEAS). The ambassador will have to take personal responsibility for making sure that European Commission funds channeled through their offices are spent correctly.

According to an Ifop poll 71 % of the **French** fear the country's image abroad is suffering due to the recent laws made by the government welcomed domestically but offensive abroad. As Paris prepares to chair the G20, it hopes to polish **France's** global image.

European Liberals are wary as new the **Dutch** government takes office due to the government coalition with far-right, nationalist, anti-immigration and anti-Islam party.

Economic Issues

Acknowledging the hitch of the economic problem the country faces, **UK's** Queen Elizabeth II canceled a Christmas party for her staff this year.

France is feeling the heat of strike actions that have affected the economy. Highlighting the economic implications of the recent strike, the chairman of the **French** oil company Total acknowledges the worrisome nature of the strike.

Meanwhile in **Spain**, unemployment and austerity measure have made the coalition of labour and Socialist Workers' Party a natural alliance.

Social/Humanitarian Issue



Freedom Party MP Geert Wilders

Dutch prosecutors have asked an *Amsterdam* court to acquit Geert Wilders, the anti-Islam, anti-Muslims and anti-immigrant politician of the charges pressed against him. Prosecutors argue that his anti-Islam comments are part of the debate needed by the society.

The refusal of certain *Chinese* journalists into **EU** conference hall has raised the view that **EU** is conceding to *Chinese* censorship even on its own soil. **EU-China** relation is definitely burgeoning and is expected to continue growing.

Paris has submitted a document to the **EU** Commission concerning Roma expulsion. The commission expected of *Paris* to change its rules which must be congruent with **EU** directive.

According to this person who is to be deported has the right to ask for a one month delay, the right to appeal and the right to receive a written notice of deportation.

Meanwhile, Roma, Livia Jaroka, the only Roma **MEP** in the European Parliament is hoping the media interest will help her push for a "micro-regional" strategy for Europe's largest ethnic minority.

As part of **EU's** effort to curtail the health and environmental hazard of smoking, the bloc's Health commissioner said the **European** Commission is bent at banning smoking totally in public by 2011. The addiction kills some 650,000 Europeans every year.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The Nabucco pipeline project is an unfinished business and bottlenecked by politics despite the huge interest the EU has thrown in it. It is yet to be seen whether a new negotiation by a **Belgian** engineering firm with *Turkmenistan* could affect the whole project.

The **EU** is hoping to fight for an extension of the Kyoto Protocol during environment talks in Nagoya, *Japan*, and at crucial UN climate change talks which start in Cancun, Mexico. The bloc wants to halt biodiversity loss by 2020 and work towards restoring the ecosystem contributing to avert global biodiversity loss.

It also welcomed an international deal to limit carbon emissions from the aviation sector. However due to economic issue, **EU** is not expected to donate any money in this regard.

After a two years debate, the **EU** Commission was able to reach a consensus on green tariff for curtailing heavy lorries creating air and noise pollution. The law is part of EU's effort to improve its environment.

The **European** Commission appears to have backtracked on earlier plans for a compulsory moratorium on deepwater oil drilling inside the **EU**, with new proposals set to call for a voluntary ban at member state discretion.

Meanwhile the recent **Hungarian** toxic spill from an aluminium plant grips **EU's** attention and experts from the bloc's commission have been sent to **Hungary** to help curtail a second leak as the **Hungarian** Prime Minister Viktor Orban believes such is inevitable.

Geostrategic Issues

The intended cut of military spending by the **British** government has raised dust among NATO members particularly Washington fearing that such cut might affect the overall NATO and global military performance. The cut is part of the whole effort to tackle **Britain's** ballooning budget government deficit.

Paris has shown willingness for **European** missile defense system even though the continent still holds the goal of nuclear disarmament. The system has been controversial because it was initiated by Washington and has raised *Russian's* concern which NATO is making effort to address.

The repeated message by the U.S. State Department's counterterrorism is that **Europe** is more likely to experience an event similar to the deadly 2008 Mumbai attacks in India. The alert is believed to be premised on coordinated intelligence gathered from aborted terrorist attacks.

Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman tells **Europe** that Israel will not allow being placated as *Czechoslovakia* was sacrificed for Hitler in 1938. Lieberman is asking the **EU** to solve its internal problems before telling *Israel* how to solve the issue of Palestine.

Meanwhile, *Pakistani* foreign minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi has urged the **EU** to keep fund flowing and to enhance economic development in *Pakistan* if the bloc really wants to help in solving the menace of extremism.



***Israel's* foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman**

EAST EUROPE

Political Issues

Albanian ruling party is under fire from coalition partners as well as the opposition party, for electoral reforms and the inability to resolve pending accusation of electoral irregularities in last June 2009

election. Meanwhile, **Albania** has been inducted into the **EU** visa liberalization scheme but the bloc demands that **Albanians** be educated on the scheme for sake of avoiding abusive use.

It is not election time in **Croatia** but political parties have started gearing up for the next November 2011 general election as coalition parties constitute themselves.

Following the resignation of President Fatmir Sejdiu last month, **Kosovo** parliament is expected to be dissolved by the end of the year; meanwhile political parties have commenced preparations for the next elections.

Serbian parliament is heading towards making a resolution to declare as war crimes action committed against the Serbs during the 1990s war. The resolution was deemed fit following the same done by the parliament to condemn the war crime perpetrated against **Albanians** and **Bosnians**.

The **Bosniak** cultural community of Sandzak, a part of **Serbia** wants *Belgrade* to recognize their autonomy as an entity. The community recently gained more strength through a landslide election victory and believes *Belgrade* should allow them to relate freely with *Turkey*, who they see as a brother state.

Poland is bent at maintaining East-Oriented policy, a priority for the **EU** and supports **EU's** position on three principles of the international law: right of nations to self-determination, territorial integrity and non-use of force. This is in reference to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Meanwhile, **Poland** is lashing out at **Russia** for refusing to allow the relatives of the Katyn massacre victim's access to investigation files.

On-going municipal and senatorial elections in **Czech Republic** is becoming a concern for the ruling centre-right government, whose coalition is losing public support after being in office for three months.

Estonian opposition leader and Center Party Chairman Edgar Savisaar commented on recent **Latvian** elections; Savisaar believes **Latvian** elections result would have been different if discontented persons had not left the country due to high unemployment.

Latvian elections result indicate the victory of Dombrovskis' centre- right Vienotiba (Unity) bloc garnered 31% of the vote and won 33 seats in the 100-seat parliament.

Economic Issues

Failing economic policy has pushed **Macedonian** main opposition Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM) to launch a series of anti-government demonstrations across the country.

The **Romanian** government was able to reach a compromise with striking civil servants after a long strike action was launched against the government for its IMF inspired austerity measures.

While economies all around the world have been struggling to halt appreciation of their currencies, the central European states are reaping benefits from currency strength. Meanwhile, **Polish** economy continue to experience growth and decline in unemployment

The **Czech** government has approved a plan to tax solar plants and to use proceeds from future carbon credit sales to keep power price hikes below 10% for homes and businesses in 2011.

It was a sound opportunity for both countries, as **Bulgarian-Slovak** Consultative Commission for Economic Cooperation signed agreements to improve economic cooperation in many fields. Yet, several thousand trade unionists marched through the **Slovak** capital Bratislava protested against austerity measures planned by the country's centre-right government.

Hungary plans tough public sector staff cuts in 2011 and may impose taxes on the energy sector to keep its pledge to the European Union to cut its budget deficit below 3 % of GDP



Recent Statistics on **Estonian** economy show a slight growth despite its troubles.

The preparation of 2011 **Latvian** budget will decide whether or not the country will implement tough budget cuts recommended by the World Bank.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Ilija Jurisic a former **Bosnian** security officer received a hero's welcome in Tuzla, **Bosnia** after a court in Belgrade acquitted him of war crimes charged against him.

Meanwhile despite problems facing the government, Pristina has taken the responsibility of building houses for ethnic minorities residing in the disputed new country.

Slovakia is considering handing over two alleged *Chechen* terrorists to **Russia**, despite objections from the European Court of Human Rights.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich promised to sack any public employee responsible for media terrorism. Under Yanukovich, who was elected last February, there have been spates of attacks on journalists.

The **European** parliament president (Speaker) said that too many people were dying on Europe's roads in reference to **Poland** and **Ukrainian** cases; meanwhile **Czech** Transport Ministry published an analysis which claims that the volume of traffic on motorways decreased by 11 % between 3pm and 11pm on Fridays after higher tolls were introduced.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Romanians finally laid the controversial energy issue to rest by signing a memorandum of intent with officials from *Russian* gas giant Gazprom regarding the possibility of the South Stream pipeline transiting **Romania**.

Toxic spill from **Hungary** is becoming a concern for the **Balkan** countries as the toxic flows into the Danube and now reaches **Serbia** and **Croatia**.

Hungarian police has detained the director of the aluminum company responsible for a flood of caustic red sludge that killed eight people when it burst from its reservoir last week. The arrest coalesce with the vow by the **Hungarian** Prime Minister Orbán that the perpetrator of the environmental crisis will be held responsible.

Following the meeting of leaders of the two countries, *France* is ready to consider a proposal in the European Union to modernize **Ukraine's** natural gas transit system. This is worthy for **Ukraine** as President Viktor Yanukovich is working to restore his country's regional reputation as an energy transit nation for the European Union. Meanwhile the European Union is cautioning **Poland** not to allow its gas transaction with *Russia* undermines EU's national gas transit systems which could be illegal under European laws.

Lithuanian government signed a new cooperation agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA), in research related areas and geared at using space technologies for peaceful purposes.

Geostrategic Issues

The head of the European Commission (EC) delegation to **Serbia**, Vincent Degert, has said that Belgrade has failed to meet the goals of an anti-corruption strategy that parliament adopted five years ago.

Slovenia and **Croatia** have ironed out one of their differences as the former is ready to refund the money of **Croats** saved in a defaulting **Slovenian** bank. Meanwhile the two nations continue to be embroiled in a border dispute, a hurdle for Croatia-EU talks.

Armenia and **Slovakia** reached a new air transportation agreement that will allow direct flight between the two and promotes cultural and economic tie.



RUSSIA

Political Issues

The on-going election in **Russia** is projected as a victory for the ruling party; the regional elections has been punctuated by emotions about the next step of democracy in **Russia** as ruling and opposition parties have been at loggerhead and independent parties are emerging.

Economic Issues

Russia-Algeria bilateral ties moved to the next stage following the final inking of agreement in six sectors including energy and transportation. Similarly, **Russia** and *Cyprus* signed a tax treaty expected to strengthen business ties and reaffirm Cyprus' status as a primary source of foreign investment in **Russia**.

Russia along with the rest of the BRIC countries hopes to put up strong resistance to attempts to make a harsh appraisal of currency controls at the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington.

Social/Humanitarian Issues

The **Russian** government is not backing away from the plan to ban a comprehensive tobacco advertisement and public tobacco smoking by 2012.

Meanwhile the **Russian** Orthodox Church has joined the *YouTube* family by opening its own channel on the popular video hosting site to "bring God's word closer to lives of modern youth," Patriarch Kirill said in a video recorded for the channel.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Reaching an agreement with **Romania** on the controversial South Stream pipeline, **Russia's** oil giant Gazprom is also aiming at creating a hub in the Middle East and Far East.

Russia is expected to hike tax on oil product as well as pushing prices above \$60 per barrel in 2011 to ensure stable growth.

Russian authority is prepared to beef up monitoring of environmental pollution. Scallop garden is expected to start monitoring the Far East Kozmino Bay, seven time zones east of Moscow.

Geostrategic Issues

Russia hopes to normalize relation with *Belarus*. Both countries in recent times have been exchanging unpleasant remarks and accusation of meddling in each other's domestic politics.

US/CANADA

Political Issues

In **America** Democrats hold 26 governor seats against 24 by the republicans, but with elections underway, there is a growing feeling that republicans will change the calculus.

According to the Nanos Research survey, **Canadian** Conservatives minority government has picked ahead all opposition parties, although election is not imminent but analysts hold the view that the minority government would face serious setbacks over its budget in early 2011.

Canada has lost its bid for the seat of UN non-permanent members after contesting along with *Germany* and *Portugal*. Critics believed the failure was due to Ottawa's sharp foreign policy, strongly pro-Israel Middle East policy and reductions in bilateral aid to poor African nations. **Canada** has served on the non-permanent seat six terms in the past.



Economic Issues

As the **U.S** economy continues to experience a downturn with no hope for recovery at the earliest, banks and customers are busy struggling to streamline the issue of foreclosures, while there is growing accusation that banks have ignored signs of troubled foreclosures.

Canadian economy recorded a bigger deficit than expected. The Conservatives government is trying to stabilize the economy but like every other developed economy, the recession is still lingering.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Toronto-born Omar Khadr is the only **Canadian** citizen accused of murdering a U.S. soldier with a grenade during a battle in Afghanistan in 2002. The **Canadian** government has rejected pleading on his behalf and his case continuously being delayed in the **U.S**

As marijuana becomes an acceptable drug across states in the **U.S**, there is growing tension that addiction to the drug might become high among youth and could transcend into adulthood. Even though not all **Americans** consent to the legality of the drug, some elders believes the drug is helpful for medical and health related diseases.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Google and Good Energies, an investment firm specializing in renewable energy, have each agreed to invest heavily in a proposed \$5 billion transmission backbone for future offshore wind farms along the Atlantic Seaboard that could ultimately transform the region's electrical map.

Geostrategic Issues

America's ambassador to **Britain** said there is no evidence that violent dissident groups in Northern Ireland are getting money from the **U.S** amid the view that **Irish-Americans** have been accused of backing the IRA's campaign of violence before its was disbanded.



LATIN AMERICA

Political Issues

The **Argentine** government is prepared to veto a parliamentary bill that tends to increase pension and minimum wage. The president is against the bill as it would cost the economy.

As **Brazilians** look prepared for second round of election by October 31, abortion becomes a political issue tearing apart the leading Workers' party and in friction with the Catholic Church.

Following troubled days of rescue operation for trapped miners, the **Chilean** parliament is preparing to enact law for better welfare of miners and company involve in the extraction sector. **Chile** hopes to increase its copper production level through the new bill. Meanwhile, **Chile's** foreign secretary said that **Chile's** copper exploration company is going to invest \$4 billion in *Balochistan, Pakistan*, to explore copper.

It was a diplomatic plus point for **Colombia** by becoming a nonpermanent UNSC member along with **Brazil** from the region. Meanwhile, efforts by the **Colombian** government continue in fighting the threat of FARC rebels.

In **Mexico**, the political teeth crushing issue is the vicious cycle of violence perturbing the **Mexicans** and at the same time headache for neighboring states in the **United States**.

According to the president of the **Venezuelan** Confederation of Industries, Chavez administration has seized at least 185 manufacturing companies within 2010, excluding firms in the agriculture sector.

Economic Issues

Brazilian plane manufacturing company Embraer is on a deal with *China* to provide passenger planes with 50 seats.

Upon applauding the effort of the rescue effort of the **Chilean** government, *Israeli* Prime Minister Netanyahu requested President Pinera of **Chile** to come to *Israel* to sign a free trade agreement.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The protection of the Amazon is necessary for **Brazil** and the world amid the growing tension of global warming. Therefore curbing unruly deforestation in the Amazon is getting greater attention by the government. Meanwhile, **Brazil** recorded 16.43 billion dollars for exporting soybeans, soya flour and soybean oil, which accounts for the largest share of **Brazil's** overall agricultural exports.

Geostrategic Issues

The rift between **Argentina** and **Britain** remains on the headlines as both countries tussle over the authority of *Falkland* Island, which according to the **Argentina** is being pirated by the *British* government because of its oil reserve.

Meanwhile according to reports **Argentina** is offering help to *Pakistan* in the Agriculture and energy sectors, in the wake of the devastation caused by the floods.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is on a foreign tour geared at strengthening his ties with the expected visiting nations, though experiencing political fracture at home. Chavez has also reiterated his support for **Argentina** against *British* interference in the *Falkland* Islands and equally threw his support for *China*, opposing the Nobel Prize awarded to a *Chinese* prisoner by the West.

**AUSTRALASIA****Political Issues**

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard said the ban on internet materials such as rape, drug use, bestiality and child sex abuse is premised on moral values but such could only be accessed by Internet Service Provider companies. The ban however has caused resentment among the Aussies.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Australia's former long-serving Guantanamo Bay inmate David Hicks reveals his ordeal at the prison in a newly published book "Guantanamo: My Journey". Hicks however is not expected to gain from his publication as **Australian** law forbids making profit from crime.

Indian student leader in Melbourne rejected the portrayal of race relations depicted by a Bollywood movie as definitely inaccurate. The movie follows the series of attacks on *Indian* students in **Australia** which stained relation between the two countries.

Geostrategic Issues

Having a regional refugee centre in *East Timor* remains unfinished business between **Australia**, *Indonesia* and *East Timor*, although these countries are in a series of discussion over the matter. *East Timor's* lawmakers are objecting to such centre based on lingering problems on the island. §