

Friday on the facebook

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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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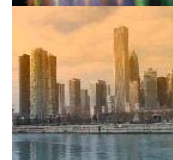
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Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of **24** surveys. **2** of these are multi-country surveys & the rest are national surveys. **11** polling organizations have been represented.



Topic of the week:

Mongolians Have Mixed Views about Their Government

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: IRI Releases Survey of Mongolian Public Opinion

October 22, 2010

IRI conducted a comprehensive national and regional representative poll in **Mongolia** from August 10-September 3, 2010.

The survey shows that *Mongolians* have mixed and confused views of their government. Just over three in ten think the country is moving in the wrong direction but a surprising over four in ten has no opinion. A small minority sees the signs of development but a reasonable majority sees the worsening conditions of corruption and poverty.

The poll reveals that citizens of **Mongolia** would like to see local governments have greater authority over issues such as roads, transportation, land allocation and tax collection while still preferring that

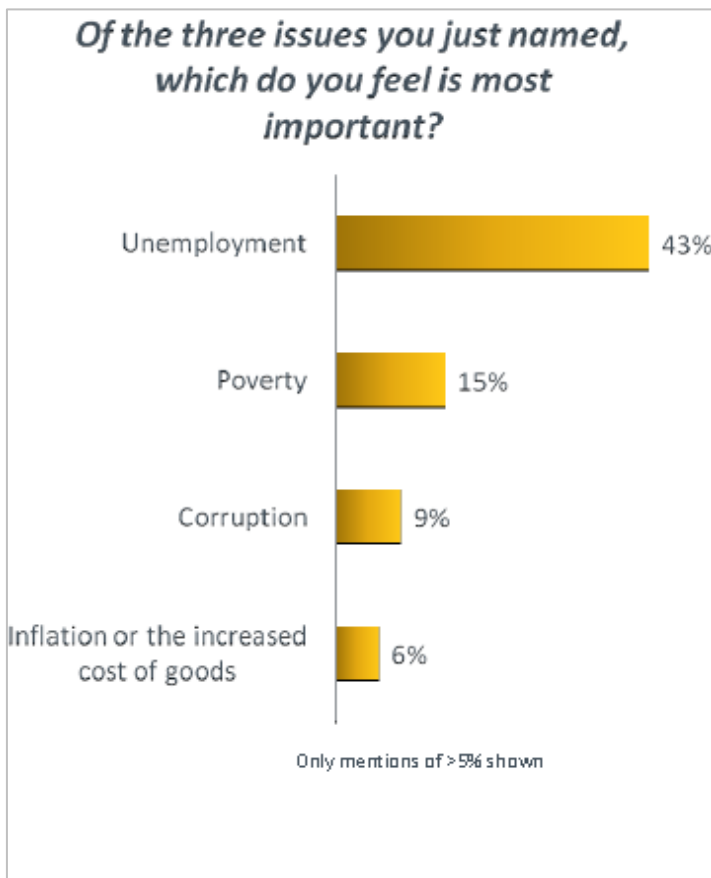
national government manage education, public safety, health care and natural resources. **38 %** of *Mongolian* citizens would like the opportunity to decide how money is spent locally, compared to **7 %** who think their member of parliament should exercise that power. An even larger number, **40%**, believes



President of Mongolia
Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj

that local residents should directly monitor local government spending, compared to only 13 % who think the national parliament, State Great Hural, should monitor local budget allocation.

The survey also explored some of the most politically salient national issues in *Mongolia*, including the *allocation of mining revenues*. Even though Mongolians are sharply divided over how to allocate mining revenue to various government services, it is clear that *Mongolians* want the revenue invested in the development of the country. When asked for the top two responses on how to allocate mining revenue 38 % wanted recurring or onetime cash payouts. A majority 86 % would like the money spent on developing the country, through investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, social welfare, training opportunities, and funds for local projects.



The sample was randomly selected using the last birthday method, and consists of 2,250 *Mongolian* adults older than 18 who are eligible to vote. It is representative of the general population by age, gender, and education. The margin of error for the national sample does not exceed ± 2.07 percent.

SOURCE: <http://www.iri.org/news-events-press-center/news/iri-releases-survey-mongolian-public-opinion>

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

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



► MIDDLE EAST

Palestinians are Confused and Uncertain (Click for Details)

While a majority of **Palestinians** opposes return to negotiations under the shadow of settlement construction, but they also opposes alternatives to negotiations such as violence, the dissolution of the Palestinian authority, or the adoption of a one-state solution. They support alternatives such as going to the UNSC, a unilateral declaration of statehood, and resort to non-violent resistance; the overwhelming majority has no confidence in the efficacy of any of the alternatives it supports. **Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)**

October 24, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security » Palestine/ Israel Conflict](#)

Israelis and Palestinians Both Are Skeptical of Their Success (Click for Details)

64% of the **Palestinians** believe that they and not **Israelis** are of greater need of success in the direct negotiations; **51%** among **Israelis** believe that both sides are in equal need of success. Nevertheless both publics are skeptical about the success of the talks; **Israelis** overwhelmingly support their continuation while **Palestinians** oppose it. **Harry S. Truman Research Institute & Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research**

21 October 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security » Palestine/ Israel Conflict](#)

► SOUTH ASIA

Indians See Threat from Pakistan, Extremist Groups (Click for Details)

A plurality of **Indians** characterize Lashkar-e-Taiba, the group widely blamed for the Mumbai attacks, as the greatest threat facing their country. One-third name Pakistan as the greatest threat -- and overwhelmingly **Indians** believe there is a link between these two threats: **58%** say the Pakistani government actively supports extremist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, while another **21%** think it at least tolerates them. **Pew Research Center**

October 20, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security » Regional Conflicts/ Issues](#)

► NORTHEAST ASIA

Mongolians Have Mixed Views about Their Government (Click for Details)

The survey shows that **Mongolians** have mixed and confused views of their government. Just over three in ten think the country is moving in the wrong direction but a surprising over four in ten have no opinion. A small minority sees the signs of development but a reasonable majority sees the worsening conditions of corruption and poverty. **International Republican Institute (IRI)**

October 22, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings](#)

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

Multi-Country Poll- Barriers to Entrepreneurship (Click for Details)

Economy » Enterprise/ Investments

Multi-Country Poll- Amid Rich Country Pessimism, Chinese Consumers Remain Upbeat: Global Poll (Click for Details)

Economy » Consumer Confidence/Protection



Africa zone

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

▶ SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Multi-Country Poll- Barriers to Entrepreneurship (Click for Details)

Economy » Enterprise/ Investments

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Economy » Consumer Confidence/Protection



Euro Americas zone

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



EUROPE

▶ EAST EUROPE



Good House and Trips Abroad - Signs of Success in Modern Russia (Click for Details)

A good house is the main symbol of status for **Russians (51%)**, followed by acquisition of overseas property (**30%**), vacation abroad, giving children good education (**28%** for each), opportunity to buy apartment (**23%**) or dacha (**22%**), car (**21%**), and opportunity to get high-quality health care (**18%**). Least valued things for Russians are expensive furniture and domestic appliances (**10%**) and opportunity to visit costly events (**8%**). **Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM)**

October 19, 2010

Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being



WEST EUROPE

Economic Concerns Still High in United Kingdom (Click for Details)

Ipsos MORI's October Issues Index shows that concern about the economy in the UK remains high – two fifths (42%) mention it when asked what the most important issue facing the country is, and an additional 17% place it among the most important issues, meaning that three fifths (59%) are concerned about this issue in total. The economy has been the most important issue since September 2008.

October 20, 2010

Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being

Opposition to Military Mission in Afghanistan Reaches 60% in Britain (Click for Details)

Public opposition to Britain's involvement in Afghanistan has reached a high point, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. The online survey of a representative national sample of 2,003 British adults also shows that respondents maintain negative views on the likely outcome of the war in Afghanistan.

October 20, 2010

Foreign Affairs & Security » Afghanistan War

Global Warming Doubts Dissolve in Britain, But Americans Still Skeptical (Click for Details)

The considerable level of uncertainty that Britons expressed earlier this year towards global warming has subsided, as more people in the country regard climate change a fact, a new three-country Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

October 21, 2010

Society » Environment/ Disasters



AMERICAS

NORTH AMERICA

Americans Split on Whether Afghan War Was the Right Course of Action (Click for Details)

People in the United States appear skeptical about the military operation involving American soldiers in Afghanistan and—for the first time—are evenly divided on whether the war was the right course of action, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

October 19, 2010

Foreign Affairs & Security » Afghanistan War

More Than Half of Voters Say Anger or Disappointment Drive Thinking About Coming Election (Click for Details)

More than half of likely American voters describe their motivation or feelings about voting this year as either angry (33%) or disappointed (25%), and 49% disapprove of the job performance of their Congressional representative, a new Zogby Interactive survey finds.

October 19, 2010

Domestic Politics » Elections

Democrats, GOP at Odds over Harm of Unregulated Business (Click for Details)

In America Democrats and Republicans differ sharply over whether business will harm society if it is not regulated by government. Two in three Democrats believe business will do so, versus 23% of Republicans who say the same. Independents are split on the issue, as are Americans overall. Gallup USA

October 22, 2010

Domestic Politics » Governance

Re-Election Measures Continue to Predict Major House Shakeup (Click for Details)

American Voters are not quite as negative now as they were earlier this year when asked if most members of Congress deserve re-election, with **33%** saying they do, and **56%** saying they do not. Still, the current sentiment about re-electing most members of Congress remains among the most negative **Gallup** has measured before midterm elections over the past 16 years, and continues to suggest the potential for a major shift in House seats on Election Day, Nov. 2.

October 22, 2010

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

Democrats Stirring but Fail to Match GOP Support, Engagement (Click for Details)

As the **American** midterm elections approach, there is every indication that voter turnout will be as high as in 2006, but unlike four years ago, Republicans -- not Democrats -- are now more engaged and enthusiastic about casting a ballot. **Pew Research Center**

October 21, 2010

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

Cold and Flu Season Off to Typical Start (Click for Details)

Cold and flu season is now underway, and **Gallup**-Healthways Well-Being Index tracking finds that **Americans'** self-reports of the flu are typical so far, with **1.7%** reporting the flu on any given day in September, on par with the same month in 2009 and 2008.

October 21, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

Obama's Approval Rating at New Low in Most Recent Quarter (Click for Details)

US President Barack Obama averaged **44.7%** job approval during the seventh quarter of his presidency. His average approval rating has declined each quarter since he took office, falling by more than two percentage points in the most recent quarter to establish a new low. **Gallup USA**

October 21, 2010

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

Bill Clinton's Impact More Positive for Democrats than Obama's (Click for Details)

Former **American** President Bill Clinton has the potential to do more good for Democratic candidates on whose behalf he campaigns than does President Barack Obama. The net positive impact of Clinton's campaigning among Democratic registered voters is +48, while the number is a slightly lower +42 for Obama. Clinton, however, has a significantly more positive impact than Obama does among independents -- and among Republicans. **Gallup USA**

October 19, 2010

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

GOP Holds Solid Leads in Voter Preferences for another Week (Click for Details)

Gallup's tracking of the generic ballot for **US** Congress finds Republicans leading Democrats by **5 %** points among registered voters, **48%** to **43%**, and by 11- and 17-point margins among likely voters, depending on turnout. This is the third consecutive week the Republicans have led on the measure among registered voters, after two weeks in September when the parties were about tied.

October 18, 2010

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

Gallup Finds U.S. Unemployment at 10.0% in Mid-October (Click for Details)

Unemployment in the **US**, as measured by **Gallup** without seasonal adjustment, is at **10.0%** in mid-October - - essentially the same as the 10.1% at the end of September but up sharply from **9.4%** in mid-September and **9.3%** at the end of August. This mid-month measurement confirms the late September surge in joblessness that should be reflected in the government's Nov. 5 unemployment report.

October 18, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

Just Over a Third of Canadians Support the Mission in Afghanistan (Click for Details)

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,009 [Canadian](#) adults, just over a third of respondents (**35%**, -4 since August) support the military operation involving Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan—the lowest level recorded over the past two years. More than half of respondents (**55%**, +2) oppose the war. [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#)

October 22, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [Afghanistan War](#)**Half of Canadians Willing to Allow Adults to Engage in Prostitution** (Click for Details)

The debate over the state of prostitution in [Canada](#) continues to be polarized by gender, with a large majority of men voicing support for decriminalization, and women not entirely convinced that allowing consensual prostitution is a good idea, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found

October 19, 2010

[Society](#) » [Social Problems](#)[Society](#) » [Morality, Values & Customs](#)▶ **LATIN AMERICA****Latin Americans See Barriers to Entrepreneurship (Multi-country survey)** (Click for Details)

Worldwide, residents of [Latin America](#) are the most likely to see government as a liability rather than as an asset to starting a business. Across 20 Latin American countries [Gallup](#) surveyed between 2008 and 2010, a median of **66%** of residents say their governments do not make permits and paperwork easy enough for those who want to start a business. Residents in *sub-Saharan African* countries are next most likely to see their governments this way: a median of 50% say this.

October 22, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Enterprise/ Investments](#)**Brazil- Dilma has 56% of the votes versus 44% Jose Serra** (Click for Details)

[Datafolha](#) on the second round of [Brazilian](#) presidential succession held on October 21 shows the PT candidate Rousseff in the lead with **56%** of the votes. Jose Serra, the PSDB, gets **44%**. 4037 voters were interviewed in all units of the Federation and the error of the survey is two percentage points.

October 22, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Elections](#)**GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS****Amid Rich Country Pessimism, Chinese Consumers Remain Upbeat: Global Poll** (Click for Details)

[China](#) has the most confident consumers of the world's major economies, with **53 %** expecting to be better off in one year's time, according to a new [GlobeScan](#) poll of consumer confidence across **24 countries**. In contrast, there is widespread pessimism in many of the major developed economies.

October 20, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Consumer Confidence/Protection](#)**CYBERWORLD****Mobile Health 2010** (Click for Details)

The online health-information environment is going mobile, particularly among younger adults. People get information through mobile and also use such applications which help them manage health related activities.

[Pew Research Center](#)

October 18, 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

Politics:

Despite the fact that **Kurdish Party** leaders warned to break cease fire in case government launches military operation; **Turkish** military began an operation against a group of outlawed **Kurdistan Workers' Party**, or PKK. PM Erdogan gave instructions at the camp to contact the main opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP, to solve the headscarf issue. The **ruling AKP** had previously proposed constitutional changes in 2008 to allow **headscarves at universities**, a decision repealed by the Constitutional Court upon a complaint from the CHP. Meanwhile the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader has welcomed a Justice and Development Party (AK Party) plan to visit opposition parties to cooperate on a planned constitutional amendment to lift the ban on the use of the Muslim headscarf on university campuses.

Parliament's Constitution Committee has discussed a new bill that would bring harsher punishments to media institutions for controversial content. Republican People's Party (CHP) leader has accused the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) of having a secret agenda.

Geo-strategic Issues:

The Greek Foreign Ministry has summoned the **Turkish** ambassador and warned him over the interference of Turkish diplomats in the domestic affairs of the country. Meanwhile Erdogan has announced his decision to boycott the **Mediterranean Climate Change Initiative**, which will be held in Athens, conditional on Netanyahu's presence.

Turkey expressed some reservations about **NATO's planned anti-missile system**, saying it wanted more technical details and that it should not be presented as a defence against fellow Muslim state **Iran**. In official talks with Turkish authorities, U.S. officials said Ankara's policies on Iran, tensions with Israel and position on the anti-missile system would determine the course of Turkish-American relations and be a test case for how Turkey wants to position itself going forward. Unless there is some improvement in these three areas, Washington made clear through diplomatic channels, **Turkey** should not be surprised to see a resolution recognizing **Armenian claims of genocide** pass before the end of the year.

Turkey has signed agreements with **Brazil** and **Germany** to enhance cooperation.

Economy:

The 2010 export figures show a significant increase for **Turkey** in pasta exports. The first nine months of the year indicate that Turkey has exported 221,000 tons of pasta to 128 countries, more than total pasta exports for 2009. Meanwhile deficits in meat and livestock reserves in **Turkey** have resulted in the importation of meat from countries with which almost no business has been conducted before.

A recent report from real-estate brokerage **Cushman & Wakefield** has declared **Turkey** as one of the most stable performers in the region in terms of its economic development.

Society:

The latest annual [freedom of the press index](#) by the international group [Reporters without Borders](#) has ranked **Turkey** 138th among 175 countries.

GCC

Politics:

Bahrain voters have been urged to turn out massively and exercise their constitutional rights - electing their legislative and municipal representatives.

Geo-strategic Issues:

Secretary General of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** has brought down the curtains on the “*GCC Days in London*”, a three days event that has been widely hailed by the *British* people and government, which signaled the close ties between the GCC nations and Britain."

UAE has taken initiatives that aim at securing food to those who need it and providing all means of living to millions of peoples who experience severe hunger and its tragic consequences.

Kuwaiti activists, participating in a Gaza-bound aid ship, affirmed their solid stance with the Palestinian cause, saying that the international community should move to break the three-year [Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip](#).

Economy:

Yemen and *Turkey* have reviewed the obtainable investment opportunities in the country. Meanwhile **Saudi Arabia** has expressed intention to establish a national center for the rational use of energy.

Omani Minister of National Economy and Deputy Chairman of the Financial Affairs and Energy Resources Council, has received a written message from the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance in *Iran*, relating to enhancing co-operation in joint economic and investment fields.

Society:

Labor Minister has estimated the number of unemployed **Saudis** at 500,000, adding that they represent about **10 %** of the expatriate work force. Meanwhile according to a recent study, **78.3 %** of jobless women hold university degrees and at least 1,000 of them doctorate degrees.

The Majlis Addawla in **Oman** has always accorded attention to women’s affairs and discussed issues of concern to women and children to help develop debate, while at the same time maintaining a balance to avoid the emergence of negative social phenomena.

IRAN

Politics:

Iranian opposition leader has announced that the "[Supervision over Members of Parliament](#)" bill will mean "the end" of parliament in the [Islamic Republic system](#). Iran's supreme leader appears to have scored a political success by gathering leading clerics in the holy city of Qom around him in a show of unity after months of in-fighting.

According to reports **Iran's** Open University has announced to fire the "secular" members of their faculty.

Iranian Ministry of Communications announced that they have identified the source of Stuxnet infection in Iran. Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has announced that the country has, thus far, produced almost 30kg of 20%-enriched uranium to supply fuel to the [Tehran research reactor](#).



Head of the **Majlis Economic Committee** has warned about the seditionists' plots over the economic independence of the country and urged the judiciary of not being silent against them. Meanwhile **Iran** has detained opposition politician in the latest crackdown on the pro-reform movement in the Islamic state.

Geo-strategic Issues:

Iran's Police Chief Brigadier General took the US and British forces in Afghanistan responsible for increased drug trafficking in the world, cautioning that the **Afghan drug problem** has gravely deteriorated since the US invasion of the country 9 years ago.

Iran's Prosecutor-General has warned about the numerous plots hatched by the enemies to sow seeds of discord between the **Iranian** nation and government. Tehran has warned that it would file a lawsuit with the international bodies against any country which blocks the supply of jet fuel to Iran under the guise of unilateral sanctions.

Secretary of **Iran's** Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has greatly emphasized the importance of growing Iran-Iraq strategic ties.

Meanwhile President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad has announced Iran's four preconditions for talks with **Group 5+1**. The president said one precondition for Iran to take part in the talks is that the 5+1 should make it clear whether they are committed to the **International Atomic Energy Agency** (IAEA) regulations. Second, he said, they should explain what their objective is with conducting talks with Iran: is it negotiation and friendship or animosity? Furthermore, the President added, the 5+1 should make it clear whether they are to follow rules and logics or are to make ballyhoo by issuing statements if they feel they are failing. Ahmadinejad said they should also announce their views about the atomic bombs "**the Zionist regime**" possesses.

Economy:

Iran has exported 6mln tons of oil to **Italy** in the first seven months of the current year.

Croatia's Ambassador to **Iran** has described Iran as the most tourist-appealing place in the world and said with proper publicity Iran's tourism revenue can even outdo its oil revenue. **Iran-Venezuela** bilateral economic relations have exceeded 3.5 billion dollars.

Iran's exports of industrial and mineral goods crossed the \$8.8 billion mark during the five months to August 2010, up more than 34 % from the same period last year. Likewise Iran's trade volume with Silk Road countries reached 16.7 billion dollars during the first half of 2010, registering 29 % growth compared with the same period last year.

Society:

During the World Masters Weightlifting Championships in **Poland** in an unprecedented move, an **Iranian** athlete took his place on the medal podium beside an **Israeli** athlete drawing criticism from Iranian authorities.

According to reports **Tony Blair's** sister-in-law has converted to Islam after having a 'holy experience' in Iran.

Three consecutive tremors hit the different parts of **Iran's** Southwestern province of Bushehr, while a fourth quake jolted a bordering province in the Northeastern parts of the country.



AFGHANISTAN

Politics:

More than 2,000 candidates who had contested last month's parliamentary election asked the government to hold a fresh election over the allegation of rigging. Ballots cast at 30 polling centers, constituting 120 polling

sites, in last month's parliamentary election have been invalidated after nearly 1,100 allegations of irregularities were probed. The **Afghan** election body has announced a preliminary list of winners in last month's fraud-tainted Wolesi Jirga election, adding that it had invalidated nearly a quarter of all ballots. A nomadic Kuchi won the highest number of votes in last month's parliamentary election, illustrating the somewhat surprising results released by the election commission. Meanwhile all the 11 candidates who have been announced as potential winners in last month's parliamentary election from southern Ghazni province represented a minority ethnic group.

Nearly 60 militants have surrendered to security personnel since the start of an operation last week in northern Kunduz province. More than a dozen vehicles carrying fuel for **NATO-led coalition forces** were torched and three guards were killed overnight in the southern province of Zabul. In the meantime a NATO soldier from US was killed following "an insurgent attack" in eastern Afghanistan, taking the death toll of American soldiers to 400 this year.

President Hamid Karzai has accused foreigners of being in Afghanistan to serve their own interests, and not that of the people. However, he also praised the international community for its efforts to achieve peace in the country.

Maulavi Abdul Kabir, member of the **Leadership Council of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan** has declared peace talks in the presence of foreigners to be meaningless and futile. In the meantime Islamic Emirates has claimed that the NATO forces in Afghanistan, in collaboration with their Afghan puppets and western media outlets under the leadership of U.S have been trying by diplomatic maneuver and organized propaganda to make it appear as though Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate were ready for negotiations and that they have made progress in this regard.



Geo-strategic Issues:

An **Afghan peace council** has called on **Saudi King Abdullah** to use his influence with the Taliban and help bring the militants to the negotiating table.

A top *Canadian* military official recently stated that Afghan security forces are not strong enough to take over the responsibility for security from international forces. In response the Ministry of Defence stated that Afghan forces are ready and strong enough to take over the task from their international counterparts.

Economy:

The Shir Khan Port Customs House in northern Kunduz province has earned 326 million *afghanis* in revenue over the past six months, showing a 5 % increase over the same period last year. **Afghanistan** receives \$1.5 million in revenue per year from the extraction of precious stones.

Society:

Ten out of 100 families in northern Balkh province earn a living with the assistance of others while 80 % people are living in extreme poverty. Meanwhile the revival of a dam and farm in southern Ghazni province could provide work for 20,000 people.

29 women have graduated from the **Afghan army's training school**.

SOUTH ASIA

Politics:

A **Bangladesh Rifles** special court in Sylhet has been set up for holding trial of 166 mutiny suspects of Comilla and Sylhet region.

Bangladeshi PM has announced to shortly restore the word 'secularism' in its constitution. She further added that it will remain an Islamic state, allowing functioning of religion-based parties. The government has announced to reprint the constitution following a Supreme Court directive to restore 'secularism'. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has further stated that her government would exchange views with the religion-based political parties to dispel confusion over constitutional amendments.

In **Nepal** Madhesh-based parties have said the caretaker government must wait for the new government to introduce a full-fledged budget. In the meantime Unified CPN (Maoist) has declared that it would not allow the caretaker government to preset the budget. **Nepali** Prime Minister Madhav Kumar however said that the government is determined to bring in a full-fledged budget after discussion with political parties within mid-November. He further added that **Nepalese** government is committed to timely drafting of the Constitution and concluding the peace process at the earliest despite various obstacles.

The **Sri Lankan** government has expressed its willingness to accept any allegations on war atrocities made by the public before the **Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC)**. Meanwhile **Sri Lanka's** External Affairs Minister has slammed the right group Amnesty International (AI) saying that the organization has a political objective to hurt **Sri Lanka**, its economy and its people.

Geo-strategic Issues:

Nepal has requested World Bank (WB) to increase its assistance to develop physical infrastructure and construct mid-hill highway in the country. Meanwhile US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Robert Blake has expressed positive hope regarding formation of government in **Nepal**.

Economy:

Bangladesh Bank has added Tk 570 million more to its refinancing fund for housing loan to settle the claims of the eligible clients. **Bangladesh** plans to demand a separate quota for raw cotton from India to ensure the item's adequate supply for the readymade garment sector. The cotton price has reached its all-time high of \$1.19 a pound on the international market this month.

Meanwhile the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has agreed in principle to lend **Bangladesh** \$1 billion under its Extended Credit Facility (ECF) Programme. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon **Italy** to import jute and jute goods, pharmaceuticals and ceramic products from **Bangladesh**.

Sri Lankan government has offered free land and tax concessions to encourage top ranking foreign universities to set up branches in the country. In an effort to boost the economy in the war-torn North, the **Sri Lankan** government is planning to revive the ceased industries in Jaffna. Sri Lanka has shown strong improvement in fiscal performance but needs forceful action to reduce the budget deficit and public debt.

Society:

A deep depression in the **Bay of Bengal** has turned into a cyclonic storm named "Giri" lying about 650 km south-east from Balasore in Orissa.

Over 30 million children of **Bangladesh** live below the poverty line, according to the **UNICEF**.

SOUTH INDIA

Politics:

Maoist sympathizer and president of newly-floated Telangana Praja Front (TPF) Gaddar began touring villages in **Telangana** to strengthen the movement for separate statehood. Apart from holding meetings with representatives of various backward classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and students; he also had an interaction with Muslim community Mahabubnagar town.



TPD leader and former CM of *Andhra Pradesh* has been arrested by the Police for staging a protest against PM Man Mohan Singh's visit to Hyderabad. Meanwhile the opposition party in *Tamil Nadu* has announced to launch protest amidst heavy security.

The only **South Indian** BJP led Karnataka government has won the 2nd trust vote with a narrow margin. District Superintendent of Police in Karnataka said that by having approached family members of Naxals to convince them to return to the mainstream of the society the Maoists activities in the state have decreased substantially. BJP has accused Congress and CPI for building ties with Muslims in order to increase their vote bank in Kerala.

Economy:

Chief Minister of *Andhra Pradesh* has assured that government would protect the interests of industry. His assurance came in response to the concern voiced by some industrialists in view of the threats by pro-Telangana groups of a massive movement in January. Meanwhile shutdowns and the violence in Hyderabad, other parts of Telangana and also in the Andhra and the Rayalaseema regions has hit the business and industry hard.

German's most industrialized city intends to build IT ties with Kerala. Meanwhile the Communist Party of India (Marxist), heading the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala flayed the recent hike in fuel prices by the congress led UPA.

Society:

To discuss raising demands of Muslim minorities of Andhra Pradesh, Tribal Welfare Minister inaugurated the 2nd all minority employees' welfare association of AP. The Lawyers of the Coastal AP districts decided to observe "fast unto death" from October 25, demanding the government and the High Court to establish a High Court bench here.

Vaccine maker, Bharat Biotech, has launched the "India's first indigenously developed cell culture H1N1 swine flu vaccine" under the brand name 'HNVAC'.

Tamil Nadu ruling DMK government has assured that they would expedite the Chennai Metro Rail Project aimed at decongesting traffic in the city. Heavy rains have caused floods in the state of Karnataka.

EAST ASIA

Politics:

Malaysian President Najib Razak has asked Umno leaders to make thorough preparations to face the next general election.

Thai PM has to face a trial over the allegations of corruption along with few other members of his executive. In case found guilty he would be banned from politics. Meanwhile the government of **Thailand** has renewed the executive decree on public administration in emergency situations in its three southern regions which have been plagued by violence. The emergency decree, which was first introduced 5 years ago, takes effect in the three southernmost provinces - Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat - for another three months, from October 20 to January 19, 2011. The **Philippine** government has formed a new panel to negotiate with communist rebels in a bid to restart peace talks stalled for more than five years.

Geo-strategic Issues:

Thailand and **China** have agreed to proceed with rail connections that will connect the two countries through neighboring **Laos**. The planned links aim to enhance rising trade flows sparked by the new China-Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) free-trade agreement and facilitate with modern infrastructure



the region's move towards a common ASEAN market. Meanwhile **Chinese** top political advisor has greatly appreciated Chinese relations with **Indonesia**.

Cambodia's foreign ministry has issued a press release saying the allegation made by **Thailand** that **Cambodia** has allowed armed training on its territory for members of the Red-shirt group to commit acts of terror against **Thai** government and plot assassination of top Thai government officials, is causing greater harm to the two countries' relations.

Economy:

Taking its FTA with the 10-nation **ASEAN** bloc a step further, **India** has implemented a free trade pact with **Indonesia** that slashes the import duties on thousands of products like seafood, chemicals and apparel.

Indonesia's National Agency for the Protection and Placement of Migrant Workers said the government will soon end the ban after **Malaysia** promised to improve the protection and welfare of **Indonesian** migrant workers.

Malaysia's Prime Minister **Najib Razak**, who is also the finance minister, has announced his plans to accelerate spending by 2.8 % while the deficit is projected to shrink only a meager 0.2 % to 5.4 % of gross domestic product from 5.6 % currently.

The **Philippines'** biggest business group has warned of more crippling power outages unless plants were upgraded and more investment in the sector was allowed to go ahead.

Society:

A survey indicated that in **Indonesia** the level of intolerance among the Muslim community toward the Ahmadiyah sect has more than doubled during the six years of President **Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's** rule.

The **Indonesian** government has been asked to develop growth centers in the eastern part to fill economic gap with western and central ones.

CHINA

Politics:

The **Communist Party of China** (CPC) has concluded Fifth Plenary Session of the 17th Central Committee on Oct. 18. **China's** 12th five year plan has been passed in the meeting.



Geo-strategic Issues:

After a brief relaxation, tensions between **China** and **Japan** have escalated again. On Oct. 16, thousands of protesters in Chengdu, Zhengzhou and Xi'an, **China**, raised complaints against Japan over the territorial dispute in the East China Sea, which has been the catalyst for recent tensions. These demonstrations continued into Oct. 18, and though the numbers of protesters dwindled considerably, reports of vandalism against **Japanese**-owned shops continued. The Japanese Embassy has warned citizens about threats to their safety in **China**. The **Chinese** Embassy in **Japan** however reported that it had

received a threat in the form of an envelope containing a bullet. In the meantime a Chinese official has urged **Japan** to "show sincerity" in mending strained relations between the two nations by taking substantial steps.

China has expressed regret over **Israel's** plan to build new housing units in East Jerusalem.

Meanwhile **China** seems keen to boost strategic ties with **Indonesia**, **South Africa** and **Poland** and economic ties with **Turkey**, **Latvia** and **Canada**.

China has urged the **U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China** (CECC) to stop interfering in China's internal affairs. A senior Chinese military official reiterated that a peaceful resolution through consultation and negotiation was needed to handle disputes over the **South China Sea**.

Economy:

The **U.S. Treasury Department** has decided to postpone its six month report on the currency practices of its major trading partners after the upcoming U.S. Congressional elections turned Chinese currency, the Yuan, into a tricky campaign issue. Meanwhile **China** has vowed to enhance coordination with the **International Monetary Fund** (IMF) to continuously push forward the reform of the global economic and financial systems.

Prices of edible farm produce in **China's** 36 large and medium-sized cities remained largely unchanged in the week that ended October 17 from the previous week, ending sixteen consecutive weeks of increases. Meanwhile Profits of **China's** state-owned enterprises (SOEs) hit 1.44 trillion Yuan (216.4 billion U.S. dollars) in the first nine months, up 46.2 % year on year. **China's** telecommunication industry reported core business revenues of 667.51 billion Yuan (100 billion U.S. dollars) during the first nine months of 2010, up 6.8 % year on year.

A **World Trade Organization** panel has largely rejected **Chinese** claims in a dispute with the United States over extra duties on Chinese goods which Washington argued were priced at below cost and subsidized. Tourists visiting east China's Fujian Province spent 94.49 billion Yuan (about 14.2 billion U.S. dollars) in the first three quarters of the year, up 18 % from the same period last year.

Society:

Human Rights officials from the **UNO** have appreciated **China** for having notable achievements in promoting people's economic and social rights. **China's** urban unemployment rate stood at 4.1 % at the end of September, with 9.05 million urbanites registered as unemployed. With a growing multitude of smokestacks dismantled and polluting factories closed, China is scaling up its often painful efforts to curb **greenhouse gas emissions** and boost energy efficiency.

Cyber News:

According to reports **Baidu**, sometimes called the Google of China, reported third-quarter profits last week that more than doubled, easily beating analysts' forecasts. Sales rose a stunning 76%. The company continues to gain market share in China while Google (GOOG, Fortune 500) remains a distant second



HONG KONG & MACAU

Hong Kong's graft watchdog Independent Commission against Corruption has recorded 2,634 corruption reports in the first nine months this year, up 5 % from a year earlier.

Macao and the Republic of **Mongolia** have signed an "agreement on cooperation to combat trafficking in persons".

As companies from overseas and Chinese mainland running business in Hong Kong has reached 6,561 this year, up 2.6 % from a year earlier, Hong Kong's role as Asia's preferred business hub remained unchanged.

Meanwhile **Hong Kong** has signed an agreement with France for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of tax evasion on income and capital. Hong Kong saw a growth of 73 % in the value of total wine imports in the first eight months of 2010, continuing to develop as Asia's wine hub.

JAPAN

Politics:

The government of **Japan** seems close to revising a bill related to its plan to set up a national strategy bureau, which is at the heart of the **Democratic Party of Japan's** policy goal of enhancing politicians' power over bureaucrats.

The Tokyo District Court has rejected Ichiro Ozawa's request to halt procedures linked to the ruling party kingpin's mandatory indictment in connection with false financial reports submitted by his political fund management body.

Geo-strategic Issues:

Ministers from **Japan** and the 16-member Pacific Island Forum have agreed to boost ties through aid and personnel exchanges, and to cooperate on climate change and reforming the United Nations Security Council. A joint team of researchers from **Japan** and **South Korea** has called for deepening dialogue with China as part of efforts to maintain maritime order in the **East and South China Seas** amid a series of territorial disputes.

Economy:

According to reports **Japan** is a major importer of rare plants and animals whose international trade is restricted under a convention on endangered species.

Four major banks have launched talks on providing a fresh loan of about ¥320 billion to embattled Japan Airlines Corp.

Society:

Representatives of over 190 signatories to a **United Nations biodiversity pact** are set to gather in Nagoya for a two-week marathon conference. The 10th meeting of the parties to the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, or **COP10**, is expected to forge a new agreement that could set aside vast amounts of the world's land and marine areas as sanctuaries.

KOREA

Geo-strategic Issues:

According to reports a **South Korean** fishing boat has been hijacked by **Somali pirates**.

A recent public opinion survey has indicated that **Chinese** people think that **South Korea** and the **United States** are more responsible for the sinking of the warship **Cheonan** than **North Korea**. Meanwhile South Korea's Unification Minister has said that dialogue with North Korea can resume only after the regime admits to sinking one of the South's warships, dismissing the North's latest "peace-offensive gestures."

China and **North Korea** have urged efforts from related parties to start the six-party nuclear talks. Movements of **North Korean** personnel and vehicles near an atomic weapons site have sparked speculation of a third nuclear test as leader **Kim Jong Il** prepares to hand over power to his youngest son.

The United States has warned North Korea against conducting a third nuclear test.

Meanwhile, according to reports scholars of Korea and Japan have reached a blue print for future relations of the two neighbor countries, which is forward-looking yet lacking details.

Korean President and his Panamanian counterpart have agreed to boost partnership in the development of resources and infrastructure and explore the possibility of Korea participating in the project to expand the **Panama Canal**.

Economy:

South Korea has extended its worldwide fixed-line broadband Internet leadership and the U.S. held onto joint 15th place as the technology's speed and availability expanded. South Korea, which has 100 % broadband penetration, topped Cisco's list for the third year in a row.

South Korea has announced plan to reduce its dependency on *Chinese* supplies of rare earths after cutting overall imports of the materials used in hybrid cars and wind turbines by almost two-thirds since



2005. **South Korean** President Lee has called on the financial chiefs of **Group of 20 nations** to find agreement on overcoming imbalances in the global economy.

Society:

The Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education has launched an investigation into allegations that the principal of Seonyu Elementary School in Yeongdeungpo District has extorted money from members of a parent representative group. §

Events of the week in

Africa zone

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

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: Nigeria: *Charles Okah*, elder brother of militant leader, Henry, is being held in Abuja by the security agencies on the suspicion of funding the October 1 bombings which claimed at least 12 lives.

Former **Nigerian** President Olusegun Obasanjo, last week played down the controversies trailing the zoning formula of the ruling party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), saying that the President in power takes the decision about zoning in the ruling party. On the other hand, **former Military President, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida**, said that **Nigeria's** political elite adopted zoning to stabilize the country.

The leadership of the **Goodluck Grassroots Movement** has warned that it would not tolerate any act of fraud in the forthcoming congresses to be organized by the Peoples Democratic Party to choose delegates for the Presidential primaries.

President Goodluck Jonathan has approved the sum of N2.1billion as Federal Government assistance to the governments of *Lagos, Ogun* and *Jigawa* states to alleviate the sufferings of victims of flood disasters in the three states.

Cape Verde: According to reports, though an unlikely candidate to be in the vanguard of African development progress, agriculture is seeing a major boost in Cape Verde, with massive investments in irrigation, infrastructure, disease control and distribution.

East/Horn of Africa: In **Sudan**, China, according to reports, will try to prevent the publication of a **United Nations** report that alleges Chinese bullets were used in attacks on UN peacekeepers in **Darfur**.

Tensions are rising over the contentious *Abyei* region as the two **Sudanese** ruling parties remain deadlocked over who will be eligible to vote in the region's upcoming referendum in January.

In Somalia: Security officials say at least 27 people have died in intense clashes between pro-government forces in **Somalia** and **al-Shabab militants**.

Ethiopian Government communications minister Bereket Simon says food distribution in the

country is based on humanitarian needs and not political considerations.

Central Africa: The **Democratic Republic of Congo's** information minister has denied accusations his government has failed to fully implement a peace agreement signed in March with both Pareco and the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) rebel groups.

Peace and demilitarization is the main theme of the **third International Action of the World March of Women** whose activities were held in **Bukavu, South Kivu province** from 13 to 17 October 2010. Thousands of people including **DRC's** First Lady Ms. Olive Lembe Kabila were in attendance.

The **European Union** representative to the **Central African Republic** said the commission has made available more than \$15 million to fund the country's presidential and legislative elections.

South Africa: In **Zambian** police have arrested the two Chinese nationals in connection with the shooting of 11 miners and one onlooker at the Chinese Collum Coal Mine in Sinazongwe district in Southern



Province, protesting about poor pay and conditions. Last week miners protesting against the shooting broke the wall fence, and ripped off the roof at shaft two and carried away the iron sheets.

In **Zimbabwe**, A call by **President Robert Mugabe** to hold national elections in 2011 and end any possibility of extending the government of national unity (GNU) has been greeted with concern by NGOs, fearing a surge in political violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

South Africa: Contrary to government expectations, the level of poverty in **Mozambique** increased slightly between 2003 and 2009, according to the latest figures from the National Statistics Institute (INE).

The **amnesty for visa-free crossing** into **South Africa** granted to the **Zimbabweans** will expire at the end of this year, alarming immigrants who face mass deportations, increased exploitation by employers and a possible renewal of ethnic violence.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: Clean water is essential in containing the spread of cholera; **Nigeria** is in the midst of its worst cholera outbreak in recent years, with nearly 40,000 cases and more than 1,500 deaths reported since the start of the year, the United Nations reported.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: Nigeria: President Goodluck Jonathan has said that fight against illegal *oil* bunkering in the Niger Delta has taken over the attention of his administration with the end of the militancy in the region, adding that the malaise was a source of concern to him. Meanwhile Former Vice President and presidential aspirant in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, have expressed grave concerns over worsening economic profile of the country.

Also according to reports controversy has stalled the 10-month-old process by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) to transfer ownership and operatorship of three oil blocks to a consortium of two **Nigerian** companies.

Nigeria: Barely two months after the country attained Category 1 of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Air Safety and Security status, it recorded yet another feat last week when President Goodluck Jonathan formally inaugurated the new radar facility that would ensure the total coverage of the country's airspace.

South Africa: According to reports Government's revelation that **Zambia** will soon become a middle income country is insensible as 70 % of the country's population still lives in miserable poverty, a local economist has charged.

Meanwhile commercial banks in the country are worried that 2011 national budget will hurt the local financial sector as value added tax (VAT) on fee-based banking services is included in it, *Bankers Association of Zambia* (BAZ) chairman Saviour Chibiya has observed.

The IMF has observed that **Zambia** has a very expensive public sector which is not delivering all the services that everyone expects it should and has called for revision of the current maize growing and marketing in the country. According to them the current policy is not effective as it dampens the development of the private sector and creates pressures on the public spending.



Mining companies operating in **South Africa** regard securing reliable power supply as one of the key constraints on growth. So, *Global mining giant Xstrata* says it is forging ahead with plans for its own power station in Limpopo despite securing agreement from Eskom to provide electricity for a R4, 9bn expansion of its Lion ferrochrome plant.

The ministerial meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between *China* and the Portuguese-speaking Countries will be held in Macau on 13-14 November, the organization's secretariat has announced.

A *Chinese* firm has secured a \$5 million contract to build 90 wagons for the regional **Tanzania-Zambia** Railway Authority (Tazara).

Swaziland has signed a Letter of Intent with the *Kuwaiti government* for the establishment of a seven-star hotel. This development occurred during His Majesty King Mswati III's visit to Kuwait.

The **World Bank Board** has approved an additional credit facility of US \$15 million to **Zambia** to finance the construction of the Chiawa Bridge on Kafue River in the lower Zambezi.

Malila, a former **Zambia** Attorney General, observed that crime had become sophisticated due to advancements in technology. He called for the development of modern methods of fighting financial crime in **Zambia**.

In Swaziland; According to reports despite the country's bad financial state, government cannot afford not to increase salaries for civil servants and politicians. Moreover, government cannot afford to cut the salaries by any margin because such 'there would be social upheaval', Prime Minister Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini said. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

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

WESTERN EUROPE

Political Issues

The **Franco-German** agreement which gives leeway to EU members to having control over imposing penalties in exchange for Franco-German amendment of EU treaties has raised the ire of the German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle of the pro-business Free Democrats. The latter believes the new agreement is too flexible; rather it should show authority and assertiveness and should be free of political opportunism.

With the growing far right politicians across Europe, **German** Chancellor Angela Merkel was not shy to say that multicultural society in Germany have utterly failed, indicating the supposed failure of immigrants to integrate.

A cut in **British public spending** is being hailed by the government as best option for the deficit gripped economy. The cut also affects military spending and has raised Washington's concern as well. The British cut shows the trend across Europe but challenges Keynesian theory that deficit spending by governments is crucial to avoiding a long recession.

Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi argued during an interview with **Germany's** Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung daily that **UN sanctions** might have little or no impact on *Iran* even though Rome consented to the sanctions. Berlusconi believes *Russia* and *China* are the two non-western countries that can convince Iran out of its blind alley.

Economic Issues

Despite the economic problems in the region and in the **Eurozone**, European MEPs have voted by a vast majority to increase next year's **EU** budget by 5.9 %, a move they define as "responsible" despite government spending cuts in member states.

The **EU** does not so much believe in U.S style of Big-government and stimulus package that bailed financial institutions out of recession. The regional bloc is bent at making law that will make banks shoulder the cross of their failure without endangering taxpayers.

Despite the massive strike actions that almost rendered the economy lame, **French** President Sarkozy and his centre-right government refused to back down on a bill seeking to plug a hole in pension funding by raising the minimum retirement age to 62 from 60 and raising the age at which people qualify for a full pension to 67 from 65.

The domestic crisis between the **French** and the government has transpired beyond domestic to **EU** issue. Shortage of fuel caused by the strike actions is causing fret for **EU** Strasbourg office as mobility of EU staffs is impaired.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Arrest of transgender persons accused of prostitution and resisting police has stirred EU's interest on Turkey's level of human right. The case might dent Turkey of being intolerant of heterogeneous people.

The EU and UN are seriously concern about the detention of illegal migrants apprehended in Greece. A UN report suggests that Greek detentions clearly amount to inhuman and degrading treatment, in violation of Articles 7 and 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Meanwhile, according to a report by Reporters without Borders, Greece's press freedom ranking plummeted from 35 places to 70 amid a general decline in press freedom in the whole of Europe. The Greek plunge is due to political unrest and related physical attacks on journalists.

Upon the submission of a document by Paris to EU commission over its expulsion of Roma. The commission ended the case to petition Paris before the European court for violating EU rules. Meanwhile Paris has agreed to exercise future actions in line with EU rules.

Complementing U.S State Department terror alert for Europe, the Saudi Arabian intelligence has issued a fresh alert about an Al-Qaeda plot in Europe. Thus, indicating the necessity of Europeans to gear up for any eventuality.

In the Netherlands' controversial Freedom Party MP Geert Wilders' party has become part of the ruling conservative government, but that does not stop the Amsterdam court from trying him over provocative and insulting comments made against Islam. However Wilders believes sitting judge should be dismissed for what he called judges' prejudices.



Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The European Commission has sent a strong warning to Italy to clean up its city of Naples from tons of trash or face sanctions. Italy's Naples is accused of failing to create a sound disposal management after the garbage crisis flared in 2007. The Naples problem is associated with corruption, poor management and infiltration by the local mob.

For most economies it was uneasy to accomplish a reduction in gas emission plan, but the 2009 Ireland's recession forced the economy to reduce its gas emission by 20 %.

Ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss is increasingly becoming a concern for the EU before the next Kyoto and Cancun talks. The EU believes the challenge entail huge costs which society simply cannot afford; as such EU wants the extension of the Kyoto protocol.

Geostrategic Issues

The European Commission is becoming worried over the increasing number of asylum seekers from Serbia and Macedonia who were recently inducted in EU visa liberalization scheme. The scheme only accords free mobility and does not allow asylum seeking.

Meanwhile, the EU has given a green light to Moldova for a visa free regime ahead of the country's election which might likely see a pro-EU government. In the same way, the bloc will still allow Belarusian President Aleskander Lukashaneko and few officials entry into the EU but the most notorious people in the nomenklatura will remain persona non grata.

The two powerhouses in the EU are debating on how to alleviate the concern of *Russia* over the proposed [European missile defense system](#). NATO has signaled the need to put Moscow on board of the system as the latter is an inescapable member of Europe.

The [Vatican](#) along with bishops from the Middle East has issued a communiqué demanding Israel to succumb to UN resolutions calling for an end to its "occupation" of Arab lands. They added that Israel shouldn't use the Bible to justify "injustices" against the Palestinians.



Economic Issues

Poland has finally reached a bargaining price with Moscow on gas delivery to **Poland** and its transit to *Germany* through the Yamal pipeline.

Meanwhile according to reports the **Polish** economy remains vibrant and its stock market attests to that fact leading to the insinuation that **Poland** could become formidable financial centre in **Central and Eastern Europe**.

The new **Slovak** government is yet to find a solution to the demand of **Slovak's** trade unions. Meanwhile the government's *austerity package*, with its 1.7 billion euros in cuts and tax raise makes the public unhappy.

The presence of *Venezuelan* President Hugo Chavez in **Ukraine** and **Belarus** is no doubt an indication for deeper economic relations as the three countries inked agreement on energy cooperation and transaction. Nonetheless, the National Bank of **Ukraine** (NBU), says its economy was growing faster than expected. Meanwhile, *China* is also eyeing the **Belarusian** market.

The European Commission has filed a query with **Hungary** and is waiting for reply on the country's tax on the telecommunications sector.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Polish-Lithuanian diplomatic relations is on a historic low upon the accusation by the Poles that minority Poles in Lithuania are facing discrimination and the latter is not sensitive about it.

Meanwhile according to reports **Poland** spends more on its justice system than any other EU state. Poland has the most judges in the EU, after *Germany*, amounting to 10,322 currently on the legal circuit **Romanian** President Traian Basescu after meeting visiting **Hungarian** President Pal Schmitt said that **Romania** has no problem with a new **Hungarian** law which allows easier acquisition of citizenship for ethnic **Hungarians** in neighboring countries. There are around 1.4 million ethnic Hungarians in **Romania**.

EAST EUROPE

Political Issues

Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski has approved a government motion to extend **Poland's** [ISAF mission in Afghanistan](#) until April 13, 2011.

The **Czech** ruling party is under fire as opposition parties are getting upper hand in Senatorial and municipal elections. Such atmosphere of victory could undermine the set of proposals the ruling party tends to undertake.

Current **Slovak** government is headed by a woman and it has just completed its 100 days in office. According to reports it will take great effort for the coalition government to live up to high expectation the public demands from it.

The President of **Ukraine** Victor Yanukovich announced he will hold a meeting with the representatives of the opposition parties to ensure the transparency of the October 31 local elections.

Hungarian government tends to be pushing for stronger ties with **Syria** and effort that could be accentuated if **Hungary** takes over the **bloc's rotating presidency** in 2011.

Economic Issues

World Bank economists have contested **Russia's** view that Moscow could soon be another global financial hub. The argument depicts **Russia** as far below other **BRIC** countries in terms of investments.

RUSSIA

Political Issues

Even as **Russia** completes its regional and municipal elections, political dust is yet unsettled as opposition remains proactive challenging the government over political discrimination.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

In a latest ruling by the **European Court of Human Rights** the court ruled that **Russia** unlawfully banned gay pride marches and picketing in Moscow in 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Russian grains will remain scarce in the international market as Moscow extends ban on grains for another six months owing to the fear that shortfall in domestic supply. Meanwhile, **Russia's** energy clout continues to expand following the acceptance of **Romania** to join the **South Stream pipeline project** and the new soft position taken by **Bulgaria** on same project.

European Union member **Lithuania** has rejected a proposal by neighboring non-EU **Belarus** for a joint **nuclear power plant** amid competition between three similar projects in the region.

The **Slovak** environment ministry has hinted a growing fear that the country might face a similar devastating **toxic sludge spill** that hit neighboring **Hungary** two weeks ago.

Geostrategic Issues

Russia has disclosed its bid to be part of the US-NATO sponsor European missile defense shield though the shield has remained controversial. Meanwhile, *Moscow* says it has no misgiving over Indo-US military deal. For Moscow it will be a diplomatic success if **ASEAN** accepts its bid for membership as the Southeast Asia hold their 17th summit.

Russia had provided **Poland** with the draft report on its investigation of the **Polish president's plane crash in Russia in April**. It is now a matter of deliberation by the Poles to ascertain the authenticity of the report.

US/CANADA

Political Issues

For the Democrats everything matters before the November 3rd elections and the deployment of **former President Bill Clinton** to campaign in swing states is no coincidence. Meanwhile, President Obama warns Americans consumers from voting republicans as their policy will further put consumer to jeopardy. Meanwhile, with the **Tea Party** advance, republicans continue to make a lead in run-up for the elections.

According to reports, in the **US** illegal immigrants have no voting rights but they are allowed to participate as volunteers campaigning for a candidate. These volunteers have the impression that elected candidate can help change their status from illegal to legal migrants.



Condoleezza Rice, the former US Secretary of State, during an interview with Olivia Ward of the Toronto Star last week asserted that the Tea Party movement is good for the country; Iran is weaker as clergy authority is under fire, no regret for overthrowing Saddam and China will have to match economic development with political correctness.

Toronto voters are locked in an election that will determine whether the mayor will go for to liberal or conservative party. The latest polls give Ford (liberal) and Smitherman (conservative) around 30 % of the vote each.

Economic Issues

US President Obama has reiterated the need for a change in global trade rules particularly with the new emerging economies like *China*. The U.S has been a pushover for the Chinese economy for a decade and that has to be changed as China heads for valued added and competitive products.

Meanwhile **Canadian** Central Bank mulls over future hike in monetary policy as the nation's economy is yet to regain its stamina, added to that is the uncertain **U.S** economy which the Canadian economy is vulnerable to.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

American scholars are back discussing culture as explanation for poverty and other attitudinal disposition of people in different locale. Amid the socio-economic and political scenario in the country cultural discourse is becoming indispensable.

The next global attack might not be in the conventional military warfare but a cyber attack, which the **United States** is now set forth to challenge through the joint effort of **Federal Emergency Management Agency**, **Department of Homeland Security** and **Defense Department**.

Canadian government is refusing the rings of human smugglers from profiting on its tradition of hospitality. The government is toughening its immigration policy refusing illegal asylum seeker to get safe havens in the country.

The **Canadian** police debunked the view that they has apprehended one of the assassins involved in the killing of Hamas leader in Dubai.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Months after the runaway oil from BP operation on **Gulf of Mexico** was sealed, environmental aftermath effect remains a discourse and scientists are arguing that building a chain of sand berms off the coast cannot suffice.

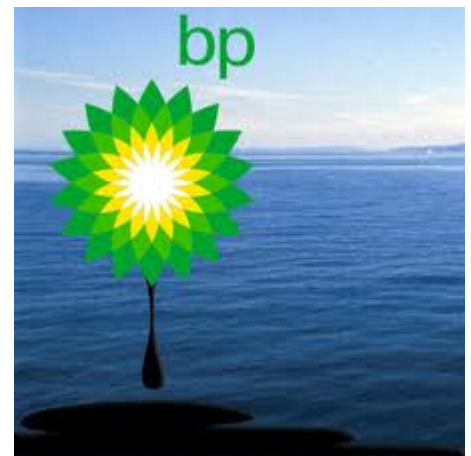
Canadian Environmental Defense, Equiterre and the Pembina Institute are the trio group shouldered with the task of beefing up the enforcement of legislation in the Alberta oil sands. The environmental implications of the sand exploration have been a concern over the last months.

LATIN AMERICA

Political Issues

The ruling Workers' party's bid for a second run election is challenged by the **Brazilian** Catholic Church on the premise that Ms Rouseff is campaigning for legalization of abortion, which according to the church is detrimental to the growth of the society.

Recent **Chileans** experience might be the backdrop for *President Sibestian Pinera* willingness to send the Mine Workers Safety bill to the parliament so as to reduce the repetition of similar ordeal.



Colombia joined the group of powerful countries as it becomes a member of **non-permanent UNSC members** for the year 2011-2012.

President Hugo Chavez has been on a foreign tour geared at garnering more diplomatic clout for **Venezuela**. His visit to the Russian backyard like **Ukraine** and **Belarus** is likely to raise the oil export of **Venezuela** to these countries.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

For **Colombians** it would be a step forward as the nation participates in the UN sponsored Creative Economy Forum at the **Shanghai World Expo**.

It is not in the interest of the **country** receiving human right violation reports, even though it is facing an unending battle with drug lords. The recent human right publication by **Inter-American Court of Human Rights** depicted violations of the human rights by Mexican military in 1974 and such report tallies with other documents that **Mexican** military is not discriminatory in the killing civilians.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

According to reports the protection of the **Amazon** is simply not environmentally wise for **Brazil** alone but for the world in general as the debate over climate change and global warming unfolds. President Lula has praised the effort of his government in reducing the rate of **deforestation of the Amazon**.

Colombia's coffee production for 2011 is more likely to see a shortfall as compared to 2010 due to heavy rains that have flooded the Andean nation.

AUSTRALASIA

Political Issues

Showing her commitment to the Afghan campaign, **Australian** Prime Minister Julia Gillard says her country is ready to face the challenges ahead in winning the war and Canberra will not abandon *Afghanistan* but will work along coalition partners to achieve a realistic future.

Economic Issues

Singapore's stock exchange is preparing to launch a takeover of its **Australian** counterpart to form a 14 billion dollar stock house. The tie-up between the **Australian** and **Singapore** stock exchanges, which have market capitalizations of some 6.1 billion US dollars and 7.9 billion US dollars respectively, would require government approval.

BHP Billiton chairman Jac Nasser told shareholders that any acquisition or investment must create value for shareholders. If shareholder value is not demonstrated, the company will not proceed with the proposed acquisition. The mining giant would pull out of a hostile 40-billion-dollar bid for *Canada's* Potash Corp if it proves too expensive.

Meanwhile, BHP announces an increased output in iron ore production as market from *China* and *India* increases.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Australian government has deemed it fit to move certain vulnerable families among the asylum seeker to community settlement due to the hard times in the camp. **Australian immigration policy** has been stained due to series of unrest in the camp.

Meanwhile in **Australia** a six years old girl has been banned from taking her bus to school after she pulled down the trousers of one of her teasers, who tormented her for wearing the *hijab*. §