

# Friday on the facebook

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## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pg 2 Global **Opinions** of the Week  
**Events of the Week**

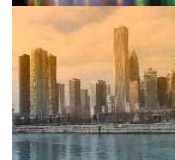
Pg 8 **Asia Zone**  
▶ MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA; NORTH ASIA ; EAST ASIA

Pg 17 **Africa Zone**  
▶ WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA & HORN OF AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTH AFRICA

Pg 20 **Euro Americas Zone**  
▶ WEST EUROPE; EAST EUROPE; NORTH AMERICA; LATIN AMERICA

Pg Global Islamic Finance  
(Under Preparation)

Pg Global Elections  
(Under Preparation)



# Global Opinions

*For the week*

This week's report consists of 24 surveys. 1 of these is a multi-country surveys & the rest are national surveys. 7 polling organizations have been represented.



## Topic of the week:

### **Feeling Safe Walking Alone at Night**

*Latin Americans Least Likely to feel safe, Asia*

*Middle East and North Africa most likely*

- 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: Latin Americans Least Likely to Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night**

*A median of 56% fear for their safety*

October 28, 2010- Worldwide, residents of Latin America are the least likely to personally feel safe in their communities. Across 18 Latin American countries surveyed in 2009, a median of 42% of residents say they feel safe walking alone at night where they live.

Less than half of adults in all 18 Latin American countries say they feel safe, but their sense of security varies and is lowest in **Venezuela**, at **23%**. Venezuelans are among the least likely in the world to say they feel safe, which likely reflects the worsening crime situation in the last decade.

Along with **Venezuelans**, **South Africans** are among the least likely in the world to say they feel safe. How secure residents across the sub-Saharan Africa region feel differs dramatically, however -- ranging from a high of **84%** in **Djibouti** to a low of **20%** in **South Africa**. South Africa is known for its high incidence of

*Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?*

Medians

	Yes	No
WORLD	60%	36%
Latin America	42%	56%
Former Soviet Union countries	52%	40%
Sub-Saharan Africa	59%	41%
Europe	62%	31%
Asia	72%	27%
Middle East and North Africa	73%	27%
U.S. and Canada	76%	23%

Based on surveys conducted in 105 countries from February to December 2009.

GALLUP®

violent crime, including one of the highest murder rates in the world.

Residents in **Asia** and the **Middle East** and **North Africa** region are the most likely to say they feel safe walking alone at night in their communities. *Singaporeans* almost universally feel safe, at **98%** -- the highest level of security of any country or area surveyed. However, less than half of adults in several

*Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?*

% Yes

countries and areas in conflict in these two regions say they feel safe: *Iraq* (34%), *Afghanistan* (37%), *Pakistan* (42%), *Nepal* (43%), and the *Palestinian Territories* (47%).

**Women Feel Less Safe Than Men**

In **93 of the 105** countries and areas surveyed, women are significantly less likely than men to say they feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live. While this is not that surprising, the striking differences between men and women in some developed countries are. There is at least a 20-percentage-point difference between men and women in **21** countries, including *Canada*, *France*, *Japan*, the *United Kingdom*, and the *United States*.

**Bottom Line**

While many factors contribute to feelings of personal insecurity or security, a median of 36% adults worldwide are afraid to walk alone at night in their communities, with women in nearly every country surveyed significantly more fearful than men. Gallup's data show fear hinders people's freedom in many countries and the huge disparities within regions show this is an issue that likely needs to be addressed at the local level.

	Men	Women	Difference (pct. pts.)
Italy	82%	43%	39
Ireland	82%	45%	37
Saudi Arabia	93%	58%	35
United Kingdom	80%	51%	29
Tajikistan	88%	60%	28
Yemen	79%	51%	28
Sweden	83%	56%	27
France	74%	47%	27
Canada	89%	64%	25
United States	87%	64%	23
Japan	84%	62%	22
South Korea	71%	49%	22
Czech Republic	71%	49%	22
Slovenia	91%	69%	22
Austria	86%	65%	21
Spain	69%	48%	21
Malaysia	60%	39%	21
Uruguay	57%	37%	20
Thailand	76%	56%	20
Romania	61%	41%	20
Belarus	59%	39%	20

Based on surveys conducted in 105 countries from February to December 2009.

GALLUP

**SOURCE:** <http://www.gallup.com/poll/144083/latin-americans-least-likely-feel-safe-walking-alone.aspx>

## SUMMARY OF POLLS



### Asia zone

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

#### ► SOUTH EAST ASIA

##### *Filipinos Are Optimistic About Their Economic Future* (Click for Details)

An SWS survey shows that **Filipinos** are very optimistic about the economy of their country in the next 12 months. **39%** were optimistic that it would get better and only **9%** were pessimistic it would get worse, for a very high Net Economic Optimism score of +29, after the record-high net +39 in June 2010. ([SWS- Social Weather Station Philippines](#))

October 30, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being](#)

*Multi-Country Poll- Latin Americans Least Likely to Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night; Residents in Asia and the Middle East and North Africa region are the most likely to say they feel safe* (Click for Details)

[Society](#) » [Crime](#)



### Africa zone

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

#### ► SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

##### *Nigerians Divided Over Choice of Presidential Candidates* (Click for Details)

Survey shows that **Nigerians** think 'being a Nigerian' is enough for getting the right to contest for the office of the President. It also shows that all the three contenders so far *Goodluck, Bukola Saraki*, and *General Buhari* are well known but Nigerians are divided over their favorability. ([NOI Polls Nigeria](#))

October 18, 2010

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

*Multi-Country Poll- Latin Americans Least Likely to Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night; Residents in Asia and the Middle East and North Africa region are the most likely to say they feel safe* (Click for Details)

[Society](#) » [Crime](#)



# Euro Americas zone

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

## EUROPE



### ▶ EAST EUROPE

**Population Census: Not Noticeable and Not Important?** (Click for Details)

**Russians** are not willing to participate in the census as they are not clear about its purpose. An overwhelming majority (**92%**) will like to see census taker at home; while **51%** will like to call a special phone and **50%** will like to visit especial enumeration centers. (**Russian Public Opinion Research Center**)

October 25, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Governance](#)

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

**Origins and Purpose of Nationwide Population Census** (Click for Details)

Most of **Russians** understands what the national population census is intended for; however, the number of such respondents has considerably decreased over the recent eight years (from **84** to **71%**). The awareness about the purpose of census is high among educated and urbanized population. (**Russian Public Opinion Research Center**)

October 21, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Governance](#)



### ▶ WEST EUROPE

**Two-in-Five Britons Believe Economic Problems Will Continue** (Click for Details)

Few people in **Britain** believe the country's economy is performing well, and a sizeable proportion of respondents expect the situation to worsen, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. (**Angus Reid**)

October 28, 2010

[Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being](#)

### ▶ NORTH AMERICA

## AMERICAS



**Fewer Swing Voters in 2010 than in Prior Midterm Years** (Click for Details)

About one in five likely **American** voters have yet to solidify their 2010 vote for Congress, including **4%** who currently have no preference and **15%** who express a preference but say they could change their minds between now and the elections. That is a lower proportion of swing voters than Gallup measured in the prior two midterm elections. (**Gallup USA**)

October 28, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Elections](#)

**Continued Positive Marks for Government Anti-Terror Efforts** (Click for Details)

The federal government continues to get positive marks for efforts to reduce the threat of terrorism, but many [Americans](#) say luck is a big reason why the United States has not suffered a major attack at home since Sept. 11, 2001. ([Pew Research Center for People & Press](#))

October 22, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [Terrorism](#)

**Midterm Snapshot: Enthusiasm for Obama Reelection Bid Greater Than For Reagan In 1982** (Click for Details)

Two years ahead of the next presidential election, the public is divided over whether Barack Obama should run for a second term as president. About half (**47%**) say they would like to see Obama run again in 2012, while **42%** say they would not. This is better than the outlook for Ronald Reagan in August 1982; at that point, just **36%** of the public said they wanted to see Reagan -- who subsequently went on to win his second term by an 18-point margin -- run for reelection. ([Pew Research Center for People & Press](#))

October 25, 2010

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

**Wide Partisan Divide over Global Warming** (Click for Details)

Views about the existence and causes of global warming have changed little in [America](#) over the past year. A new Pew Research Center poll finds that **59%** of adults say there is solid evidence that the earth's average temperature has been getting warmer over the past few decades. In October 2009, **57%** said this. Democrats are more pro-environment while Republicans are more suspicious about existence of the phenomenon and immediate actions required. ([Pew Research Center for People & Press](#))

October 27, 2010

[Society](#) » [Environment/ Disasters](#)

**37% Believe in Ghosts & 23% Say They Have Been Visited by the Dead** (Click for Details)

A Zogby Interactive poll found that 37% of [Americans](#) say they believe in human or animal ghosts, **23%** believe they have been visited by a dead relative or friend, and **20%** say they have seen or heard a ghost. Another **22%** say that while they have not experienced a ghost, they know someone who says they have. ([Zogby Interactive](#))

October 28, 2010

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

**Illegal Immigration Backlash Worries, Divides Latinos** (Click for Details)

In the [US](#) the national political backlash against illegal immigration has created new divisions among Latinos and heightened their concerns about discrimination against members of their ethnic group -- including those who were born in the United States or who immigrated legally. ([Pew Research Center](#))

October 28, 2010

[Society](#) » [Immigration/Refugees](#)

**U.S. Consumers' Spending Anemic in October** (Click for Details)

[Americans'](#) self-reported spending in stores, restaurants, gas stations, and online averaged \$62 per day during the first four weeks of October. That figure is up from \$59 in September and is about the same as the \$63 figure from August. From a broader perspective, spending remains in the 2009-2010 new normal monthly average range of \$59 to \$72 and is far below the 2008 recessionary spending range of \$81 to \$114.

([Gallup USA](#))

October 29, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Consumer Confidence/Protection](#)

**One in 4 Say Congress Accomplished Less Than Usual This Year** (Click for Details)

Despite the 111th Congress' passage of a lengthy list of legislation, including a massive healthcare bill, **37%** of [Americans](#) say it has accomplished less this year than in the past few years, and a smaller **23%** say it has accomplished more. ([Gallup USA](#))

October 29, 2010

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

***Religious Americans Enjoy Higher Wellbeing*** ([Click for Details](#))

A new analysis of more than 550,000 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index interviews conducted over the last year and a half finds that [Americans](#) who are the most religious also have the highest levels of wellbeing. ([Gallup USA](#))

October 28, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

***New High of 46% of Americans Support Legalizing Marijuana*** ([Click for Details](#))

While California's marijuana ballot initiative is garnering a lot of attention this election cycle, Gallup finds that nationally, a new high of **46%** of [Americans](#) are in favor of legalizing use of the drug, and a new low of **50%** are opposed. The increase in support this year from **44%** in 2009 is not statistically significant, but is a continuation of the upward trend seen since 2000. ([Gallup USA](#))

October 28, 2010

[Society](#) » [Social Problems](#)

***Slightly Fewer Satisfied With Conduct of Campaigns in 2010*** ([Click for Details](#))

[Americans](#) are less satisfied with the way local congressional candidates are conducting their campaigns in 2010 than in any of the past four midterm election years. Though not appreciably different from the levels of satisfaction in 1998 and 2006, the current reading does mark the first time less than a majority is satisfied. Still, those who are satisfied continue to outnumber those who are dissatisfied. ([Gallup USA](#))

October 29, 2010

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

***More Than Half of Americans Say They Are Angry with Politicians*** ([Click for Details](#))

With only a few days left before [Americans](#) take part in the mid-term congressional election, the anti-incumbent feeling across the country is substantial, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. ([Angus Reid](#))

October 25, 2010

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

***Obama Has Underperformed as President for 44% of Americans*** ([Click for Details](#))

As the second anniversary of Barack Obama's electoral victory approaches, a considerable proportion of [Americans](#) believe that their President has not been able to fulfill their expectations, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. ([Angus Reid](#))

October 26, 2010

***Economic Confidence Remains Minimal in the United States*** ([Click for Details](#))

A large proportion of [Americans](#) believe the U.S. economy remains in bad shape, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. ([Angus Reid](#))

October 27, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being](#)

***Half of Canadians Think Khadr's Guilty Plea Was a Strategic Decision*** ([Click for Details](#))

The trial of Omar Khadr ended with a guilty plea, but many [Canadians](#) appear to be questioning whether the last westerner being held at Guantanamo Bay actually committed the crimes he was accused of, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. ([Angus Reid](#))

October 28, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [Terrorism](#)

***Conservatives Extend Lead in Canada as Stagnation Hits Liberals*** ([Click for Details](#))

The Conservative Party holds a double-digit lead in [Canada](#) and overall voter preferences are very similar to the will expressed by the electorate in the last federal election, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. ([Angus Reid](#))

October 27, 2010

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

**Canadians Split on the Economy as Trust in Harper Falls Sharply** (Click for Details)

After several months of optimism, **Canadians** are now divided when assessing the state of their country's economy, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. (**Angus Reid**)

October 26, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being](#)

**Half of Canadians Would Allow Cameras inside Courtrooms** (Click for Details)

Most **Canadians** feel the country's media outlets did a proper job in covering the trial of Colonel Russell Williams, but many are voicing support for lifting the ban on cameras and electronic devices in Canadian courtrooms, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found. (**Angus Reid**)

October 26, 2010

[Society](#) » [Justice](#)

▶ **LATIN AMERICA****Latin Americans Least Likely to Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night; Residents in Asia and the Middle East and North Africa region are the most likely to say they feel safe** (Click for Details)

Worldwide, residents of **Latin America** are the least likely to personally feel safe in their communities. Across 18 Latin American countries surveyed in 2009, a median of **42%** of residents say they feel safe walking alone at night where they live. Residents in **Asia** and the **Middle East** and **North Africa** region are the most likely to say they feel safe. **Singaporeans** almost universally feel safe, at **98%** -- the highest level of security of any country or area surveyed. However, less than half of adults in several countries and areas in conflict in these two regions say they feel safe: **Iraq (34%)**, **Afghanistan (37%)**, **Pakistan (42%)**, **Nepal (43%)**, and the **Palestinian Territories (47%)**. (**Gallup USA**)

October 28, 2010

[Society](#) » [Crime](#) §

*Events of the week in*

**Asia** zone

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

**TURKEY****Politics:**

According to reports the **Turkish** government has not taken any step to stop PKK from ending ceasefire. However plans to extend date of ceasefire are under way.

**TUSAID**-an influential business group has made a plan to engage the non-governmental organizations and political parties in a dialogue process. Meanwhile the leading *Justice and Development Party*, or **AKP**, has prepared a draft bill that would reduce penalties for civil servants found guilty of

misconduct and save them from having to serve time in prison. The draft has been approved by the Parliament.

Company Poll mark's executive has revealed that the **Turkish** prime minister was especially shocked to know that the educated class voted "no" in the referendum. The Survey results have indicated that as the level of education increases, people's ideas of the AKP turns negative.

#### *Geo-strategic Issues:*

The **European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)** fined **Turkey** more than 15 million euros in 19 cases filed by **Greek Cypriots** for their abandoned properties in the northern part of the divided island of **Cyprus**. The cases concerned the applicants' complaints that the **1974 Turkish military intervention** in the northern part of Cyprus deprived them of their homes and properties.

According to reports *Israel's* leader praised the naval commandos who participated in a deadly raid on a **Gaza-bound flotilla** last May that drew international condemnation; meanwhile a **Turkish** rights group denounced the praise showered by Prime Minister *Benjamin Netanyahu*.

During his visit to *China* Foreign Minister of **Turkey** expressed concern about **Uyghur's rights**.

#### *Economy:*

**Turkish** Energy and Natural Resources Minister has announced to invest nearly \$3.2 billion in **Iraq** in the tenders for two of the three natural gas zones in Northern Iraq. **Turkey's** poultry exports to Iraq have increased to \$91 million in the first nine months of this year.

At Istanbul's *13th International Auto show* has begun with 200 automobile brands displaying their new models to boost local economy. **Turkey** has recorded 11-% growth by selling 465,178 cars in the first nine months of this year. **Turkey** ranks second in the world for the highest taxes on the automotive industry after *Denmark*.

**Turkey's** imports from *Iran* increased by **130.7 %** to reach 5,360 million USD in the January-September period this year. The country's exports to Iran were also up by **39.5 %** year-on-year in the first nine months of 2010 and they totaled 1,978 million USD.

Meanwhile according to reports **Turkey** is the third-largest tomato producer in the world after China and the US. Despite this, the price of tomatoes is still high due to heavy rainfall early this summer.

#### *Society:*

**58** environmental activists, many of them **Greenpeace** members, went on trial for demonstrating in July against **Turkey's plans to build a nuclear power plant**.

**Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)** leader has strictly criticized the Republican People's Party (CHP) for its stance regarding the **ban on the Islamic headscarf** in universities. Meanwhile the *European Union* has said it cannot take a position on **Turkey's** headscarf debate claiming there is no common implementation on the issue among member countries.



## **GCC**

#### *Politics:*

*Third parliamentary elections* were held in **Bahrain** amid a crackdown by the Sunni Muslim-led government against the Shia majority. **Bahrain's** main opposition group, the **Islamic National Accord Association**, has won **18** of parliament's **40** seats. The first round of **Bahrain's** municipal and parliamentary elections was largely peaceful with the exception of a few isolated cases of disturbance. Out of 317,900 eligible voters, a large number of **Bahrainis** exercised their right of franchise. Tight security was laid as a

trial opened in **Bahrain** for 27 persons accused of being militants who plotted to overthrow the Gulf state's monarchy.

**Yemen** has ordered the confiscation of all firearms in the possession of its citizens after canceling weapons licenses not carrying the Interior Minister's signature. **Yemen** has also launched a manhunt for Al Qaeda in its southern Shabwa province, the same day a U.S.-born Muslim cleric sought by Washington and thought to be hiding in that area appeared in an online video.

#### *Geo-strategic Issues:*

The Secretary General of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** has expressed grave concerns regarding reports published recently on the killings and widespread **torture** at the hands of U.S. forces in Iraq.

Meanwhile **GCC** Secretary General Abdul Rahman has also condemned a decision by the Israeli Ministerial Committee on Legislation "to add Jerusalem to the new map of national priority zones. **Saudi** King has discussed the latest developments related to *Palestinian* cause with Mahmood Abbas. The talks also tackled the currently exerted efforts to put the peace process back on the right track. A pledge of \$ 100m from **Saudi Arabia** and other international aid has eased the *Palestinian Authority's* (PA) financial crisis. **Saudi** Ambassador to the *United States* lauded the historic strong relations between the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** and *United States of America*.



The **United Arab Emirates** has opened a naval base on its east coast as part of efforts to secure its ability to export oil in the event *Iran* closes the strategic **Strait of Hormuz**.

The State of **Kuwait** called on the international community to squeeze *Israel* to join the **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**. Meanwhile a senior **Kuwaiti** customs official has

reaffirmed his country's commitment to the Arab League's boycott of **Israel** as an effective weapon in the face of the aggressive policies and crimes systematically pursued by the Jewish state against the Palestinian people. The **Kuwaiti** cabinet approved a draft agreement between the State of **Kuwait** and the *Republic of France* on the **peaceful uses of the nuclear energy**.

#### *Economy:*

The **Arab World Competitiveness Review 2010** indicated that the global economic crisis has further widened the competitiveness gap between the countries of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** and the rest of the Arab world. Non-oil trade rose to Dh412 billion during the first seven months of this year. Exports saw a growth of **31 %** during the same period and there was also a rise in the number of items imported. The **UAE** experienced a **9 %** growth in non-oil trade during the first half of 2010 compared to the same period last

year. Traders in the **UAE** reported one of the highest levels of confidence globally, second only to those in the country's largest trading partner, *India*.

*Society:*

The Supreme Judicial Council has announced to establish 14 courts in **Makah and Madina** to consider crimes committed during the **Hajj** season. Officials of the Passports Department deputed at 12 checkpoints leading to Makah have prevented as many as 15,000 pilgrims without permits from entering Makah.

**Kuwait's** rank in the **Corruption Perception Index 2010 (CPI)** dropped from 66th to 54th, while it was ranked number seven among the Arab countries and last among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations.

Gunmen in south **Yemen** shot dead a colonel in the country's intelligence service. Meanwhile the **Yemeni** police foiled a plot aiming to blow up several sites in the southern port city of Aden, which is due to host the Gulf Cup soccer tournament next month.

## CENTRAL ASIA

*Politics:*

Opposition leaders from **Azerbaijan's** Popular Front have refused to meet with a delegation of **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)** observers for next month's parliamentary elections. **Azerbaijan's** Central Election Commission (CEC) has registered 581 international observers to monitor parliamentary elections.

**Kyrgyzstan's** top election official said that "a wave of mistakes" has held up the release of the final tally from parliamentary elections held earlier this month. Meanwhile **Kyrgyzstan's** Central Election Commission (CEC) declared invalid election results on 2 polling stations in Uzgen district, Osh oblast. Former **Kyrgyz** Prime Minister, whose party finished third in this month's parliamentary elections, said that the country is not yet ready to make the transition to a parliamentary republic. The cases against two **Kyrgyz** politicians accused of planning mass disorder and attempting to overthrow the government were sent to court. Hundreds of supporters of nationalist **Kyrgyz** politician Kamchybek Tashiev staged a rally outside the parliament building in the capital, after Tashiev claimed to have been targeted for potential kidnapping or assassination.

**Tajikistan's Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP)** has alleged that a fire that destroyed the party's cultural center in Dushanbe-widely known as the "women's mosque"-was not an accident.

*Geo-strategic Issues:*

Deputy foreign ministers of **Russia** and **Azerbaijan** discussed in Moscow the situation around the draft multilateral agreement on security cooperation in the Caspian Sea. **Russian** President Dmitry Medvedev has expressed hope that **Azerbaijan** and **Armenia** can reach agreement on the principles of a peace deal for the disputed region of **Nagorno-Karabakh** by early December.

**Kazakh** President met with NATO Secretary General and European Commission President respectively in order to explore areas of cooperation. Meanwhile Defense Ministers of **Azerbaijan** and **Kyrgyzstan** have signed the plan of military bilateral co-operation in 2011. **Tajikistan** and **Afghanistan** have signed six cooperation documents in Kabul. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Turkmenistan** issued a statement to the press in connection with the appearance of reports in recent days in the Russian media, "giving unreasonable interpretation of some aspects of the energy policy of **Turkmenistan**, including those related to the implementation of the projects for delivery of **Turkmen** energy resources to the international markets." **Turkmenistan** has expressed keenness to increase gas export to *Russia*.

*Economy:*



The volume of unregistered economy in **Azerbaijan** makes approximately **9%** of GDP.

**Kazakhstan's** lower house of parliament, the Majilis, has approved a 2011 budget with a deficit equivalent to **2.8 %** of gross domestic product. The unstable political situation has caused outflow of deposits from the banking system of **Kyrgyzstan**. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of **Turkmenistan** and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) for the modernization of the seaport of *Turkmenbashi* has been signed in Ashgabat.

*Society:*



**Jailed Azeri Journalist Eynulla Fatullayev** continued his hunger strike. Fatullayev, editor of the independent newspaper "Realny Azerbaijan," was sentenced in 2007 to 11 years in prison on charges including tax evasion and fomenting interethnic hatred. Rights organizations believe the charges against him were fabricated.

Hundreds of oil workers in western **Kazakhstan** have ended their strike after management promised to hire a lawyer to defend a union activist accused of drug possession.

**AFGHANISTAN**

*Politics:*

**Richard Holbrook**, the U.S. special representative for **Afghanistan** and Pakistan, claimed that recent contacts between the Afghan government and Taliban leaders don't rise to the level of peace negotiations. Meanwhile according to reports a senior **Haqqani** leader was killed during an overnight military operation in eastern Paktika province, a main hub for Haqqani Network.

According to the *Taliban* at least 50 civilians, mostly women and children, have been killed in a US air strike in **Afghanistan's** southern Helmand province. Meanwhile four suicide bombers armed with weapons launched an unprecedented attack on a UN office in western Herat province. In response to suicide attack the United Nations vowed to continue its mission in western **Afghanistan**.

*Parliamentary candidates*, who locked up Independent Election Commission (IEC) officials in western Ghor province, have called off their protest. Dozens of unsuccessful preliminary candidates have called for a fresh vote, alleging the **September 18 election** had been rigged at a massive scale. The Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) has accused about 120 parliamentary candidates of election law violations, and gave them five days to explain their positions.

President *Hamid Karzai* has called on the international community to stop threatening his administration on the issue of security firms, warning 'it is not the way they should deal with Afghans'. Hamid Karzai also accused '**Black Water**' for its involvement in terrorism in **Afghanistan**.

*Geo-strategic Issues:*

The *United States* expressed concern over **Iran's growing role in Afghanistan** after President Hamid Karzai's said his office received "bagsful" of cash from Tehran. In the meantime the Presidential Palace and the Iranian embassy in Kabul have rejected a US media report that President *Hamid Karzai's* chief of staff is receiving cash support from Tehran.

*Economy:*

The annual cost of the war in **Afghanistan** has reportedly exceeded **USD 200 billion** for the first time since 2001. A US government audit has found that billions of dollars earmarked for reconstruction projects in **Afghanistan** cannot be tracked.

*Germany's* foreign ministry has signed an agreement with **Afghanistan** to give 14 million dollars to Taliban militants, who choose to lay down their arms, every year. Meanwhile *Germany* has also announced

to spend €12.5 million (786.5m afghanis) over the next six months on surveying existing and new *hydraulic power stations* in the north and northeast of the country.

**Society:**

According to reports US military operations in *Kandahar* province in southern **Afghanistan** have destroyed more homes and farmland.

## **SOUTH ASIA**

**Politics:**

**Bangladeshi** law minister has told reporters that the existing constitution will be replaced under the directives of the Supreme Court soon, which will stop doors for anyone in continuing **religion based politics** in the country.

Meanwhile *European Union* Ambassador has suggested that political parties of **Bangladesh** should turn away from the path of confrontation and has called for dialogue between ruling and opposition parties.

Police has detained 20 **Jamaat-e-Islami** men, including former *lawmaker Mujibur Rahman*, with "bomb making materials" and "anti-state" leaflets from the capital. Meanwhile Prime Minister (PM) *Sheikh Hasina* renewed her government's firm stance to hold the trial of war criminals who committed crimes against humanity during the country's War of Liberation in 1971.

**Nepali** Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudyal, the sole candidate who is adamant over not quitting the prime ministerial race, has failed to garner a majority in Parliament for an unprecedented 14th time in a row, prolonging the leadership crisis in the country. Hence the first protest in parliament against the charade came from **Nepal's** only openly **Unified CPN (Maoist)** secretary and chief whip, who expressed his party's readiness to show maximum flexibility in order to forge national consensus to end the current deadlock if the UML and Nepali Congress show similar gesture.

**Sri Lanka's Supreme Court** has dismissed a petition filed by the former Army Commander and defeated presidential candidate **Sarath Fonseka** challenging *President Mahinda Rajapakse*' reelection at the January 26 presidential elections.

**Geo-strategic Issues:**

**Nepal's** main-opposition party, Unified Maoist has decided to write a formal letter to the Indian establishment demanding immediate release of its three cadres arrested by the Indian police suspecting that they were supporting the **Indian Maoists' rebels**. The row between **Nepal's** caretaker government and the opposition Maoist party over the latter's guerrilla army fighters' clandestine visit to China escalated with the government seeking an explanation from the UN agency monitoring the combatants and the Maoists calling it interference. In response to this the **United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN)** made it clear that the Maoist division commanders, who visited China last week, did not approach it for the travel that has been dragged into a *political controversy*. President of **Nepal** during his visit to China reiterated his country's commitment to **one China policy** and assured that territory of **Nepal** would never be used against *China*.

According to reports the *British* Prime Minister has said there should be an independent investigation into what happened during the decisive phase of **Sri Lanka's** war against Tamil Tiger rebels.

**Economy:**

**Bangladeshi** central bank has taken various measures for attaining sustainable economic development. Economic experts, former ministers and industrialists in **Nepal** have warned that if a full fledged budget is not introduced in time then it will be disastrous for the economy. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has



said it will continue to work closely with the Government of **Nepal** and stakeholders in reducing poverty and promote inclusive growth for all Nepalese.

**Sri Lanka's** inflation as measured by consumer prices in Colombo rose for the sixth consecutive month in October. The inflation increased to **6.6 %** in October from **5.8 %** in last month while the Colombo Consumer Price Index increased by **1.2 %** to 223.3 points from 220.7 points in September 2010.

#### *Society:*

The **CPI - Corruption Perceptions Index-2010** revealed that **Bangladesh** has failed to achieve improvement over last year. Meanwhile the owners of CNG refueling stations in the country have decided to go for an indefinite strike from November 26 instead of November 1 following a meeting with State Minister for Power and Energy. The strike aims to press home six-point demand including withdrawal of government order for six-hour closure of pump stations.

**Sri Lanka** has shown improvement in reducing corruption according to the global Corruption Perceptions Index figures as it has been placed at 91st position among 178 countries surveyed in 2010 with a score of 3.2. Last year **Sri Lanka** was at the 97th position with a score of 3.1 among 180 countries surveyed. The progress made by Sri Lanka so far in resettling the people displaced by the conflict and achieving the Millennium Development Goals amidst a long drawn-out conflict was commended by the United Nations representative in **Sri Lanka**.

## INDIA

### *Politics:*

As much as **75.72 %** of the voters exercised their franchise in the first stage of the local body elections held in seven districts in Karnataka. Statistics show that the Congress party's vote share of vote has consistently eroded even in the rural areas of Gujarat.



Congress party has asked noted writer and activist **Arundhati Roy** to withdraw her statement on **Kashmir**, saying it was "contrary to historical facts" and could mislead the nation and the international community. The Booker Prize winning author had said "*Kashmir has never been an integral part of India. It is a historical fact. Even the Indian government has accepted this.*" Meanwhile BJP asked UPA led government to take action against Arundhati Roy.

Uttar Pradesh Congress has asked the Central and state governments to monitor the activities of **RSS**, which is involved in almost all the riots that took place in the country and ban the fundamentalist organization if its activities could not be controlled.

In **Kashmir** curfew has crippled life in many parts, particularly Srinagar downtown, Sopore, Palhalan and Pattan, as they remained under curfew for most of the time during this period. Even as the government has been claiming that **Kashmir** is returning to normality, the life of the common man has become difficult. Experts say the Valley faced a whopping loss of over Rs. 12,000 crore in the past four months as businesses were badly affected.

### *Geo-strategic Issues:*

BJP claimed that "startling revelations" had come to light about links among **Pakistan's ISI, Kashmiri separatists and Naxals in India** and demanded action without further delay from the UPA in this regard. Meanwhile **Pakistan's** Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani has expressed disappointment that the promise held out at the Prime Minister-level engagements with **India** had not yet been realized in the form of a full resumption of the dialogue process.

**India** and *Malaysia* have formally announced firming up of **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** to boost trade and decided on a range of other engagements in various sectors, including defence.

*Economy:*

**India's** exports shot up by an annualized **23.2 %** in September, 2010, to a two-year high of USD 18.02 billion, but even faster import growth increased concerns over the country's widening trade gap. **India's** exports were valued at USD 15.8 billion in September, 2008. After remaining in the red for 13 months in a row, exports have been growing since November, 2009. However, imports grew even faster, by **26.1 %** to USD 27.14 billion in September.

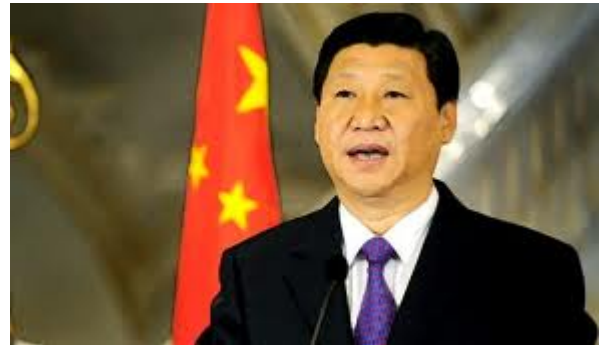
*Society:*

PM Man Mohan Singh said cyber warfare is another emerging area of concern, while **Naxalism** and left-wing extremism posed the “greatest threat” to national security.

**CHINA**

*Politics:*

A signed article published in People's Daily stressed that **China's** political reform must be conducted in a step-by-step manner under a socialist system and the leadership of the **Communist Party of China (CPC)**. Meanwhile Chinese Parliament has approved the nomination of *Vice President Xi Jinping* for the vice-chairmanship of the powerful *Central Military Commission*, paving the way for him to succeed *President Hu Jintao* in 2012.



*Geo-strategic Issues:*

Presidents of *Israel*, *Italy* and *Indonesia* paid visit to **China** in order to boost ties with the later. Meanwhile **China** has vowed to enhance ties with *Costa Rica* and *Azerbaijan*. **China** and *France* seem hopeful to sign a number of cooperative documents in civilian nuclear energy and aviation. Foreign Ministers of China and Japan have agreed to put effort to improve ties. **Chinese** Assistant Foreign Minister later on accused *Japanese* representatives of violating China's sovereignty and territorial integrity through statements to the media during the summit meetings between the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** and its partners.

*U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton* rejected the view to apply "a zero-sum calculation" on **U.S.-Sino relationship**, insisting the two countries are working together for a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive relationship in the new century. At least 29 candidates for the Congress have released advertisements accusing opponents of helping **China** at the expense of the American workers. Of them, 19 are Democrats and 10 are Republicans, showing that blaming *China* has become a mid-term election strategy for both parties.

*Economy:*

An official of one of **China's** top government think tanks called for the readjustment of the nation's breakneck expansion of the auto industry as an explosion of new cars on China's roads aggravates problems with pollution and congestion. The **benchmark Shanghai Composite Index** surged **2.57 %**, or 76.38 points, to close at 3,051.42, its highest level since April 21. China's government announced to exempt components of some major items of technical equipment from import taxes.

**China** has welcomed the **World Trade Organization's (WTO)** final ruling that *United States* restrictions on Chinese poultry imports are inconsistent with WTO regulations. Meanwhile **China's** quality watchdog has called for joint efforts from other countries to enhance the safety of consumer goods.

Chinese Premier has made proposals for boosting cooperation, especially in economy and trade, at a series of ongoing summits between the Association of **Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** and its partners including *China, Japan and South Korea*.

*Society:*

**China** has been ranked 17th in the world in terms of national competitiveness, up 56 places since 1990. China's top legislature began to discuss draft law amendments, designed to give rural residents greater say in village affairs. Three weeks after jailed *Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo* was named winner of this year's **Nobel Peace Prize**, the government in Beijing has defied widespread international criticism and continued its crackdown on human rights activists and lawyers. **China's** state media accused the Nobel committee of using the Peace Prize as a "*political tool*" - the latest in a barrage of complaints after the award went to jailed dissident Liu Xiaobo.

According to reports the Chinese government has been working to bridge the wide "**digital divide**" between urban and rural areas caused by imbalances in Internet access and information literacy.

**JAPAN**

*Politics:*

Hundreds of *Chinese* staged protests against **Japan** stirring more discontent.

The ruling Democratic Party of **Japan** has denounced to field its own candidate in Okinawa's November gubernatorial election. The decision was due to a rift between DPJ headquarters, which backs the government plan to relocate a major U.S. air base within Okinawa, and the party's local chapter, which is opposed to the policy and wants the base moved elsewhere. Meanwhile the Liberal Democratic Party proposed a law to continue promoting the economic development of Okinawa beyond the March 2012 expiration of current legislation.



*Geo-strategic Issues:*

*Indian PM* paid three day-visit to **Japan** in order to boost cooperation with the later. Meanwhile a meeting of economic ministers from *China, Japan and South Korea* got canceled over objections by Beijing.

*Economy:*

**Japanese** exports continued to increase with a preliminary gain of **14.4 %** in September, but the pace is slowing because of the yen's summer surge and sluggish consumption in other Asian economies. Prime Minister's Cabinet has endorsed an extra budget for this fiscal year to fund a ¥5.1 trillion emergency stimulus package aimed at fighting deflation and the surging yen. The unemployment rate fell to **5 %** in September from **5.1 %** in August for the third consecutive monthly drop, edging down on an expansion in payrolls in such sectors as manufacturing, medical and welfare.

*Society:*

This year's two **Japanese Nobel Prize laureates**, *Akira Suzuki* and *Eiichi Negishi*, have been awarded the *Order of Culture*, the country's top cultural award, for fiscal 2010.

**Japan** has pledged \$2 billion to preserve biodiversity in the developing world. Meanwhile according to a report released by the **National Cancer Center**, contrary to common belief, drinking lots of green tea was found to have little effect in reducing the risk of contracting breast cancer.

**KOREA**

*Politics:*

The chairman of the **South Korean** governing *Grand National Party (GNP)* vowed to introduce more reformative policies and turn his party to a “centrist” conservative party in an effort to appeal to a broader base of voters.

*Geo-strategic Issues:*

Senior **North Korean** and *Chinese* military officials demonstrated strong military ties between the two communist allies. The leaders of **South Korea** and *Gabon* have agreed to boost cooperation in the development of energy, natural resources and infrastructure as the two nations signed a package of deals on boosting energy cooperation, cultural exchanges and avoiding double taxation.

**Korea** vowed to contribute more financial resources and tailored technical assistance to join the global effort to help poor nations get out of the “aid trap.” The U.S.-led **United Nations Command (UNC)** and **North Korea** failed to arrange a general-level military meeting.

**North Korean** troops fired two rounds at a military guard post near the border.

*Economy:*

**S Korea** agreed with **ASEAN**, an economic bloc of 10 Southeast Asian nations, to upgrade their relations to a “strategic partnership” last week, to promote stronger economic, cultural and security ties.

*Society:*

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade opened a Twitter account in English to reach out to foreign bloggers who are interested in knowing more about the ministry’s policies and major events. It also created Face book accounts both in *Korean* and *English* on the same day, intensifying its communication online with **Koreans**, as well as foreigners and foreign governments.

**South Korea** has seen no progress in the annual **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)**, remaining in 39th place among 178 countries for the second consecutive year. §

*Events of the week in*

**Africa** zone

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

**POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES**

*West Africa:*

**Nigeria:** Big brickbats were hurled across the political terrain with President Goodluck Jonathan threatening his former National Security Adviser, retired Lt-General Aliyu Mohamed Gusau that he could also engage in political mudslinging. Meanwhile **President Goodluck Jonathan** has said he will win at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential primary to pick the party's ticket for the 2011 poll fair and square.

**Nigeria's** secret police intercept weapons shipment at the port in *Lagos* city. The secret police say they intercepted 13 containers, some of which had rocket launchers and grenades and other explosives hidden under tiles. The authorities have said they cannot say who owned the containers or their intended destination. It was later speculated that the seized weapons were linked to *Palestine* and were actually heading for Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. *Israeli* officials said the military-grade armaments came from *Iran* and were bound for the Gaza Strip.

**Ghana:** A group, Foot Soldiers for Unity and Victory (FOSUV) of the ruling NDC has condemned the actions of some foot soldiers of the party campaigning for the Former First Lady *Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings* to be elected as flag bearer to lead the party for the 2012 elections.

**Cote d'Ivoire:** Ivoirians voted last week in their first presidential election in more than a decade, one they hope will draw a line under years of war, instability and under-investment in their once prosperous West African nation. Meanwhile **Ivory Coast's** ex-rebel Prime Minister Guillaume Soro appealed to all candidates in the presidential election to accept the declared result and put an end to the West African nation's protracted crisis.

**Guinea:** Guinea's electoral commission has proposed holding the delayed presidential run-off election, meant to transfer power to civilians from soldiers, on Oct. 31 but one candidate said last week that that was too soon. Guinea's attempt to shed military rule has hit the same wall of ethnic distrust that has for decades trapped the West African country in instability and poverty.

**Niger:** Some 6.7 million people in **Niger** are eligible to vote in a referendum on a new constitution aimed at starting a transition to democracy.

#### **East/Horn of Africa:**

**Tanzania** Peoples` Defense Forces (TPDF) chief of staff Lt. General Abdul-Rahman Shimbo has said his force has been highly impressed by the Chinese navy hospital ship 'Peace Ark's, visit to Dar es Salaam.

**AU reaction in Horn of Africa:** The European Union (EC) has provided €500,000 to help in the prevention, control and reduction of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the region. The grant is part of the Africa-EU strategic partnership in the fight against illicit accumulation and trafficking of firearms and explosive materials.

**In Sudan:** Religious leaders from southern Sudan are urging strong international pressure on Sudan's northern-based government to ensure a January referendum on independence for the South takes place on time.

**In Somalia:** Somalia's parliament has approved a new prime minister; Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed About three-fourths of the 392 lawmakers present endorsed the prime minister in the vote in Mogadishu Sunday.

#### **Central Africa:**

**Rwanda:** The United Nations has pledged to increase its support of building peace and security in the country. In 2008, the UN Secretary General launched a global campaign known as "UNITE to end Violence of women and girls", to draw attention to the pervasiveness of the consequences affecting millions of women and girls worldwide.

30 **Congolese** Women Allegedly Raped, Held Captive in Angola; a few weeks after reports of hundreds of men, women and children being raped in the eastern DRC, there's word of yet another brutal incident involving Congolese.



**Chad:** A new group of Chadian rebels left Darfur region to Chad in implementation of security arrangements ending proxy war between the two countries. Sudan and Chad agreed last January to end proxy war and to stop their support to the rebel groups.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS**

### **West Africa:**

**Nigeria:** The Consumer Protection Council, CPC is set for 'war' with the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) over what it described as ill-treatment of passengers by air line operators in the country following incessant cancellation and delay of flight schedules without explanations.

### **South Africa:**

**Zambia:** The United Nations refugee agency this week closed the last two remaining camps in Zambia which hosted refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), after the deportation of the final group of refugees.

The **Botswana** Police Service Public Relations Officer, Mr. Christopher Mbulawa, has confirmed that a task force comprising Botswana and Zimbabwe officials has been set up to investigate serious torture allegations against Botswana security officials made by seven suspected illegal Zimbabwean immigrants.

## **HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS**

### **West Africa:**

A cholera outbreak in **Nigeria** has killed more than 1,500 people, **the United Nations** said Tuesday. It is the worst cholera outbreak in **Nigeria** in recent years. The number of cases is three times higher than last year and seven times higher than in 2008, the United Nations Children's Fund said.



## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

### **West Africa:**

**Ghana:** A \$13 billion Chinese loan to Ghana is good for the African country and does not contravene any agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a senior IMF adviser told Reuters last week.

African palm oil producer Siat Group is set to get its **Ghanaian** output certified as sustainable by early next year, the Brussels based firm said on Tuesday.

Work on the installation of equipment at the Jubilee Field for the commercial production of oil is 92 per cent complete, the Director of Exploration and Production at the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC), Mr. Thomas Manu, has said.

**Ghana:** The Russian government has indicated its preparedness to make available to Ghana, classified documents on oil and gas reserves in the Voltaian Basin, if the government officially applies for them.

**China and Africa** celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, outlining future efforts for greater development of the new type of strategic partnership, Xinhua reported.

**Ghana** will use a series of multi-billion dollar deals with China to finance infrastructure projects and transform its economy through gas- and oil-driven industrialization, the government said.

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

**Cameroon:** British oil explorer Victoria Oil & Gas (VOG) said its first gas sale may be pushed into early next year from its current target of December, as it is still waiting to receive a license from Cameroonian government.

**Cote d'Ivoire:** Ivory Coast fuel storage company GESTOCI said on Tuesday it had awarded a provisional contract worth up to \$400 million to two Saudi companies for projects to double its capacity.

**Cote d'Ivoire:** Ivory Coast opposition candidate Henri Konan Bedie promised to diversify the cocoa-dependent economy into commodities such as oil and gold as he rallied thousands of supporters' just days before a presidential vote.

Nestle will distribute an extra 600,000 disease-resistant cocoa trees to farmers in Ivory Coast during the 2010/11 cocoa season, after handing out 140,000 trees so far, its Africa research director said last week.

**South Africa:**

Eskom will get additional loan guarantees amounting to R350-billion, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan confirmed last week. The power utility warned, however, that even with the additional support from government, **South Africa** still faces power cuts, especially between now and 2012.

The World Bank and the IMF have opposed agricultural subsidies for poor African farmers because of the high costs associated with the initiative. But **Malawian** President Bingu wa Mutharika, who is also African Union chairman, said last week that Africa should fight for subsidies for its poor farmers so as to achieve food security on the continent. §

*Events of the week in*

# Euro Americas zone

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

## **WESTERN EUROPE**

### *Political Issues*

According to Lisbon treaty, **European** Citizens' Initiative can be evoked through referendum in order to effect legislation. Europe's far-right 'lite' parties want to use this initiative to push for a pan-European ban on *Turkish* accession to the EU.

The **European** Commission has launched surveillance Rabbit-teams on the Greek-Turkish border to stem the tide of undocumented immigrants passing through the Greek-Turkey border for EU countries.

Unfolding realities in the **EU** has forced the EU leaders to agree on the need for tweaking the EU's rulebook on a limited basis, though a Franco-German proposal for a wholesale rewriting was once rejected. The rules can help resolve issues like the budget deficit; strengthening the Euro and many more could be laid to rest. However the change must be cautious not to trigger another round of referenda.

The tentative change is further creating brawl between **EU** justice commissioner Viviane Reding and **France**. For months she lambasted Paris for expelling Roma and now called the **Franco-German** proposed changed irresponsible but unkindly taken by Paris rather as insult to the French.

The **European** Commission urges the **United Kingdom** to end discriminatory conditions which breach transitional arrangements on free movement of workers and the obligation to ensure equal treatment on the basis of nationality. London is believe to be depriving citizens of *Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Poland, Romania and Bulgaria* certain social benefits.

**France** political decision of banning the burqa is brewing trouble for the country as al-Qaeda sends threat of killing French citizens if the French government refuses to retract the law.

Regardless of whether the Wikileaks materials were justified or not, **Britain** deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg broken ranks with the **UK** and US administrations that the leak suggest that basic rules of war, conflict and engagement have been broken or that torture has been in any way condoned are extremely serious and need to be looked at.

### *Economic Issues*

As the global economy problems linger, **G20** summit held in *South Korea* strived to reduce the tension of the problem, the summit moved toward more market-determined exchange rate systems that reflect underlying economic fundamentals and they pledged to refrain from competitive devaluation of currencies.

More importantly, Europe during the **G20** summit agreed to give representation to the emerging economies which meant that Europe has to give up two of its seats.

**French** strike actions have become more noticeable on the streets but the victims of the strike on sea are less known. Report has it that sailors get stranded on the sea failing to reach the shore due to striking workers and hence made life uneasy for sailors on the sea.

Wanting to reach the benchmark set by the **EU** and curtailing the repetition of Greek financial crisis, the Portuguese Socialist ruling minority government and its centre-right opposition PSD compromised on a deal on austerity budget for 2011. Meanwhile, **China** has indicated its willingness to buy **Portuguese** government bonds.

### *Social/Humanitarian Issue*

As part of its Crisis Management plans, the **EU's** Aid commissioner Kristalina Georgieva has proposed having standby Crisis Unit that will be responsible whenever natural disaster strikes. Having such unit will eliminate the dilemma of rescue operation among member state.

According to the latest report of Transparent International, **Greece** took the position of 78/178 as the most corrupt nation in the EU. The report shows a change in the usual suspect nations like **Romania** and **Bulgaria**.

The world was once again gripped by bomb threat allegedly sent from *Yemen* via Dubai to London and U.S. Investigators are still looking into the viability of the bomb.

The issue of the Roma is once again coming to spotlight following the report of Human Right Watch that there is a forceful relocation of Roma to *Kosovo*. The NGO is asking all western European countries to stop sending Roma back to Kosovo until they can ensure that conditions for their integration there have improved.

### *Food, Environment and Energy Issue*



EU leaders are at the last stage of rubber stamping the consensus of having the Kyoto protocol extended as recent environmental summits have been less yielding. This is also due to the growing sensitivity of the EU towards the loss of biodiversity environment.

Following the EU warning of a fine over environmental indiscipline, the **Italian** government has finally resolved the garbage problem of Naples, responsible for angry clashes and stinking waste piling up in streets of Naples.



### *Geostrategic Issues*

Although a complete lift of sanction on *Cuba* cannot be embarked, yet the EU deems it worthy to start exploring closer ties with the Communist country, following the release of dissidents and reforms unfolding in Cuba.

### **EAST EUROPE**

#### *Political Issues*

The **Polish** Parliament is debating laws to regulate In-vitro fertilization (IVF) but the bill is facing challenge from the opposition Law and Justice Party and the Catholic Church as morally wrong.

The result of recent **Czech** Senatorial elections has become a hurdle for Prime Minister Petr Necas's drive to narrow the budget deficit. The Czech Social Democrats now with a majority has vowed to veto cuts in welfare programmes upon the election's victory.

The upper house of the **Czech** parliament gave final approval to expand the country's military mission in Afghanistan to 720 troops next year from the current ceiling of 535.

Meanwhile, **Slovak** parliament passed a revision to the judicial council act on October 19, which requires the judicial council to appear before the public and its members will be obliged to provide arguments before the public for their decisions.

**Hungary's** top court has defended its powers after the governing Fidesz party proposed curbing them to prevent the judiciary from interfering with its political promises or budget goals.

As **Belarus** prepares for election, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is scheduled to send a long-term observer mission to Minsk to observe the country's presidential election.

In **Latvia**, prime minister has made a sharp reversal of a decision that tends to include radical nationalist in the newly constituted government. The government now wants aboard the Centrist Unity Alliance and the Populist Greens and Farmers Union.

#### *Economic Issues*

**Poland** is leading countries that already have a reformed pension system not to be forced by the EU to incorporate pension cost in budget deficit cut. EU believes the move to exclude pension reform costs would violate the EU's current accounting system. Meanwhile **Poland's** resolve for the Euro is unwaived in the face of a growing economy.

On the other end, Czech National Bank Governor Miroslav Singer expects the country's economy to grow faster than previously expected as current forecast for 2010 growth is 1.6 per

**Hungary's** public debt can begin to decline in 2010 if the Forint remains near 270 per euro, and the current path would bring debt to the EU's ceiling of 60 percent of GDP by 2015.

**Estonia's** ministry of economic affairs and communications will allocate the €50mn (\$485mn) proceeds of a sale of CO2 credits to Spain for investment in new wind farms.

In **Lithuania**, Statistics Lithuania announces that third-quarter GDP increased by 0.6 per cent compared to the same period last year and by 6.7 per cent compared to the second quarter of 2010.

#### *Social/Humanitarian Issue*

**Poland** is not taking lightly the issue of Pole minority in Lithuania. Poland accuses the Baltic state of marginalizing the Poles and refusing to use standard Polish orthography in the transcriptions of the names of Polish residents and in the Baltic country. In the same connection, a UN human rights panel's report urges **Hungary** to tackle widespread and "virulent" hate speech, discrimination and violence against the Roma minority as well as rising anti-Semitism.

Following the attack and murder of a political assistant in the offices of Law and Justice Party last week, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) demands a complete ban on firearms in **Poland** allowing only sports clubs and hunting associations to purchase weapons.

#### *Food, Environment and Energy Issue*

The **Slovak** government intends to apply similar **Czech's** law that slashes subsidies on solar power producers, though the Slovak law will only support solar power plants with a capacity of maximum 100 kilowatt hours.

Following the visit of President Hugo Chavez to the region, **Ukraine** and **Belarus** have signed the first in a series of agreements needed to start the transit of Venezuelan crude oil to Belarus through Ukrainian pipelines.

**Estonia** plans to separate Eesti Gaas's natural gas sales and transmission divisions in two years to reduce dependence on Russia's Gazprom, the biggest owner and its sole gas supplier.

#### *Geostrategic Issues*

**Poland's** Defense Ministry is to renegotiate a contract for the purchase of anti-ship and land attack missiles from Norway's Kongsberg Defense and Aerospace Company.

**Slovakia** which does not recognize Kosovo as an independent state after its unilateral declaration of independence in 2008 has agreed to withdraw the country's NATO-troops from Kosovo by the end of 2010 and will make a modest increase of troops in the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan by next year.

**Hungary** remains a favourite and supporter of Turkey's EU bid as Ankara played a significant role in Hungary's NATO accession. As Hungary takes on the EU presidency in the first half of 2011, Turkey issue will be part of the prioritized issues.

European Union Foreign Ministers kept the threat of sanctions hanging over **Belarus**, but decided not to implement the threat in the hope of encouraging the authoritarian state towards democratic reforms.

## **RUSSIA**

#### *Economic Issues*

The **Russian** government heads for a huge privatization by embarking on a five-year plan to sell off stakes in prized state companies such as oil major Rosneft and banks Sberbank and VTB to raise US\$60 billion for state coffers.

**Russia** and other emerging economies have come under the radar of European Commission's criticism. The commission believes protectionism policies of these economies is affecting EU's economy recovery and does not meet the commitments of G20.

#### *Social/Humanitarian Issue*



As political tension heightens in Russia, left wing and liberal anti-Kremlin opposition groups gathered in Moscow protesting against Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, demanding his resignation. Meanwhile, Moscow is unhappy about NGOs reporting of press freedom in the country.

**Russia**, the United Nations, the European Union and the Vatican stands oppose to the death sentence of former Iraq's former deputy premier Tareq Aziz. Such sentence is believed by the four as potential to exacerbate the tension in Iraq.

#### *Food, Environment and Energy Issue*

Moscow and Washington struggles to ensure nuclear nonproliferation amid an unsettled START agreement. Moscow fears that the republicanisation of the U.S Congress could further undermine the agreement. Meanwhile, Russia's nuclear energy cooperation with Armenia, **Russia-Saudi**, **Russia-Ukraine**, **Russia-Venezuela** nuclear talks and *Turkmenistan* gas pipeline are all raising more questions about Moscow energy intentions.

#### *Geostrategic Issues*

**Russian** Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has visited Ukraine as both countries are now on a new level of relations. Russian gas supplies to *Ukraine* became a matter of discussion during the visit as about 80 percent of Russian gas exports to the European Union is transited via Ukraine.

### **US/CANADA**

#### *Political Issues*

The pre-election polls show that coalition that brought Obama-Democrat party to power is faltering. Women, Roman Catholics, less affluent Americans and independents, who threw their support for democrat in 2008 are now showing interest for the Republican Party.

#### *Economic Issues*

As the midterm election campaign draws to a close, fear hangs in the air that U.S deficit might further increase owing to the on-going polarization between the Democrat and Republican parties and coupled with the frenzy that democrats might lose the House majority. Meanwhile, Washington is rallying allies against Chinese economic protectionism particularly its devalued currency that has been a lingering issue between developed economies and Beijing.

According to Ben Bernanke, the Fed chairman of U.S, **American** economy would have been worse off without federal stimulus programme. Ben has refused to heighten the partisan fray on the state of the economy by avoiding public debates. Bernanke and the rest of Obama's administration need magical effort to turn around the economy, revive it from further downturn.



Being a major U.S economy partner, the faltering U.S. housing market is a potential threat for **Canadian** economy, adding salt to **Canada's** injury following IMF report that risks to Canada's economic outlook have increased. Yet the Canadian economy was reported to resume growth in wholesale trade, manufacturing and oil and gas extraction during the month of August.

**Canadian** fertilizer producer Potash Corp, Saskatchewan does not favour the takeover bid by BHP. The company has gotten the support of the Liberals and the left-wing New Democrats opposing the BHP offer.

*Social/Humanitarian Issue*

The U.S Justice Department has fined GlaxoSmithKline for putting on sale 20 drugs with questionable safety. The pharmaceutical company will have to pay \$150 million for the settlement of criminal charges that will be the largest such payment ever by a manufacturer of adulterated drugs

*Food, Environment and Energy Issue*

Halliburton has refused to accept the blame for the blowout of BP oil well in the Gulf of Mexico. According to presidential investigative panel, Halliburton had made unreliable cementing that contributed to the April disaster.

**Canada** is a major neighbouring trade partner of the United States and Canadians are always fearful that unkind law from Washington could hamper their economy as in the lobby against TransCanada's application to build the 2,000-mile Keystone XL pipeline. The pipeline hopes to bring crude oil to the U.S. Some fear it will further increase U.S dependence on fossil oil.

**LATIN AMERICA**

*Political Issues*

The death announcement of the former **Argentina** President, Nestor Kirchner was a shock for the country and the region. Late Nestor Kirchner was reported to have died of heart attack, therefore jeopardizes his presidential bid.

In **Brazil** it was a clear show of victory for Ms. Dilma Rousseff upon securing 56% votes after the second round of **Brazilian** elections. Rousseff believes filling the boot of Lula will be tough task and fervently determined to further accomplish the legacy of Lula. Meanwhile, President Lula da Silva still maintains a high rating from the public even after the elections.

*Economic Issues*

**Brazil** and **Argentina**, the leading oilseed producers in Latin America held meetings with **Chile**, **Paraguay** and **Uruguay** in Santiago, **Chile** on the prospect of combining their oilseeds for export to buyers in Asia and elsewhere.

The economy is being under fire and added to the **Venezuela's** finance minister predicts that **Venezuela's** oil industry is going to shrink by 1.4 percent and the non-oil economy will decline 2.6 percent in 2010.

*Social/Humanitarian Issue*

The internet is reported by Ibope as the battle ground for **Brazilian** president candidates and their supporters. The avenue of social networking increases Brazilians internet usage which was reflected in the just concluded elections.

Mining tragedy is not usual in the region and the recent **Chilean** saga is becoming a wakeup call for others, therefore linking the closure of 18 illegal gold mines in Colombia will not be overstatement geared to ensure safety. Meanwhile, Brazil has shown interest in Colombia's metallurgical coal and ready to help in constructing railway for its export.

**Colombian** government is worried over the California's Proposition 19, which aimed at legalizing marijuana. If such law comes to being, it will grease up marijuana production, a major crop in **Colombia**.

The menace of drug lord is a protracted experience the



Mexican government is still struggling to resolve as Ciudad Juarez was again hit by drug lord. Meanwhile, Mexican government accuses the United States of lack of seriousness to fight drug as California prepares to legalize marijuana.

*Food, Environment and Energy Issue*

With the aim of reducing environmental pollution and providing cheap energy, **Chilean** President Pinera inaugurated the Pacific Hydro's La Higuera and La Confluencia projects that will provide almost 1 million Chilean homes with renewable energy, equivalent to taking more than 250,000 cars off the road.

Meanwhile, **Chile** and Pakistan mull on cooperating on projects like irrigation, coal, hydro power, and mining in Sindhi province.

**Venezuelans** might have to endure months of unsupplied gas from **Colombia** as the latter undertakes maintenance and upgrading of gas machinery.

*Geostrategic Issues*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> South American-African joint summit is an indication that the global south can have a viable cooperation. Since 2020, trade between *South America* and Africa was recorded to have jumped from \$6 billion to \$36 billion and Brazil has been the main beneficiary of the transactions.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Dialogue and Agreement Mechanisms of Tuxtla Presidential Summit (Tuxtla Group Summit) was recently held and attended by ten Latin American governments. The summit agreed to strengthen regional and bilateral cooperation on security and to create a united front against drug trafficking and organized crime.

*Argentina-Russia* consolidated their 125 years old diplomatic relationships through the inking of agreements in nuclear power engineering, space exploration, high technologies, and transportation sectors.

Meanwhile, tussle between **Argentina** and Britain over Malvinas remains a hot issue. Argentina claims Britain is not ready to give up the island due to its energy reserve.

**Chilean** President Pinera's visit to Germany was aimed at showcasing the democratic tradition between the two countries and love of the citizens as demonstrated during the recent rescue effort of 33 miners. Pinera taunted Cuban-Venezuelan inspired kind of democracy as unparalleled with the Chile.

President Chavez's foreign tour is completed and Chavez believes it was a success encompassed Africa, Asia and Europe followed by huge inking of agreement and cooperation.



**AUSTRALASIA**

*Economic Issues*

The proposed merger of **Australia** and Singapore stock exchange is brewing debate even within the coalition government of Prime Minister Julia Gillard. The Green coalition partner is against the merger and other opposition finds regulatory issues with the bid.

*Social/Humanitarian Issue*

In **Australia**, a Muslim cleric lost an appeal against his jail terms for being complicit in an abortive terror attack. The appeal court however said some sentences given to his group were excessive.

*Geostrategic Issues*

As **Australia** renews its commitment in Afghanistan, its ministry of defense found that the WikiLeaks documents had not had a major impact on its operations in Afghanistan. §