

# 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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# Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of 27 surveys. 1 of these is a multi-country survey. 12 polling organizations have been represented.

## COUNTRY of the week- THAILAND

► 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: **Thais Urge for Dialogue, Not Elections, For Peace**

June 23, 2010



(*Angus Reid Global Monitor*) - Many people in **Thailand** reject the notion that a new general election will achieve national reconciliation, according to a poll by *Bangkok University*. Only **16.6 %** of respondents think dissolving the legislature is the best way forward.

Conversely, **28 %** of respondents think the government should listen to representatives from all political parties in order to foster unity and stability, and **24.9 %** believe the best course of action is to help the poor and create jobs.

**Thailand** has experienced more than three years of political instability, including the *dissolution* of the lower house, a *cancelled national election*, a *military coup* and the enactment of a *new constitution*. In December 2007, **Thailand** held a legislative ballot. Final results gave the People's Power Party (PPP) 232 of the 480 seats, followed by the Democratic Party (PP) with 165 mandates. In **January 2008**, PPP leader Samak Sundaravej became prime minister.

Samak's government faced fierce opposition and major street protests led by the civic organization People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). The group accused Samak of being a puppet of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was deposed in a 2006 military coup.

In **August 2008**, the PAD occupied the Government House in Bangkok, demanding Samak's resignation. Samak stepped down in September after the national Constitutional Court found that he violated conflict of interest laws when he received payments for hosting two television *cooking shows*. Then Deputy Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat took over as acting head of government.

In **November**, PAD yellow-clad activists took over Bangkok’s international airport—where the government had been working from after its offices were invaded in August—demanding Somchai’s resignation. The airport was forced to shut down entirely, stranding thousands of tourists.

In **December**, the Constitutional Court ordered the PPP and its two coalition partners, the Machima Thipatai Party and the Chart Thai Party, to disband after it found them guilty of voter fraud in the **2007** ballot. The court also banned Somchai and executives from the three parties from participating in politics for five years. Somchai accepted the verdict and stepped down. Protesters at the airport ended the siege. PP leader Abhisit Vejjajiva became prime minister, with the support of 235 lawmakers in the House of Representatives.

In **March 2009**, Thaksin accused Privy Council president Prem Tinsulanonda of masterminding the 2006 military coup, and openly called for a "people’s revolution" to topple the Abhisit government. In **April**, the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD)—an extension of the Puea Thai Party led by Thaksin and whose followers wear *red shirts*—organized protests in Bangkok and Chonburi.

In **June**, the PAD’s Yellow Shirts formally created a political party, *the New Politics Party*, and chose labour activist Somsak Kosaisuk as its leader.

On **Mar. 12, 2010**, the Red Shirt movement took control of Ratchaprasong, an area in the heart of Bangkok’s commercial district, demanding early legislative elections and the resignation of Prime Minister Abhisit.

On **May 13**, after issuing several public warnings, the government ordered the military to enter the Red Shirts’ camp in Ratchaprasong and disperse the dissidents. Power, water and food supplies were cut from the camp. *Eighty-five* people died in the confrontations, which went on for days. The Red Shirts eventually surrendered. As they were leaving, some of them lit **36** buildings on fire, including a major shopping mall, and looted stores and banks. Another **54** people died in these events.

On **May 25**, a Thai court issued an arrest warrant against Thaksin on terrorism charges for his alleged participation in the Red Shirts’ actions.

Prime Minister *Abhisit* has set up four separate panels to study the incidents that led to last month’s violence.

On **Jun. 22**, Chaturon Chaiseng, a former cabinet member under Thaksin, warned that the government has appointed only loyalists to these commissions, adding, "Abhisit’s plan excludes the opposition totally. The people he picked mostly supported the coup and the present constitution, which is the fundamental problem."

**Polling Data**

What should be the main priority for the government to achieve reconciliation?

Listening to the opinion of all parties	28.0%
Helping the poor, creating jobs	24.9%
Dissolving the legislature	16.6%
Launching an impartial investigation into recent political violence	9.5%
Arrest and punish terrorists	6.6%

Source: Bangkok University

Methodology: Interviews with 1,628 Thai adults, conducted on Jun. 16 and Jun. 16, 2010. No margin of error was provided.

**SOURCE:** [http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/35669/thais\\_urge\\_for\\_dialogue\\_not\\_elections\\_for\\_peace](http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/35669/thais_urge_for_dialogue_not_elections_for_peace)

# SUMMARY OF POLLS

## Zone 1- ASIA

### ► MIDDLE EAST

#### *Abbas Would Clearly Win Palestinian Ballot* (Click for Details)

Mahmoud Abbas would win a new election in the [Palestinian](#) territories, according to a poll by the [Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research](#). **54 %** of respondents would vote for the current Palestinian Authority president and leader of Fatah in the next ballot, up four points since March.

June 25, 2010

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

#### *Palestinians See Turkey as Best Regional Ally* (Click for Details)

Many people in the Palestinian territories consider Turkey as their closest ally in the region, according to a poll by the [Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research](#). **43 %** of respondents believe Turkey is the most supportive of the Palestinians and their cause.

June 22, 2010

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

### ► WEST & CENTRAL ASIA

#### *CHP Grows, Virtually Ties AKP in Turkey* (Click for Details)

Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) is technically tied with the Republican People's Party (CHP), according to a poll by [Sonar Arastirma](#). **32.5 %** of respondents would vote for the CHP in the next legislative election, while **31.1 %** would support the ruling AKP.

June 21, 2010

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

### ► EAST ASIA

#### *Thais Urge for Dialogue, Not Elections, For Peace* (Click for Details)

Many people in [Thailand](#) reject the notion that a new general election will achieve national reconciliation, according to a poll by [Bangkok University](#). Only **16.6 %** of respondents think dissolving the legislature is the best way forward.

June 23, 2010

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

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



#### *Multi-Country poll- Global Economic Crisis Was Personal in Countries Far and Wide* (Click for Details)

[Economy](#) » [Economic Globalization](#)

## Zone 2- AFRICA

### ► SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

#### *Multi-Country poll- Global Economic Crisis Was Personal in Countries Far and Wide* (Click for Details)

[Economy](#) » [Economic Globalization](#)

## Zone 3- EURO-AMERICAS

## EUROPE

### ► EAST EUROPE

#### ***Most Czechs Agree with Euthanasia*** (Click for Details)

Most people in the [Czech Republic](#) support the practice of euthanasia, according to a poll by [CVVM](#). **61 %** of respondents share this point of view, down one point since May 2009.

June 26, 2010

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

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

#### ***Czech Decidedly Favor Abortion*** (Click for Details)

A solid majority of people in the [Czech Republic](#) agree with legal abortions at the request of the mother, according to a poll by [CVVM](#). **70 %** of respondents share this point of view, down three points since May 2009.

June 22, 2010

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

[Society](#) » [Family](#)

### ► WEST EUROPE

#### ***Just Over a Third of French Happy with Sarkozy*** (Click for Details)

The popularity of [French](#) president Nicolas Sarkozy remains well below the **50 %** mark, according to a poll by [Ifop](#) published in *Paris Match*. **35 %** of respondents approve of Sarkozy's performance, up one point since May.

June 26, 2010

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



## AMERICAS

### ► NORTH AMERICA

#### ***Americans Blame BP for Oil Spill, Britons Divided*** (Click for Details)

People in the [United States](#) and [Britain](#) hold differing views on the main culprit of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). While **63 %** of Americans think BP Plc deserves most of the blame for the incident, only **31 %** of Britons concur.

June 25, 2010

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

#### ***Verdict on Healthcare Reform Bill Still Divided*** (Click for Details)

In [America](#) the healthcare reform legislation Congress passed in late March divided the public then and has not gained significant support in the three months since. [Gallup USA](#)

June 22, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

#### ***Obama's Rating Steady despite Tough Environment*** (Click for Details)

Since the beginning of this year, President Obama has signed a controversial health care measure, coped with a stubbornly high jobless rate and struggled to manage the largest environmental disaster in the nation's

history. In that period, Obama's overall job approval rating has moved from **49%** to **48%**. [Pew Research Center](#)

June 24, 2010

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

**Obama Receives 44% Approval on Oil Spill While BP Gets 16%** [\(Click for Details\)](#)

[Americans](#) give President Obama a **44%** approval rating on his handling of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, up slightly from **40%** in early June. Meanwhile, **16%** of Americans approve of BP's handling of the spill. [Gallup USA](#)

June 21, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)  
[Society](#) » [Environment/ Disasters](#)

**Registered Voters' House Voting Preferences Tied at 46%** [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Registered [American](#) voters divide evenly when asked which party's candidate they would vote for if the congressional elections were held today, with **46%** preferring the Republican candidate and **46%** the Democratic candidate. Registered voters' preferences have generally been closely divided since [Gallup](#) began tracking preferences in March.

June 22, 2010

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

**Americans' Church Attendance Inches Up in 2010** [\(Click for Details\)](#)

[Americans'](#) self-reported church attendance has continued to inch up in 2010, with **43.1%** of Americans reporting weekly or almost weekly attendance. This is up slightly from **42.8%** in 2009 and **42.1%** in 2008. The increase comes as Americans' economic confidence has also risen, suggesting that, instead of church attendance rising when economic times get bad, as some theorize, the opposite pattern may be occurring. [Gallup USA](#)

June 25, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)



**More Women without Children** [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Nearly one in five [American](#) women ends her childbearing years without having borne a child, compared with one-in-ten in the 1970s. While childlessness has risen for all racial and ethnic groups, and most education levels, it has fallen over the past decade for women with advanced degrees. [Pew Research Center](#)

June 25, 2010

[Society](#) » [Family](#)

**In 2010, Conservatives Still Outnumber Moderates, Liberals** [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Conservatives have maintained their leading position among [U.S.](#) ideological groups in the first half of 2010. [Gallup](#) finds **42%** of Americans describing themselves as either very conservative or conservative. This is up slightly from the **40%** seen for all of 2009 and contrasts with the **20%** calling themselves liberal or very liberal.

June 25, 2010

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

**Americans See Congress as Ineffective, Self-Serving, Entrenched** [\(Click for Details\)](#)

**Americans** who believe most members of Congress do not deserve to be re-elected support their position by saying representatives are simply doing a bad job, that they have been in office too long, that they are not making decisions based on what's best for the country, or that they are too focused on self-interest, special interests, and partisanship. Relatively few cite Congress' performance on specific issues. [Gallup USA](#)

June 23, 2010

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

***Public Uncertain How to Improve Job Situation*** ([Click for Details](#))

In **America** there is broad public agreement that past government policies intended to address the financial crisis and recession have not worked. At the same time, there is very little agreement about what the government should do now to deal with the nation's biggest economic concern -- the job situation. [Pew Research Center](#)

June 21, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

***Public Sees a Future Full of Promise and Peril*** ([Click for Details](#))

In the public's view, this promises to be an era of technological progress. Large majorities expect that computers will be able to carry on conversations (81% say this definitely or probably will happen) and that there will be a cure for cancer (71%). About two-thirds (66%) say that artificial arms and legs will outperform real limbs while 53% envision ordinary people traveling in space. [Pew Research Center](#)

June 22, 2010

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

***System Fails to Reform Prisoners, Say Americans*** ([Click for Details](#))

A large majority of people in the **United States** say the country's penitentiary system fails at helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 75 % of respondents share this point of view.

June 23, 201

[Society](#) » [Crime](#)

***Canadians Want Deeper Inquiry into MP Expenses*** ([Click for Details](#))

The terms of the proposal to review the way federal lawmakers spend their allowances did not please many people in **Canada**, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 57 % of respondents think the probe announced recently does not go far enough.

June 24, 2010

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

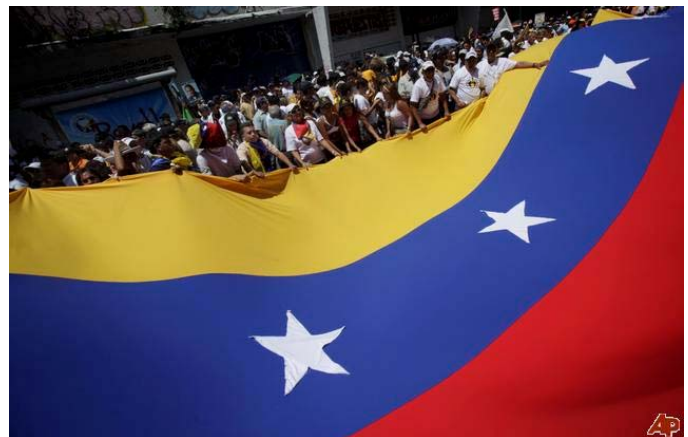
► **LATIN AMERICA**

***Most Venezuelans Want Chávez Out in 2012*** ([Click for Details](#))

Most people in **Venezuela** are hoping to see president Hugo Chávez leave in 2012 when his current term expires, according to a poll by [Hinterlaces](#). 64 % of respondents want Chávez to step down in two years, up three points since October 2008.

June 24, 2010

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



► **AUSTRALASIA**

**Most Australians Were Unhappy with Rudd** (Click for Details)

Just as Kevin Rudd stands down as leader of the [Australian](#) Labor Party (ALP) and prime minister, the majority of people in the country were expressing dissatisfaction with his work, according to a poll by [Newspoll](#) published in *The Australian*. **55 %** of respondents were unhappy with Rudd's leadership, up one point since late May.

June 25, 2010

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

**Australian Opposition Maintains Lead** (Click for Details)

[Australia's](#) political scene is definitely experiencing a shift away from the governing party, according to a poll by [Newspoll](#) published in *The Australian*. **40 %** of respondents would vote for the opposition alliance of Liberals and Nationals.

June 24, 2010

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

**New Zealanders Welcome Three-Strike Law** (Click for Details)

Most people in [New Zealand](#) agree with the plan to apply the "Three Strikes and you are out" guidelines in the country, according to a poll by [Research New Zealand](#). **81 %** of respondents are in favor of this proposal. The law imposes maximum jail terms and no parole for 40 different offences, including murder, aggravated burglary and robbery, for people convicted for the third time.

June 22, 2010

[Society](#) » [Crime](#)



## GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS

**Global Economic Crisis Was Personal in Countries Far and Wide** (Click for Details)

[Gallup's](#) Personal Economy Index before and after the global economic meltdown in 2008 shows the crisis touched everyday lives around the world. In **61** out of **96** countries, scores fell significantly, documenting a decline in economic situations at the personal and community level. [Ireland](#) led the declines, followed by other major economies such as [Singapore](#), [Spain](#), and the [United Kingdom](#).

June 22, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Economic Globalization](#)

### ► CYBER WORLD

**Oil Leak Spreads Online** (Click for Details)

Eight weeks after the oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico triggered one of the largest environmental catastrophes in the country's history, attention to the subject hit unprecedented levels in social media last week. [Pew Research Center](#)

June 24, 2010

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

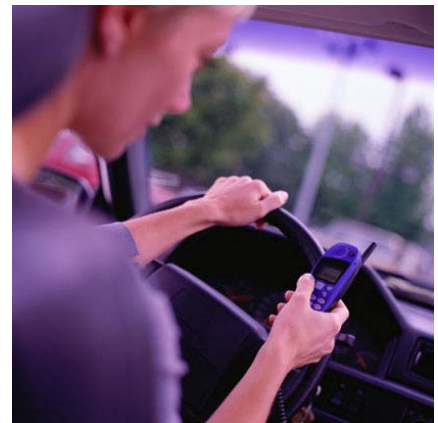
[Society](#) » [Media/ New Media](#)

**Adults Text While Driving Too!** (Click for Details)

Adults are just as likely as teens to have texted while driving and are substantially more likely to have talked on the phone while driving. [Pew Research Center](#)

June 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

### **Political Front:**

**Turkey's** Pro Kurdish Peace and Democratic Party or BDP had filed a motion in the Parliament against Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan calling democratic initiative to be discriminative as it has failed to fulfill the government's promises specifically to end terror problem in that area.

Meanwhile the General Staff has recently submitted a report to the Prime Ministry on the recent escalation in terrorist attacks. PKK is being regarded as the main culprit.

### **Geo-strategic Front:**

**Turkish** Parliament has passed a motion extending the mandate of Turkish forces in *Lebanon* for an additional year under the banner of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL, for the fourth time.

**Turkish** Prime Minister recently said that **Turkey** should immediately be given visa liberalization by EU. EU's chief official has appreciated **Turkish** pace in bringing reforms in the country and expressed positive hopes that **Turkey** would speed up its process of accession to the EU.

**Turkey** and *Kazakhstan* have extended support to *Kyrgyz* leader Roza Otunbayeva's plan to hold a referendum while stating that they were ready to offer a joint action plan to be implemented following the referendum in a bid to help resolve the unrest in *Kyrgyzstan*.

### **Economic Front:**

In spite of the fact that the global financial crisis has taken a huge toll on nearly all sectors around the world, the **Turkish** defense industry has continued its upward trend, achieving a 16 % year-on-year growth in its exports.

**Turkish** exploration activities in 143 wells that started drilling last year resulted in the discovery of oil in 53 wells and natural gas in 30; 33 of the wells were dry, and the work on the remaining 27 is still ongoing.

Meanwhile **Turkey**, *Jordan*, *Lebanon* and *Syria* have pledged to intensify cooperation in trade and commerce.

### **Social Front:**



According to reports discrimination against professional women who wear a headscarf has kept millions of qualified female employees out of the workforce and has hampered women's economic progress in **Turkey** so far.

## **GCC**

### ***Political Front:***

**Kuwait's** National Assembly Speaker has urged the need to apply "wisdom and dialogue" in solving any potential differences that could cause unrest in the country.

### ***Geo-strategic Front:***

The *European Union* (EU) and the **Gulf Cooperation Council** (GCC) have celebrated 22 years of their relationship by launching a three-year Joint Action Program (JAP) to move forward to stronger cooperation with confidence and optimism.

A senior **UAE** official has expressed keenness to boost cooperation and coordination with the *European*

*Union* (EU) in various security fields with particular emphasis on fighting human trafficking. Authorities in the **United Arab Emirates** have closed down 40 companies for selling products to *Iran* in violation of UN sanctions on *Iran*. Analysts however say the move would have little impact on the estimated \$ 8 billion in trade between the **UAE** and *Iran*.

Meanwhile **Bahrain** has stressed its firm commitment to promote bilateral relations with *Iran*. **Bahraini** Foreign Minister has also slammed *anti-Iranian* media reports, dismissing them as "totally unacceptable". **Qatar's** Assistant Foreign Minister too has paid a visit to *Tehran*.

**Oman** and *Tunisia* have signed five memoranda of understanding (MoU) and three executive programs aimed at enhancing co-operation in various key sectors. Meanwhile **Kuwait** has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) with the *US* Government on nuclear safeguards and other nonproliferation topics.

### ***Economic Front:***

Gap between **GCC** and *EU* in trade has reduced remarkably. Besides that **Qatar** has emerged as an increasingly important player in terms of global real estate capital flows primarily because of rapid growth in its oil and gas sector.

### ***Social Front:***

Vice-President and Prime Minister of the **UAE** have endorsed by-laws of the federal human resources laws. The move came within the government's efforts to establish clear standards and effective managerial governmental measures to develop human resources, clarify duties and rights of employees in the federal government and provide an appropriate work environment for all employees, who number about 80,000.

## **FERTILE CRESCENT**

### ***Political Front:***

In **Egypt**, ruling National Democratic Party has won 80 out of 88 seats in the elections of Shura Council. Opposition that succeeded in getting only 5 seats has accused the ruling party of rigging the elections.

In **Iraq** efforts are being made by different leaders to sign a deal in order to take the political process forward.



Meanwhile in the last week, attacks blamed on *Al-Qaeda* have killed at least 35 people and injured scores as its suicide bombers are said to have targeted a state-owned bank and a private bank.

**Geo-strategic Front:**

Five *East African* countries have announced their refusal to go back on a deal they signed last month to share the waters of the Nile, despite fierce criticism from **Egypt** and *Sudan*. The stand was adopted as the latest meeting of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in Addis Ababa, *Ethiopia's* capital, ended with open disagreements.

**Egyptian** authorities denied *Iranian* claims of having barred a Gaza-bound aid ship sent by the *Iranian* Red Crescent from entering the Suez Canal. Meanwhile *Turkish* troops have been deployed along the **Iraqi** border after a raid by separatist *Kurdish* militants left 12 *Turkish* soldiers dead on June 19.

**Israel** has threatened to use military force to take the full control of a newly-discovered gas field partly in **Lebanese** waters in the Mediterranean Sea. **Israel's** Infrastructure Minister made the remarks after *Beirut* announced that parts of the giant reserves actually belong to **Lebanon** and that it does not allow Tel Aviv to loot **Lebanon's** resources. Meanwhile **Israel** has launched its latest military spy satellite, *Ofek 9*, reportedly increasing its capacity to gather intelligence on enemies such as *Iran*.

**Economic Front:**

Under new **Iraqi** legislation, oil-producing provinces have the right to \$1 from each barrel their oil fields export. Hence the oil-rich city of Kirkuk has received more than \$65 million as part of its share from oil exports for the last four months.

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors has approved a proposal to provide \$55 million in funding for projects in the **West Bank and Gaza** (WBG) to support Palestinian economic recovery and development.

**Social Front:**

Despite **Egyptian** commitment to avoid human rights violation government has been blamed for existing state of emergency. The Government has promised to lift emergency as soon as possible.

A recently published UN report based on various constraints faced by **Egypt** declared Education to be a major issue. Report revealed that 27% of youth between 18 and 29 have not completed their basic education in addition to the fact that education in **Egypt** as a whole is of low quality.

An Islamic Studies scholar has reportedly said that Christians should not be given top positions as it goes against the spirit of Islam. Meanwhile efforts are reportedly being made by people belonging to civil society to facilitate situation for women's appointment as judges in **Egypt**.

**Lebanon** has extradited a former *Baghdad* government official suspected of stealing millions of dollars from the government.

Thousands of **Palestinian** refugees have staged a demonstration in the **Lebanese** capital, demanding the government in *Beirut* grant them basic civil rights. They were joined by several **Lebanese** non-government organizations as well.



**CENTRAL ASIA**

**Political Front:**

**Azerbaijan's** parliament last week passed controversial amendments to the country's election law. The amendments include the shortening of the election campaign period from 75 days to 60 days. The law would also bar campaigning by candidates before the registration deadline.

Some 31 members of an alleged Islamic insurgent group have been sentenced in **Azerbaijan** to various prison terms for forming a radical religious group and plotting to overthrow the government.

Meanwhile police forced leading members of the **Kazakh** opposition *Azat* Social Democratic Party to leave the central Kazakh town where they were meeting with supporters. Two **Kazakh** activists have protested the newly approved law declaring President Nursultan Nazarbaev the "leader of the nation" and giving him greater privileges and protection.

The head of **Kyrgyzstan's** State Security Service has accused relatives of ousted President Bakiev of planning and instigating recent ethnic clashes along with the Taliban and other regional Islamic militant groups. **Kyrgyz** interim leader has promised to hold referendum amidst unrest and clashes. Meanwhile security officials have detained 12 suspected organizers of the ethnic clashes between local **Uzbeks** and **Kyrgyz**. Meanwhile Government of **Kyrgyzstan** has lifted a state of emergency imposed in the wake of ethnic violence in its south, amid UN concerns about the risk of fresh tensions in the area.

#### ***Geo-strategic Front:***

**Azerbaijan** has claimed that the total amount of damage suffered by the country due to the war with **Armenia** over the disputed region of *Nagorno-Karabakh* has been estimated at 70 billion manat (\$87 billion). Meanwhile the *Russian* President held a meeting with the presidents of **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan** on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg Economic Forum to discuss the ongoing search for a solution to the *Karabakh* conflict. Intense skirmishes between **Armenian** and **Azerbaijani** forces around the disputed region of *Nagorno-Karabakh* continued last week as well.

Two **Kazakhs** were wounded in a shooting incident on **Kazakhstan's** southern border with **Uzbekistan**.

**Kyrgyz** authorities have planned to set up a state-owned company to provide a U.S. air base with fuel, replacing a series of private intermediary firms set up under the recently deposed government. **Kyrgyzstan** held its referendum on 27 *June* as planned in order to end ongoing unrest and chaos, amid relative calm. Significantly, amongst approximately **70 %** of the people who voted last week, **90 %** supported the new constitution that establishes a parliamentary system.

**Turkmenistan** and *Iran* have expressed interest in enhancing bilateral ties. *Russia* has extended full support to all peace initiatives of **Turkmenistan** aimed at consolidating the efforts of the international community to ensure peace and security. Meanwhile an exclave of **Uzbekistan** surrounded by **Kyrgyzstan's** southern Batken Oblast has been opened for transit of **Kyrgyz** vehicles and citizens.

#### ***Economic Front:***

TX Oil Ltd (USA) has expressed interest in cooperation with **Turkmenistan** in fuel and energy sector. Meanwhile the **Turkmen** capital hosted the first *Turkmen-Chinese* business forum.



#### ***Social Front:***

More than **80** activists of the opposition Popular Front Party were detained in a rally attempt on June 19 in Baku. International and **Azerbaijani** human rights groups have issued a joint appeal to the Council of Europe to take decisive measures to improve the human rights situation in **Azerbaijan**.

**Kazakh** police has detained journalist Yekaterina Belyaeva for holding an unsanctioned protest against President.

The **Kyrgyz** authorities have launched an investigation into reported cases of beatings and robberies of Osh residents

by security forces. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility have been trying to implement an environmental project in **Turkmenistan** aimed at sustainable management of land resources and combating desertification and drought. An official delegation from **Kyrgyzstan's** Jalal-Abad region visited ethnic **Uzbeks** in refugee camps in neighboring **Uzbekistan** on June 22 and urged them to return home.

## IRAN

### **Political Front:**

A member of *Majilis* National Security and Foreign Policy Commission expressed satisfaction and claimed that U.S. sanctions against **Iran** will make **Iranians** firmer.

### **Geo-strategic Front:**

**Iran's** negotiations to finalize an oil-fields deal with *Russia's* OAO Gazprom Neft have entered the final stages. Meanwhile *Russia* has agreed to support UN sanctions against **Iran**- a move expected to trigger tensions in their bilateral relations.

The **Iranian** Red Crescent has accused *Egypt* for stopping their aid ship headed for *Gaza*- to enter the Suez Canal.

*Australian* Ambassador to **Iran** has called for the expansion of cultural ties between *Tehran* and *Canberra*.

Head of **Iran's** Parliament national Security and Foreign Policy Commission has demanded that the *German* ambassador to **Iran** apologize for mistreatment of an **Iranian** citizen at the embassy.

*Pakistan* has claimed that it would review sanctions approved by the *US* Senate against **Iran** and would give its policy line soon.

Meanwhile growing **Iranian** ties with *Azerbaijan*, *Turkey* and *Singapore* also remained significant.

### **Economic Front:**

G-8 leaders have urged **Iran** to hold a "transparent dialogue" over its suspect nuclear program.

Head of **Iran's** Customs Administration has said that sanctions would not affect the volume of **Iran's** import and export activities. As the value of its exports has exceeded 78.5 billion dollars with a 12.7 increase in non-oil exports. **Iran** exported more than 22 million dollars worth of handicrafts in the first two months of the current **Iranian** year.

### **Social Front:**

**Iran's** deputy judiciary chief has blamed the West for using human rights issue as a tool to achieve their political objectives by creating undue pressure on the developing world.

## AFGHANISTAN

### **Political Front:**

United Nations in a report has revealed that Taliban led-insurgency has increased at an "alarming" rate over the past year. *Kandahar's* governor has formed a commission to negotiate with the Taliban and resolve key issues in the southern province such as allegations of land seizures. Meanwhile President Hamid Karzai has asked a visiting United Nations Security Council (UNSC)'s delegation to remove the names of some Taliban, who are not linked to al-Qaeda, from a terror blacklist.

### **Geo-strategic Front:**



President Hamid Karzai praised *Japanese* government for its generous contribution towards **Afghanistan**, saying *Japan* has no political motives behind helping his war-torn country.

**Afghanistan** and *Pakistan* have agreed to increase their cooperation in fighting terrorism.

**Social Front:**

According to reports more than one million **Afghans** are addicted to drugs, with many using narcotics to blunt the effects of poverty and hardship brought on by three decades of war.

**SOUTH ASIA**

**Political Front:**

**Nepalese** PM has expressed his willingness to form a unity government. Meanwhile **Nepal's** opposition Maoist party has threatened to block the annual budget until the prime minister fulfils a pledge to stand down and make way for a new power-sharing government.

**Sri Lanka's** Buddhist monk party has announced to support the constitutional reforms proposed by the government including the removal of the President's term limit. Meanwhile the **Sri Lankan** Government has declared that it would refuse visas for UN panel members appointed to investigate alleged human rights abuses during the civil war against Tamil rebels.



**Geo-strategic Front:**

A technical committee of *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation* member countries has decided to put the proposal of establishing 'SAARC police' and 'SAARC Institute of Criminology' on the agenda of the upcoming SAARC foreign ministers conference.

**India's** Border Security Force (BSF) and its **Bangladeshi** counterpart have agreed to exercise 'utmost restraint' in areas of dispute along the border.

*United States* has asked **Sri Lanka** to accept the UN proposal of sending monitoring team to the country. However *Russia* slammed the UN decision by calling it to be against **Sri Lanka's** sovereignty.

**Economic Front:**

**Bangladesh** has started losing the US market for garments to **India**, *China*, *Vietnam* and *Indonesia*, among others, causing concern among exporters. **Bangladesh's** annual economic losses out of the energy shortfall are US\$16.6 billion, around **16.6 %** of the \$100 billion gross domestic product (GDP).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to provide **Nepal** with a loan of NPR 4.3 billion (USD 60.4 million equivalent) and a grant of NPR 870 million (USD 12.1 million equivalent) in an effort to increase access for credit to the rural poor and to women. **Nepal** Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS) 2010, recently launched by the government, has identified 19 products and services having maximum export potentials as an attempt to reenergize the country's ailing exports. The **Nepal** Stock Exchange (NEPSE) index continued to see downward spiral on the closing day of share transactions for the week-too as it shed 4.15 points to close at 463.45 points.

**Srilanka** economic growth accelerated in the first quarter as the three major sectors of the economy contributed positively. Hence Gross domestic product, or GDP, rose **7.1%** annually in the first three months of the year. Meanwhile *Japanese* government has allocated 39 billion yen (48 billion rupees) assistance to **Sri Lanka** for the forthcoming period.

**Social Front:**

One of **Bangladesh's** leading universities closed indefinitely after five people were injured in riots by students demanding time off to watch the football World Cup.

**Bangladesh** has proclaimed an order to redesign the capital city, requiring reclamation of 3,000 acres of land occupied by influential real estate companies. Meanwhile at least 150,000 people have been marooned and thousands of hectares of crops were destroyed by floods after weeks of heavy rain in **Bangladesh's** northeast.

A new study published in the journal *Lancet* has revealed that more than **20 %** of the deaths in the **Bangladeshi** capital, Dhaka can be directly attributed to drinking arsenic-tainted well water.

A satellite phone has been launched in **Nepal** targeting **Nepal** Tourism Year 2011 (NTY-2011) by I4 Technologies. The price of the satellite phone in **Nepal** is US\$ 700 excluding value added tax (VAT). Meanwhile the return and resettlement of IDPs continues at a slow pace.

## **INDIA**

### ***Political Front:***

In **India** the Congress secured the highest number of 16 seats in the just-concluded biennial election of 55 Rajya Sabha seats from 13 States and the by-election to one seat from Rajasthan. But 18 of the members of Congress would retire in the next two weeks hence it would effectively lose 2 seats. The Bharatiya Janata Party equalized its figure with 11 members getting elected. The major loser is the Samajwadi Party as it could get only two of its members elected though seven of its MPs are retiring. The BSP secured seven seats and the DMK got three.

**Jaswant Singh** has recently rejoined the **BJP**. Singh was expelled over his controversial take on Mohammad Ali Jinnah in his book on *Pakistan's* founding father. *West Bengal* chief minister said there was no easy solution to the Maoist challenge and the issue has become "very complicated" due to support to the rebels by the main Opposition Trinamool Congress and others. The threat of Maoist attacks has hampered coal mining in several states, keeping production lower than the demand from growing industries.

The Kashmir Valley has observed a strike to protest against the killing of two youths. In another development, a militant attack in north **Kashmir's** Sopore town left 12 people injured, including four policemen.

CPM general secretary Prakash Karat has finally held both his party — the CPM, and the Left Front government responsible for the recent electoral setbacks in West Bengal.

### ***Economic Front:***

**India** has assured US Inc. that its concerns on infrastructure, investment restrictions and other impediments would be addressed expeditiously, and a road map prepared for discussions ahead of President Barak Obama's visit in November.

### ***Social Front:***

According to reports the youth in **Kashmir** have fallen into the net of drugs, with such cases increasing by **35-40 %** in the last few years.

United Nations report on the Millennium Development Goals for 2010 claimed that India is expected to reduce its poverty rate from **51 %** in 1990 to **24 %** in 2015, slashing the number of extremely poor by 188 million.



## **EAST ASIA**

**Political Front:**

Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) secretary-general has said that his party supports a plan to allow **Indonesian** Military (TNI) personnel to join politics, starting by giving them a right to vote.

A political party once bent on turning **Malaysia** into an Islamic state has for the first time started preparing to put up non-Muslim candidates for election, in a bid to grab the political center in this divided country. Meanwhile UMNO president stressed that the party's political perception should change according to the latest trend instead of following the old way of winning support for the Barisan Nasional (BN).

**Thailand's** newly-established New Politics Party (NPP) has announced withdrawal from contesting the July 25 by-election by calling competing candidate to be a terrorist.

**Economic Front:**

World Bank has predicted that **Indonesia's** economy would grow **6 %** year-on-year in the second quarter this year after reaching **5.7 %** in the first quarter. Meanwhile in order to fulfill economic objectives **Indonesian** government has started paying special attention to FDI particularly in terms of the Middle Eastern countries.

The **Indonesia** government has denied claims of establishing nuclear power facilities as a substitute to fossil fuels used to generate electricity over the next five years.

Positive economic recovery signs have been visible in **Malaysia** over the past few months. **Pakistan's** exports to **Malaysia** have witnessed an upsurge of 155% in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period last year, with bilateral trade registering a growth of **18.3%**. In monetary terms, the total exports touched to RM 251.19 million compared to RM 98.5 million in the first quarter of the year 2009.

**Philippine** central bank has asked the new government to work at attracting foreign investments amid the capital surge into Asia, which has emerged from the global financial crisis ahead of other regions.

World Bank has estimated an economic growth of **6.1%** for **Thailand** in the year 2010. Meanwhile **Vietnamese** annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth accelerated in the second quarter to between **6.2 %** and **6.4 %** from **5.83 %** in the first quarter. **Singapore** seems keen to strengthen Islamic Finance in the country. Meanwhile **Brunei** has been making efforts to extend industries for *Halal* Food.

**Social Front:**

**Indonesian** Democratic Party of Struggle lawmakers have demanded that president should take action against hard-line Islamic groups, after a meeting between legislators and local residents was disrupted by militants.

A recently released report by the U.S. State department on human trafficking lists **Indonesia** as a Tier-2 country for trafficking, for not fully complying with standards set by the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

A drought in *Southeast Asia* has seriously threatened rice production in **Cambodia** and **Thailand**, the world's biggest rice exporter.

According to reports various events in **Philippines** have left more than 2 million people poor in the last four years. The Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF) has strongly cautioned the Royal **Thai** Government (RTG) against implementing this migrant crackdown policy as it could lead to gross human rights violations affecting more than a million highly vulnerable migrants, especially those from **Burma's** ethnic minorities.

Google has announced the addition of more **Indonesian** content in an effort to lure the country's growing number of Web users to its popular search engine. §

Events of the week in

# Africa zone

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

## POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

**West Africa:** Angolan President made an historic visit to **Ghana**. The visit of President Dos Santos was his first state visit to **Ghana** in close to three decades of his administration.

**Ghana's** President John Evans Atta Mills, last week met with Vice President of *South Africa*, Kgalema Mothlanthe, in Pretoria in a closed door session to discuss matters pertaining to the growth path of the African Union (AU), preceding the Union's summit in Kampala, **Uganda** between the 24th and 27th of July, 2010.



The Prime Minister of **Cameroon**, Philemon Yang, on 22 June 2010 visited Commonwealth Headquarters in London and met Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma. During the meeting, the Secretary-General briefed Mr. Yang on current Commonwealth activities on promoting democracy and development among member countries.

**Côte d'Ivoire's** president has called for an official investigation into corruption allegations against one of his own ministers. President Laurent Gbagbo asked a state prosecutor last week to look into whether Interior Minister Désiré Tagro has been skimming state funds and funds intended for toxic waste victims into his personal account. The minister is also accused of peddling influence to get members of his ethnic group into the national police academy.

A court in Lome, **Togo** last week dissolved the OBUTS, an opposition party led by the former Prime Minister Messan Agbeyome Kodjo, for "violation of the Charter of political parties". The court acted upon complaints of officials of the party, who were either excluded or had resigned. The seven founding members who were either excluded or had resigned said following their departure, the party no longer had the quorum of two-thirds of national representation of the ethnic groups in the country.

**African Union** (AU) has said it was satisfied with steps taken to hold **Guinea's** first presidential elections on June 27 to restore civilian rule. The statement followed the signing into law of a new constitution and the electoral law. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU said the signing into law of a new constitution and the electoral law meant that the return to civilian rule in the *West African* nation was final and irreversible.

During this recent **Guinean** election a new SMS texting campaign to allow **Guineans** to monitor their election and protect their votes was one of the ways the *United States* Embassy helped further that country's democratic electoral process. A runoff vote would be needed to determine who wins the mineral-rich West African nation's first free election since independence 52 years ago. Former Prime Minister Cellou Dalein Diallo garnered about nearly **40 %** of vote in last week's historic poll, well short of the simple majority needed to avoid a runoff.

**Ghana** and *China* last week signed a cultural agreement for the period 2010 to 2012 in Accra.

**Central Africa:** The former chief of staff of the **Rwandan** army and a leading critic of President Paul Kagame was shot in *South Africa*, where he lives in exile. He was taken to a Johannesburg hospital where he is undergoing surgery. Earlier this year, **Rwandan** officials accused Nyamwasa of conspiring with another former army officer against Mr. Kagame's government. Meanwhile the exiled editor of the *Umuwugizi* newspaper in **Rwanda** has alleged that **Rwandan** security killed acting editor Rugambage because the paper

was investigating the shooting of **Rwandan** General Kayumba Nyamwasa in *South Africa*.

The sons of **Congolese** independence leader Patrice Lumumba say they will seek war crimes charges against 12 *Belgians* they accuse of being involved in their father's death, nearly 50 years ago. Lumumba was the first democratically-elected leader of **Congo**, now known as the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, after it won independence from *Belgium* in 1960. He was soon ousted in a coup by army chief Joseph-Desire Mobutu and murdered by officials in *Katanga* province in January 1961.

In **Burundi** all opposition parties pulled out of presidential election on 28 Jun, saying the ruling party used fraud to win local elections in May. Incidents of violence and opposition boycotts have cast a cloud over hopes for democratic reform.



**Nkurunziza was the only candidate after six opposition candidates pulled out**

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

**West Africa:** In **Liberia** the Sirleaf Administration, last week, beefed up measures already in place to reform the judicial system and increase the citizen's access to justice as part of efforts to combat corruption and injustice. As part of the measures, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf dedicated two criminal courts designated Court A and Court B at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia, the home of the Liberian Judiciary. She also proposed the establishment of "Special Courts" and threatened to request legislation that would make corruption a "non-bail able offense" in case reform measures took longer than expected in taking roots.

In **Ghana** Mrs. Augustina Akumanyi, Deputy Chairman of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), has said that the issue of fewer women participation in elections to occupy public offices had become worrisome.

Meanwhile Mrs. Janet Amegatcher, Director, Mind Freedom **Ghana** (MFG), a mental health non-governmental organization on Friday called on government to ratify the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs).

A **Sierra Leonean** business woman who helped in recruiting fighters to invade Sierra Leone in 1991 last week concluded her testimony as Charles Taylor's 18th witness, telling Special Court for **Sierra Leone** judges about her support and loyalty to the Sierra Leonean rebel leader and denying prosecution claims that she was not only supportive and loyal to the Sierra Leonean rebels, but that same support and loyalty extended to Mr. Taylor and his **Liberian** rebel group.

Meanwhile Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of **Sierra Leone** (HRC-SL) has disclosed that the country is yet to submit a report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

**Togolese** immigration officials at major entry points have commended **Ghana** for introducing biometric passports as a positive development to resolve problems associated with acquisition of **Ghanaian** passports.

**Central Africa:** In **Congo-Kinshasa** the inquiry into the killing of the human rights activist Floribert Chebeya is to be handed over to the army. The Chief Prosecutor in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Floribert Kabange said any suspects would now be brought before a military court.

Last week UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon named a high-profile committee including President Kagame as a co-chair, aimed at combating poverty, assessing and fast tracking implementation of Millennium Development Goals.

## HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

**West Africa** A Swiss based company that chartered a ship that allegedly dumped deadly waste in the **Côte d'Ivoire** could be fined two million euros. Seventeen people allegedly died after toxic residues on board the Probo Koala were shipped away from the Port of Amsterdam and redirected to Abidjan, where they were dumped on city waste tips. Meanwhile a new laboratory has been set up in the **Ivorian** port city of Abidjan to improve the monitoring of hazardous materials under a project backed by the United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP) that aims to prevent a repeat of the notorious incident in which thousands of people were sickened by toxic waste.

**Liberia's** President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says that although **Liberia** may not meet the deadline set for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, she is grateful to the World Bank and its partners for positively helping to alleviate poverty on the African continent.

**Central Africa:** The official death toll stands at 76 after a train accident last week in the **Republic of Congo**. The train was

en route to the **Congolese** capital, Brazzaville, when it derailed and plunged into a narrow valley near the southern coastal city of Pointe-Noire.



## POLITICAL ECONOMY

**West Africa:** **Ghana's** Parliament last week endorsed a credit agreement between **Ghana** and the BNP Paribas of the *United Kingdom* for the supply, installation and operation of Vessels Traffic Management Information System (VTMIS).

The *Dubai* Chamber of Commerce and Industry last week hosted a delegation of 20 **Ghanaian** businessmen, as part of its efforts to reach out to the promising economies of Africa.

US carrier, United Airline began a direct flight from Washington D.C last week for *Accra*, **Ghana**. It is part of a strategy to use the African market to build on its strong emergence from the recent global economic downturn that hit the aviation industry.

**Ghana's** Annual Producer Price Index (PPI) dropped by **0.77 %** points in May, bringing the respective yearly change between May 2009 and May 2010 to 16.14, up from **16.90 %**. Meanwhile the **Ghana** Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) recorded a total of 257 investment projects with a total estimated value of 619.99 million dollars last year. Also available Statistics from the **Ghana** Tourist Board (GTB) have revealed that revenue generated by the tourism sector in 2009 was 1,615.2 million dollars, compared to 1,403.1 million dollars obtained in 2008.



However *Forbes* Magazine issued a report on **Ghana** titled "**Ghana** Ranked 9th Worst Economy in the World". It is believe that the report is being done with 2008 and 2009 as the reference years in which case, most of the data and information used have a lot of factual inaccuracies.

**Ghanaian** Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) last week launched a brief guide for civil society on oil and gas, which focuses on issues, challenges and prospects associated with the production of oil and gas in the country.

The ministry of finance and economic development has revealed that **Sierra Leone** will receive the first tranche of a three-year \$45 million International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan in July to boost the nation's economy.

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last week completed its fourth review of **Togo's** economic performance under its Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement and approved an augmentation of access of US\$16.2 million. With this augmentation, completion of the review allows Togo to access US\$21.1 million immediately, bringing total disbursements under the arrangement to US\$106.7 million.

In **Sierra Leone** oil marketing companies in the country have announced another increase in the pump prices of all petroleum products as government withholds all subsidies on the products with effect since June 21.

**Central Africa:** As global oil prices continue to fall, a top **Rwanda** government official revealed last week that the government departments and fuel dealers are set to meet this week to discuss whether pump prices should remain stable or decrease. In the past few weeks, a barrel of oil on the international market has fallen below \$76 (Rwf44, 156) from \$89 (Rwf51, 709) a barrel amid signs the U.S. economic recovery and demand for crude remains uneven. §

Events of the week in

# Euro Americas zone

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

## WESTERN EUROPE

**Italians** under the auspices of trade union staged a general protest against Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right measures geared at cutting funds for local government and freezing of public sector pay.

BP shares fell sharply in *London* last week following the company's announcement that the cost of responding to the *Gulf of Mexico* oil leak has risen to \$2.35 billion. The share price dipped as low as 303.6 pence (\$4.52) during morning trading, a 6.3 % drop. That took the shares well below half of the 655 pence price on April 20, the day an explosion killed 11 workers on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig.



Meanwhile the coalition **British** government released its budget tagged as the most severe budget that cuts spending and increases tax since the early days of Margaret Thatcher's era. The budget is expected to irk the **British** public, particularly the powerful public-sector unions and their allies in the Labour Party.

**British** Minister of State for Europe David Lidington said last week that the **United Kingdom** supports the independence and territorial integrity of *Kosovo* and opposes its partition.

The **Spanish** parliament has approved the *Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA)* with **Serbia** and next will inform Brussels that the ratification procedure is completed. *Spain* will be the first EU member to complete the ratification. **Italy** will likely be next, while **Austria**, **Denmark**, **Finland** and **Poland** will kick off the procedure this fall.

**German** politicians are calling for the reintroduction of border controls in the areas adjacent to *Poland* and the *Czech Republic* due to a growing number of car thefts.

## CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

**Albanian** junior ruling coalition partner, Socialist Movement for Integration (SMI) has reiterated its calls for a solution to the longstanding political crisis in the country. A protracted crisis that the European parliament was disappointed about after several steps towards reconciliation failed.

**Kosovo** Serb-dominated municipality of Partesh/Partes went to the polls last week to elect local leaders. Although turnout topped 65% but none of the contestants were able to secure 50% vote therefore a mayoral run-off will be required.

Meanwhile the UNDP "Early Warning Report" outlined serious worry and dissatisfaction among **Kosovars** for the growing failure of government institutions. Government work, unemployment, poverty and the judiciary are all worrisome issues, while KFOR and the Kosovo Police and EULEX received public appreciations. The report came amid the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) urging Pristina authorities, EULEX and UNMIK to demonstrate more commitment to strengthening the rule of law, required for **Kosovo** to meet EU standards.

**Montenegrin** state-level coalition partners, the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) reached an agreement to form a coalition within Podgorica's local government.

Having failed to win a vote of no confidence, **Romania's** two largest opposition parties, the Social Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party have decided to postpone a new motion of no confidence against the government until the autumn. The last vote though failed was tailored to challenge government for its austerity measures. Opposition opted for court and the court ruled that the government's decision to cut pensions by 15% as of mid-year is unconstitutional, as is the decision to end the practice of offering higher pensions for certain professions, including law enforcement and judicial posts. However, the court allowed the 25% cut in salaries of civil servants.

**Croat** labour unions have garnered enough signatures for referendum that will decide whether the country should continue with collective union bargaining or start an individual system where every employee will have to bargain with employer one on one.

**Macedonian** President Gjorge Ivanov after a meeting with his **Russian** counterpart Dmitry medvedev, on the sidelines of the International Economic Forum said that energy giant *Gazprom* has agreed to include **Macedonia** in the South Stream gas pipeline project.

**Macedonian** Police detained 48 people last week suspected of illegal trade in archaeological artifacts.

European Integration Minister Gordana Djurovic has said that **Montenegro** will be prepared to join the EU by 2014.

A court in Bucharest has sentenced a **Romanian** and a **Bulgarian** to 12.5 years in prison each for passing classified information to **Ukraine**. Floricel Achim and Petar Marinov Zikolov were arrested in March 2009 in Bucharest on charges of having delivered confidential **Romanian** military files to a country that is not a member of NATO.

Serbian war crimes prosecutors have pressed charges against four former members of a paramilitary group for war crimes against civilians committed in **Croatia**. The four allegedly took part in the 1991 killings of six non-Serbs in the Beli Manastir municipality.

**Slovenia's** Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar said last week that **Croatia** will not be able to wrap up its EU accession talks unless it opens its financial market to **Slovenia's** biggest bank, Nova Ljubljanska Banka (NLB). The central bank in Zagreb blocked access until the former Ljubljanska Banka (LB) was to settle its debts to **Croatian** citizens. Meanwhile **Slovenian** Parliament's foreign policy committee last week



okayed opening the judiciary negotiation chapter of EU accession talks with **Croatia** at the next inter-governmental conference.

In **Poland** initial exit polls indicated *Bronislaw Komorowski*, the candidate of Civic Platform having won **40.7%** of the vote. In a presidential runoff on **July 4**, Komorowski garnered **52.6 %** of the votes, bagging the presidency.

The outcome of the **Slovak** election failed to favour the Socialist ruling party and its coalition partners, bringing forth Iveta Radicova as the first **Slovakian** female prime minister. Radicova has formed a parliamentary majority through a coalition of four small center-right parties: her SKDU-DS, Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and Most-Hid.

**Meanwhile** in Hungary the political system permits selection of president by the parliament with at least 50 MPs approval. Andras Balogh, **Hungarian** ambassador to Thailand has been picked as the next president with 50 MPs approval

According to a latest report good financial discipline saved the **Polish** economy from the 2009 financial recession. The economy stood out among EU and OECD countries. It kept its inflation rate and its debt levels low, limited its borrowing in foreign currencies, and accumulated a large amount of foreign reserves. It did not overact to the financial crisis and hence prevented the panic.

Meanwhile, the European Commission wants *Ireland*, the *Netherlands*, **Poland** and *Austria* to change certain aspects of their legislation which are not in compliance with EU rules on value-added tax (VAT).

Due to recent financial problem encountered in the Eurozone, **Czech** President Vaclav Klaus, a pronounced Euro-sceptic has reiterated his view that the zone has no future.

**Ukrainian** government reported a GDP growth and sees a full-year GDP growth at around **3.7** and **4.5%**. According to a separate report, the growth accelerated to **6.1%** in the first five months of 2010 from **4.8 %** in the first quarter.

The new **Hungarian** government will not be distancing itself from the prevailing austerity measures elsewhere in Europe. The government plans to cut budget deficit, raise taxes but there are no plans to introduce new taxes and it might be borrowing from IMF/EU to keep the economy stable.

Despite the energy face-off, **Belarusian** President Alexander Lukashenko has urged **Russia** to make both countries keep security and strategic relations prioritized.

The **Czech** President Vaclav Klaus is making an attempt to mediate between *Athens* and *Skopje* over the name dispute. During **Czech** presidency of the EU, an abortive effort was made to resolve the dispute.

**Belarusian** authority takes an adamant stance not to extradite former *Kyrgyz* president Kurmanbek Bakiyev taking refuge in **Belarus**. Bakiyev has been in **Belarus** under President Alexander Lukashenko's personal protection since April this year. *Kyrgyz's* interim government wants Bakiyev for charges of corruption and misuse of office.

NATO has planned using **Lithuania** Embassy in **Georgia** as the channel of communication with **Georgian** authority. This decision was made by member-countries of the alliance.



## RUSSIA

Controversial **Russian** political figures are in coalition for a single party. Meanwhile the Other **Russia** coalition, the *National Bolshevik Party*, *People's Democratic Union* and *United Civil Front* are joining hands to contest the next parliamentary election.

According to recent *Freedom House* survey, **Russia** retains the status of controlling the Internet and limiting political competition among dissidents, and the government is also accused of failing to fight corruption and exercising pressure on businesses.

On March 25, the *Belarusian* Ministry of Justice filed a claim to the CIS Economic Court, over export customs duties on **Russian** oil products and petrochemical raw materials. The CIS Economic Court (EC) has dismissed *Belarus'* motion to suspend duties on oil products from **Russia**.

The *Georgian* President Mikheil Saakashvili said last week that his country will be ready for "extensive" dialogue with **Russia**. The remark came barely days after the **Russian** president ruled out any progress in **Russian-Georgian** relations under Saakashvili.

**Russian** President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S President Barack Obama have agreed to restart exports of poultry by US companies to **Russia** as the two leaders found common ground on trade and investment. Washington is also backing **Russia's** entry into the World Trade Organisation, saying that it would deepen Moscow's integration into the global economy. However **Russia-US** relation was yet again strained as U.S officials apprehended and charged ten persons for conspiring to spy for **Russia**. The **Russian** foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, questions the timing of the decision by the *United States* to break up the spy allegation. The espionage allegation nonetheless did not stop the U.S State Department to paint the Caucasian insurgent leader Doku Umarov a terrorist, a step announced on the eve of President Dmitri A. Medvedev's visit to the White House.



According to RBC's report **Russia's** foreign trade surplus from January to May 2010 was 72 billion U.S. dollars, indicating growth in export and import of the country.

**Russia** and the *United States* will collaborate on humanitarian effort for the affected people in recent *Kyrgyz's* violence. The violence erupted after the president was ousted, leaving about 2,000 people dead and 400,000 ethnic *Uzbeks* homeless.

**Russian** and *Canadian* authorities are now in partnership of satellite monitoring project. The satellite system will monitor climatic changes and survey energy resources in

the Arctic region. It will monitor the weather and environment of the North Pole, pinpoint hydrocarbon deposits on the Arctic shelf, provide telecommunications over the hard-to-access areas and ensure safe air traffic and commercial shipping in the region.

**Ukrainian** Prime Minister Mykola Azarov once again diffused the view that a merger between **Russian** energy giant Gazprom and **Ukraine's** state gas firm Naftogaz is far from being real. Critics have criticized the government of over depending on **Russia**, even though the merger is hoped by **Russia** to be an avenue of alleviating **Ukraine** from energy problem.

**Russia** is avoiding being left behind, as most major economies spend money on the development of new arms, hence **Russia** must not be an exemption. Increasing military development will benefit **Russian**



economy as it is a major arms exporter. Moscow is planning to increase its hardware sale by 12% before the end of the year.

**Russia's** ire was raised due to UN's failure to consult the UNSC over the appointment of UN panel of Experts to investigate war crime in *Sri Lanka*. **Russia** holds that such investigation should be the principal task of *Sri Lankan* government. Similarly, Moscow resented Council of Europe's invitation of *Chechen* separatist leader Akhmed Zakayev, to attend a CE meeting. Zakayev has been on **Russia's** wanted list.

*Polish-US* missile system partnership has kicked off and training of the *Poles* for the system is started in **Germany**. Yet the grievance of **Russia** over the installation of *U.S. Patriot* missiles just 100 kilometres from the **Russian** Kaliningrad remains a concern.

## US/CANADA

*Gen. Stanley McChrystal's* comment during an interview in *Rolling Stone* magazine has cost him his job. McChrystal's comments sounded insulting to President Barack Obama and key administrative officials, who according to McChrystal are less informed of the reality in Afghanistan and lacking serious plans to see **Americans** through the war. McChrystal though later apologized for the inconvenience his comment had caused.



The **US** Senate and House of Representatives has agreed unanimously to emasculate *Iran* through a new round of sanctions that will punish severely any company, either within the **US** or overseas, trading with *Iran*.

**American** economy grew slowly in first 3months of 2010 than previously projected. The economy was expected to grow by 3% but statistic shows a growth of 2.7%.

Meanwhile in the wake of the Gulf of **Mexico** oil spill President Obama ordered six month suspension of oil drill, but a federal judge in New Orleans unblocked the moratorium on economic and businesses grounds. The White House swiftly vowed to appeal the ruling.

*Faisal Shahzad* pleaded guilty last week to a 10-count indictment charging him with attempting to set off a car bomb in Times Square on May 1 in a conspiracy with *Pakistan's* Taliban.

Massive protests by anti-globalization activists during the last weekend of the G8/G20 summits in the **Canadian** cities of *Muskoka* and *Toronto* led to arrests of more than 900 people and widespread damage to the financial sector when the crowd smashed the windows of stores and banks.

## LATIN AMERICA

In **Argentina** Ex Foreign minister Taiana's resignation has reportedly resulted from a clash between him and President Fernandez de Kirchner. Taiana will be succeeded by Timerman, a staunch supporter of Kirchner family and the **Argentinean** ambassador to US.

Presidential aspirants for the forthcoming **Brazilian** elections have started campaigning and introducing themselves to foreign leader. In a detailed report published by the *Economist* magazine, formidable economic policies of **Brazil** are said to be responsible for **Brazil's** independent global policy. Traditionally, **Brazil** is a supporter of United States, but its growing economic clout can not be disconnected from its recent policy on Iranian nuclear issue.

**Brazilian** Foreign Minister visited *Bulgaria* to boost economic relations with the latter, in a first of its kind visit by a high official.

Recent **Colombian** elections were won by Juan Manuel Santos, an ex defense minister, who defeated Bogota's Mayor Antanas Mockus with **69%**. President-elect Juan Manuel has planned not to discontinue with Uribe's policy of combating terrorist, drug production and trafficking. Despite the mistrust with Uribe's government, **Ecuadorian** President Rafael Correa and **Venezuelan** Hugo Chavez have welcomed the newly elected **Colombian** president. Meanwhile, United States too has congratulated Santos for his election victory.

**Mexicans** are due to go to the poll to elect new governors, but drug cartels and drug-related violence in the country is daunting the political landscape. The influence of drug lords on politics is no news, as 12 governors are reportedly receiving the support of the lords. Meanwhile, the *Roman Catholic Church* of **Mexico** is requesting tougher government involvement in the forthcoming election in order to safeguard against drug lord election intimidations.

Meanwhile an official of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised the **Colombian** government's role in reducing drug related activities and coca production in **Colombia**.

**Venezuela's** President Chavez has reshuffled his cabinets as a way of preparing for upcoming September elections. The reshuffling has been criticized as a usual Chavez tactic, who reshuffles yearly.

At the economic front in **Brazil** President Lula da Silva defended his policy of **7.7%** increase in pension. According to him, the policy should neither affect public account nor burden the government; rather it would be a mechanism for supporting eight million retired **Brazilians**. Similarly, the president kick started the Family Farming Harvest Plan 2010/2011 expected to create opportunity and livelihood for many families. The plan should cut interest rates on the family farming from **5.5 %** to **4.5 %** annually.

International Labour Organization has urged the **Venezuelan** government to retract from anti privatization policies that target private businesses and disturb the growth of the economy.

Meanwhile President Chavez has requested Interpol to arrest the owner of private television *Globovision* for criticizing the government outside the country. The *United States* condemned the **Venezuelan** move deeming it a violation of human rights.

## AUSTRALASIA

In a brutally efficient move driven by bad opinion polls and the approach of a general election, **Australia's** Labor party has dumped Prime Minister Kevin Rudd for his 48-year-old deputy. At a news conference that capped one of the most abrupt transitions in **Australia's** political history, Gillard said she accepted the job "with the greatest humility, resolve and enthusiasm."

Meanwhile **Australia's** new prime minister said she used her first telephone conversation with President Barack Obama last week to assure him the country's military commitment to *Afghanistan* would not change under her leadership. Some observers have speculated Prime Minister Julia Gillard may push for an early withdrawal of **Australia's** 1,550 troops from *Afghanistan* as the war loses popularity among **Australians** and elections loom. §



**Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard**