

Friday on the facebook

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

Published with the collaboration of Gilani Research Foundation August 2010, Week # **129**

Compiled on a weekly basis since January 2007



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



Who are we?

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

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

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

Contact Details:

Rushna Shahid- *Research Executive*

Gilani Research Foundation

Email: rushna.shahid@gilanifoundation.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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

Pg 9 Asia Zone
▶ MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA; NORTH ASIA ; EAST ASIA

Pg 16 Africa Zone
▶ WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA & HORN OF AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTH AFRICA

Pg 19 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 29 surveys. 2 of these are multi-country surveys. 12 polling organizations have been represented.



Topic of the week:

Politics is Not a Very Popular Choice as Profession for Pakistanis

► 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: *Politics is Not a Very Popular Choice as Profession for Pakistanis* GILANI POLL/GALLUP PAKISTAN

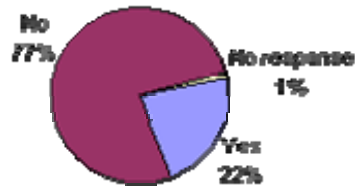
July 19, 2010

According to a Gilani Research Foundation survey carried out by Gallup Pakistan , politics as a profession is not very popular among the average Pakistani men and women. Only 22% have ever wished to join politics and even if they were offered an opportunity, only 9% say they will have a strong inclination to take up the profession, another 19% express some inclination. But the vast majority of both men and women show complete disinclination to join politics as a professional career.

Only 22% have ever wished to join politics

A nationally representative sample of men and women from across the country were asked the following question “*Have you ever wished to join politics?*” More than three quarters (77%) of the respondents had no such desire of joining politics where as 22% were interested in taking part in politics. 1% gave no response.

“*Have you ever wished to join politics?*”



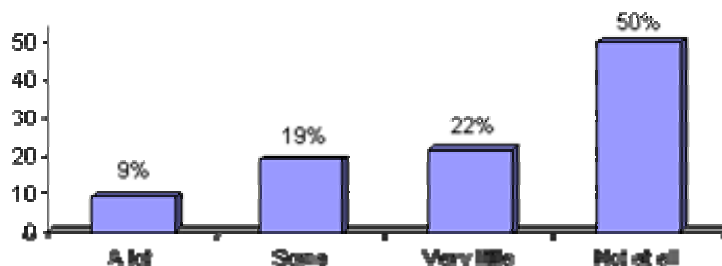
Source: Gilani Poll conducted by Gallup Pakistan ,the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International Association (www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk)

Only 9% are keen on adopting politics as a professional career

In a follow up question the respondents were asked “Suppose you get a chance of joining politics, what are the chances that you will adopt it as a profession? Only 9% showed great enthusiasm and said that they are a lot of chances that they will take up politics as a profession, 19% mentioned there are some chances of this, 22% stated there are very little chances while half of the respondents (50%) stated that there is no likelihood at all of them entering the field of politics.



“Suppose you get a chance of joining politics, what are the chances that you will adopt it as a profession?”



Source: Gilani Poll conducted by Gallup Pakistan , the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International Association (www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk)

Gender difference is small

It is interesting to note that the gender difference on politics as a professional career is smaller than one would expect. Thus 7% of women (as opposed to 10% of men) are highly inclined towards politics as a career.

Only 3% of with Post Graduate Education are keen on adopting politics as a professional career

On the other hand interest in Politics as a professional career takes a sharp dip among Pakistanis with post graduate education, as only 3% of them said they were keen on politics as a professional career.

Commentary by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani, Chairman Gallup Pakistan ; BEYOND THE FORGED DEGREES DEBATE:

The findings of the survey are a sad commentary on the prospects of building a civilian political leadership for a democratic Pakistan. A successful democracy requires talented people from all sections of the society to be attracted to politics as an engaging commitment and profession. Pakistan needs to deliberate why politics appeals to and attracts people with low levels of education; after all so many of those elected to the parliament had to forge basic college degrees to qualify according to the law at the time. Pakistan also needs to deliberate why voters prefer the lowly educated politicians to those with higher qualifications and why political parties are unable to recruit the better educated into their ranks. While the current blame game on forged degrees of parliamentarians may even be counter-productive, it does provide a serious occasion for deliberating on how can Pakistan build an educated political class and what would induce a larger section of the society to aspire for politics as a career.

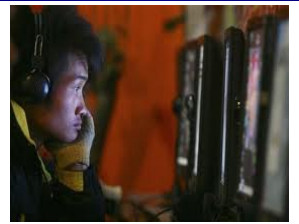
The study was released by Gilani foundation and carried out by Gallup Pakistan , the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International. The recent survey was carried out among a sample of 2757 men and women in rural and urban areas of all four provinces of the country, during July 2010. Error margin is estimated to be approximately $\pm 2-3$ % at 95% confidence level.

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

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



► WEST ASIA

Afghans' Approval of Their Leadership Falls to 33% (Click for Details)

Afghans' approval of their country's leadership fell to 33% in April -- the lowest measured since 2008. More Afghans now approve of the job performance of U.S. leadership (43%) than they do their own. [Gallup USA](#)
July 23, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security » Afghanistan War](#)

Politics Turns Out To Be Not A Very Popular Choice As Profession For Pakistanis (Click for Details)

In a **Gallup Pakistan** survey almost eight in ten (77%) **Pakistanis** show complete disinclination to join politics as a professional career. Only 22 %age of Pakistanis have ever wished to join politics.

July 19, 2010

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Filipinos Express Confidence in Aquino and Binay (Click for Details)

The vast majority of people in the **Philippines** trust new president Benigno Aquino III and vice-president Jejomar Binay to do a good job leading the country, according to a poll by **Social Weather Stations**. 88 % of respondents have confidence in Aquino, while 77 % trust Binay.

July 24, 2010

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

NORTH EAST ASIA

90 Million More Chinese Online at Home Now Than in 2007 (Click for Details)

Signaling new opportunities for businesses to connect with millions more **Chinese** consumers, **Gallup** surveys document rising access to information technology. The %age of Chinese who report that they have computers at home doubled in the past several years, while home Internet access nearly tripled.

July 21, 2010

[Society](#) » [Media/ New Media](#)



EUROPE

► **EAST EUROPE**

United Russia Keeps Dominating the Political Scene (Click for Details)

No other political party matches the popularity of the governing United Russia (YR) in the country, according to a poll by **the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center**. 55 % of respondents would vote for United **Russia** in the next election to the State Duma.

July 24, 2010

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

Russians Vehemently Oppose Nuclear Disarmament (Click for Details)

Over the past two decades, people in **Russia** have become averse to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, according to a poll by **the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center**. Only 19 % of respondents want to discard all nuclear arms in the country, down 29 points since 1991.

July 18, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [Energy/ Nuclear issues](#)

VV Chairman John is Most Popular Czech Leader ([Click for Details](#))

Radek John, chairman of the Public Affairs (VV) party, is the best ranked politician in the [Czech Republic](#), according to a poll by [STEM](#). 62 % of respondents approve of his performance.

July 19, 2010

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

► **WEST EUROPE**

The Economy Remains Britain's Chief Concern, Though Concern About Unemployment Increases ([Click for Details](#))

[Ipsos MORI's](#) July Issues Index shows that the economy remains the public's most important issue facing [Britain](#) by some margin. Similarly to last month, around two-thirds (63%) feel that it is among the most important issues facing the country; 44% see it as the single most important issue, and 19% feel that it is among the most important issues. Those in Scotland (79%), the Midlands (68%), and those in the South East (68%) are more likely to mention it than those in Wales, (56%), the north of England (54%) and London (53%)

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

Britons Call for Changes to National Health Care ([Click for Details](#))

Many adults in [Britain](#) believe the National Health Service (NHS) could be better than it currently is, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 58 % of respondents think there are some good things in the NHS, but many changes are required.

July 21, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

AMERICAS

► **NORTH AMERICA**

Government Economic Policies Seen as Boon for Banks and Big Business, Not Middle Class or Poor
([Click for Details](#))

The public sees clear winners and losers from the economic policies the government has implemented since the recession of 2008. Most [Americans](#) say these policies have helped large banks, large corporations and the wealthy, while providing little or no help for the poor, the middle class or small businesses. [Pew Research center](#)

July 19, 2010

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

Obama Averages 47.3% Approval in Sixth Quarter ([Click for Details](#))

President Obama averaged 47.3% job approval during his sixth quarter in office, spanning April 20-July 19 - his lowest quarterly average to date. Americans' approval of Obama has declined at least slightly in each quarter of his presidency. [Gallup USA](#)

July 20, 2010

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

Lost Income, Lost Friends -- and Loss of Self-Respect ([Click for Details](#))

Long-term unemployment takes a much deeper toll than short-term unemployment on a person's finances, emotional well-being and career prospects, according to a new [Pew Research Center](#) survey that explores the attitudes and experiences of workers who have lost jobs during Americas Great Recession.

July 22, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

Democrats Jump Into Six-Point Lead on Generic Ballot ([Click for Details](#))

In the same week the [U.S.](#) Senate passed a major financial reform bill touted as reining in Wall Street, Democrats pulled ahead of Republicans, 49% to 43%, in voters' generic ballot preferences for the 2010 congressional elections. [Gallup USA](#)

July 19, 2010

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

Congress Ranks Last in Confidence in Institutions ([Click for Details](#))

[Gallup's](#) 2010 Confidence in Institutions poll finds Congress ranking dead last out of the 16 institutions rated this year. Eleven % of [Americans](#) say they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in Congress, down from 17% in 2009 and a %age point lower than the previous low for Congress, recorded in 2008.

July 22, 2010

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

Bill Clinton More Popular Than Barack Obama ([Click for Details](#))

Former President Bill Clinton is currently more well-liked by [Americans](#) than both of his successors. Sixty-one % view him favorably, compared with 52% for President Barack Obama and 45% for former President George W. Bush. [Gallup USA](#)

July 21, 2010

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

Americans' Confidence in Banks Not Improving ([Click for Details](#))

The %age of [Americans](#) saying they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in U.S. banks is at 23% this year -- essentially unchanged from 22% last year, and far below the pre-recession level of 41% in June 2007. [Gallup USA](#)

July 23, 2010

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

Michelle Obama Outshines All Others in Favorability Poll ([Click for Details](#))

America's First lady Michelle Obama's favorability rating among Americans tops that of several major political players who have called or might someday seek to call the White House home -- including her husband and his two predecessors, former first lady Hillary Clinton, three vice presidents, and a number of potential Republican presidential hopefuls. [Gallup USA](#)

July 22, 2010

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

Americans Blame Mexico for Growth of Drug Trade ([Click for Details](#))

Half of people in the [United States](#) believe that Mexico is mostly to blame for the massive drug market involving the two countries, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 49 % of respondents say Mexico is at fault for allowing the drug cartels to grow and flourish.

July 23, 2010

[Society](#) » [Social Problems](#)

Half of Americans Would Deport All Illegal Residents ([Click for Details](#))

More people in the [United States](#) are expressing support for deporting all illegal immigrants currently working in the country, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 50 % of respondents share this opinion, up eight points since May.

July 18, 2010

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

One-in-Six Americans Would Ban Abortion ([Click for Details](#))

Almost half of adults in the [United States](#) consent to pregnancy termination in specific cases, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 46 % of respondents think abortion should be legal only under certain circumstances.

July 21, 2010

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

[Society](#) » [Family](#)

Canadians Ponder Future of Governor General ([Click for Details](#))

People in [Canada](#) hold differing views on the existence of a Governor General in the country, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 33 % of respondents would keep the appointed position, 22 % would prefer to elect the Governor General, and 31 % believe the position should be abolished.

July 22, 2010

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

Canadians Think Oka Clashes Could Happen Again ([Click for Details](#))

A large majority of [Canadians](#) think there could be another clash between an Aboriginal group and the police, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 79 % of respondents think a crisis similar to the one that took place in Oka in 1990 is likely to happen again.

July 24, 2010

[Society](#) » [Ethnicity](#)

► [LATIN AMERICA](#)

Half of Brazilians Reject Adoption by Gay Couples ([Click for Details](#))

Half of people in [Brazil](#) oppose allowing gay couples to adopt children, according to a poll by [Datafolha](#) published in *Folha de Sao Paulo*. 51 % of respondents share this opinion, while 39 % disagree.

July 22, 2010

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

[Society](#) » [Family](#)

Lula Soars to New Approval High in Brazil ([Click for Details](#))

[Brazilians](#) are growing fonder of their president as his second term winds down, according to a poll by [Datafolha](#) published in *Folha de Sao Paulo*. 78 % of respondents rate Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's performance as very good or good, up three points since May.

July 19, 2010

► [AUSTRALASIA](#)

National Up, Labour Falls Back in New Zealand ([Click for Details](#))

[New Zealand's](#) governing party has gained strength and is widening the gap with the opposition, according to a poll by [Roy Morgan International](#). 53 % of respondents would vote for the conservative National party in the next election to the House of Representatives, up 2.5 points since mid-June.

July 23, 2010

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

New Zealanders Split on Emissions Trading Scheme ([Click for Details](#))

People in [New Zealand](#) are divided about the country's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), according to a poll by [Research New Zealand](#). 49 % of respondents are in favour of the ETS, while 44 % oppose it.

July 18, 2010

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

Many Australians See Gillard as Similar to Rudd ([Click for Details](#))

Almost half of people in [Australia](#) say the change in the leadership of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) will not make any difference, according to a poll by [Newspoll](#) published in *The Australian*. 47 % of respondents say new leader Julia Gillard will be about the same as her predecessor and former prime minister, Kevin Rudd.

July 22, 2010

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



GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS

Canadians Want More Action on the Environment ([Click for Details](#))

Many adults in [Canada](#) believe their federal administration is not dealing properly with environment, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 66 % of respondents think the government is paying too little attention to this issue.

July 20, 2010

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

Britons and Canadians Side with Evolution, Not Americans ([Click for Details](#))

Many people in [Britain](#) and [Canada](#) believe in the theory of evolution, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 68 % of Britons—and 61 % of Canadians—believe human beings evolved from less advanced life forms over millions of years.

July 19, 2010 §

Events of the week in

Asia zone

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

TURKEY

Political Front:

Turkey's main opposition party has made plans to apply to the Constitutional Court for a partial annulment of two bills signed on May 12 between Russia and **Turkey** on the establishment of a nuclear power plant.

Geo-strategic Front:

Greek Prime Minister has urged **Turkey** and the Turkish Cypriots to "seriously study" the new package of proposals put forward by Greek Cypriot President. Turkish and Turkish Cypriot authorities have signed a \$450 million agreement to transport 75 million cubic meters of water from **Turkey** to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (KKTC) annually.

The **Turkish** President paid a two-day visit to *Egypt* at the invitation of his Egyptian counterpart. The Turkish and Egyptian presidents held bilateral talks on a number of issues, including the Middle East peace process and Turkish-Egyptian relations.

Turkey has launched its second reconstruction team in *Afghanistan*. Meanwhile the **Syrian** President has reaffirmed **Turkey's** role as mediator with Israel.

Economic Front:

Turkey and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic have signed an agreement on the construction of a natural gas pipeline.

Social Front:

Six people from the same family were killed when flood waters swept away their house in the eastern province of Erzurum.

EAST ASIA

Political Front:

Thai PM has indicated that the emergency decree would be lifted next week in provinces where there are no longer serious security concerns. An election for a parliamentary member has brought **Thai** citizens to voting booths for the first major vote after violent clashes shook the capital in May. The election, though for just a single seat in Parliament and only covering part of the capital, has been regarded as a new chapter in **Thailand's** political feuds.

Philippine President has said that political connections would no longer be the route to promotion in the nation's coup-prone army, as he named a decorated general as the new head of ground forces. Despite making several top military appointments since taking office three weeks ago, Aquino said he had ended political patronage as part of his government's efforts to restore trust and confidence in the military.



Geo-strategic Front:

Indonesia and the *United States* have prepared for establishing comprehensive partnership on defense.

Meanwhile *Pakistan's* Defense Minister has offered his **Indonesian** counterpart the latest jet fighter called the JF-17 during his visit to Jakarta.

American soldiers would remain in the southern **Philippines** to help the local military in their fight against Muslim extremists. About 500 US Special Forces troops have trained Filipino soldiers in Mindanao to combat militants from the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf group, which the *United States* lists as a terrorist organization.

A senior U.S. State Department official visiting **Cambodia** has defended U.S. support for **Cambodia's** military. **Thailand** and **Cambodia** have descended into a loud political feud about Bangkok's 2006 coup, and **Thailand's** current threat to demand the extradition of its fugitive former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Economic Front:

Indonesia has predicted that its economic growth would accelerate to 5.9 % this year, higher than assumption in the state budget, boosted by 6 % growth in the second half. *UK* has been investing heavily in **Malaysia**.

The Bank of **Thailand** has sharply revised upward its economic growth forecast for the year to 6.5-7.5 %.

Social Front:

Indonesia's top Islamic body has recently declared that Muslims can drink civet coffee — the world's most expensive coffee, which is extracted from the dung of civet cats.

The **Malaysian** Prime Minister has reiterated that a combined and cumulative effort from the public and private sector would ensure **Malaysia's** success towards achieving a high income economy.

The death toll from a typhoon that struck the **Philippines** last week has risen to 111.

GCC

Geo-strategic Front:

UK has been pursuing various policies to enhance ties with the Gulf countries.

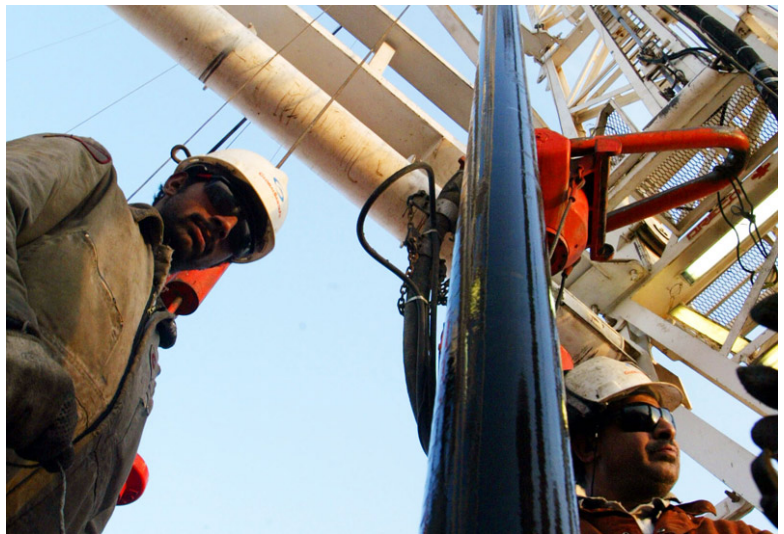
The **UAE** has called for establishing an international independent body representing peoples of the world to act as a parliamentary arm of the United Nations (UN).

Economic Front:

The *IMF* warned that the challenges faced by the financial sectors of **GCC** nations would restrain growth in that region for the short-term, but is not expected to have long-term implications. The combined value of the 100 largest projects in the **GCC** region that have either been completed or are underway, totals over \$ 1.3 trillion.

Kuwait's crude oil exports to *China* skyrocketed 139.7 % in June from a year earlier to a record high of 1.26 million tons, equivalent to around 308,000 barrels per day (bpd), becoming *China's* sixth-biggest crude supplier.

Kuwait's exports in the first half of 2010 reached 203,000 bpd, up 23.8 % from the same period last year. Oman and **Indonesia** have been putting effort to further boost their economic ties.



Social Front:

The Board of Senior Ulema (religious scholars) has set up a new committee to regulate the publication of religious fatwa in a bid to prevent the haphazard issuing of *fatwas* by unauthorized scholars. The Grand Mufti has stated previously that *fatwas* should only be released by the official Permanent Committee which would stop any unauthorized or unqualified persons from issuing *fatwas*.

AFGHANISTAN

Political front:

Many NATO-led soldiers as well as *Taliban* have been killed in various clashes in different regions of **Afghanistan**. An Afghan soldier opened fire on his American trainers after an argument, killing two and injuring a third.

Geo-strategic Front:

Foreign ministers of Canada, Czech Republic, Russia and **Turkey** have extended support to the Afghan government's efforts for reconciliation with militants. Pakistan has expressed its willingness to train the nascent Afghan security forces. Chinese Foreign Minister has supported the channeling of 50 % of foreign aid to the Afghan government.

Economic Front:

The European Commission has announced to donate 600 million euros to **Afghanistan** following this week's Kabul conference. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to provide more grant funds to **Afghanistan** to support essential reconstruction projects and economic development. The *United States* of America (USA) and **Afghanistan** have signed an agreement, forgiving a \$108 million debt payable by the conflict-torn country. The mining industry would help increase the annual revenue of the government to more than a billion dollars over the next five years. Kabul and Islamabad have finalized a trade deal that would allow **Afghanistan** to export goods to India via Pakistan.

Social Front:

A recently released poll has indicated that most people in Taliban heartlands view foreign troops negatively and believe the Taliban should join the government. Another survey has revealed that 44 % of Americans have disapproved President Barrack Obama's handling of the war in **Afghanistan**. Another survey by Integrity Watch **Afghanistan** (IWA) has indicated a sharp expansion in corruption in Afghan society. A number of civil society organizations have urged the government to approve a draft law they have drafted to enable all *Afghans* to get access to information regarding administrative corruption.



IRAN

Political Front:

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei has asked his nation and armed forces to observe preparedness to thwart possible military aggression against **Iran**. Vice-Speaker of the **Iranian** Parliament has stressed unity and solidarity among the **Iranian** Shiite and Sunni Muslims. The Islamic Consultative Assembly has approved the bill on safeguarding the nuclear achievements to counter the US and *UK* plots in this regard.

Geo-strategic Front:

Iranian foreign Minister has given a proposal to resolve Afghan crisis during an international conference on **Afghanistan**. He declared presence of foreign troops in **Afghanistan** to be the main reason of instability in

the region. All the while **Iranian** official denounced any chances of holding talks with the US representative on the side line of Afghan Conference. **Iran** also turned down an offer made by U.S. Senator John Kerry to talk because the U.S. Democrats proved inconsistency in word and action.

Meanwhile the *German* Chancellor has recently condemned **Iran** for lack of cooperation with IAEA over the issue of its nuclear program.

Iran and *Georgia* have agreed to establish visa-free regime between the two countries. While talking about growing **Iran-Iraq** ties; *Iraqi* President claimed that no one could place barriers on expansion of **Iran-Iraq** cooperation.

Iran has been paying attention to enhance collaboration with African countries. Despite leveling accusations against Tehran's nuclear program, *Saudi Arabia's* top diplomat has recently stated that **Iran** "deserves" to be treated as a leading force in the Middle East.

Trade activities between *Pakistan* and **Iran** have been suspended after the latter closed the 'zero-point' in Taftan border because of the July 15 suicide attack in Zahedan, which led to the death of 20 people.

Economic Front:

Economic sanctions on **Iran** by the *United States* has also affected Pakistan's exports as all major banks have refused to conduct transactions with **Iran**. **China** has announced its readiness to cooperate in gasoline production projects in the country and to finance some oil refineries. The Islamic Republic of **Iran** has exported 104 million dollars of various Persian carpets during the first quarter of the current **Iranian** year. Head of Tajikistan's Customs Service has described **Iran** as a stable and trustworthy partner of his country in economic and trade ties and cooperation.

Social Front:

Islamic Republic of **Iran** ranks first in medicine production among regional countries.

SOUTH ASIA

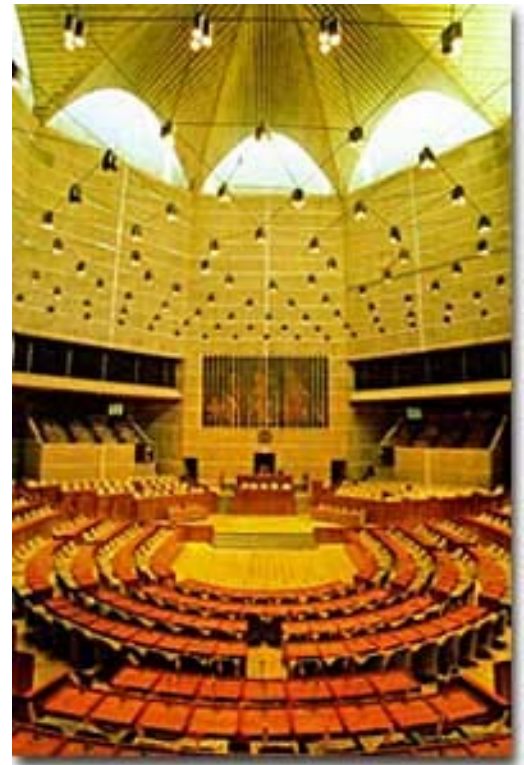
Political Front:

Bangladesh has formed a 15-member parliamentary committee to amend the country's constitution in line with an earlier plan to restore the "spirit" of the post independence constitution of 1972. Awami League lawmaker has expressed positive hope that reverting to the original constitution of 1972 would lead to ban on the politics of Jamaat-e-Islami, the weapons and financial supplier and biggest patron of the banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen **Bangladesh** (JMB).

In **Nepal**, the Parliament has decided to go for a third round of election to elect a new Prime Minister. **Nepal's** failure to elect a Prime Minister has been seen as a setback to the Maoists, who had paralyzed the country earlier this year by organizing strikes and blockades to force the resignation of former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar **Nepal**.

Geo-strategic Front:

India and **Bangladesh** have finalized 14 infrastructure projects, including those that would enhance connectivity between the two countries, which will be implemented with an Indian loan of \$1 billion.



Bangladesh has sought Japanese assistance in the construction of the Padma Bridge as well as power sector and disaster management.

The *United States* has pressed **Sri Lanka** to improve human rights and media freedoms amid charges that security forces committed war crimes during the last days of the island's civil war.

Economic Front:

Nepal has expressed keenness to sign Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with *Pakistan* in the next meeting of Joint Economic Commission (JEC). **Sri Lanka** has produced nearly 30 % more tea in the first half of the year and is on track for a record crop.

Social Front:

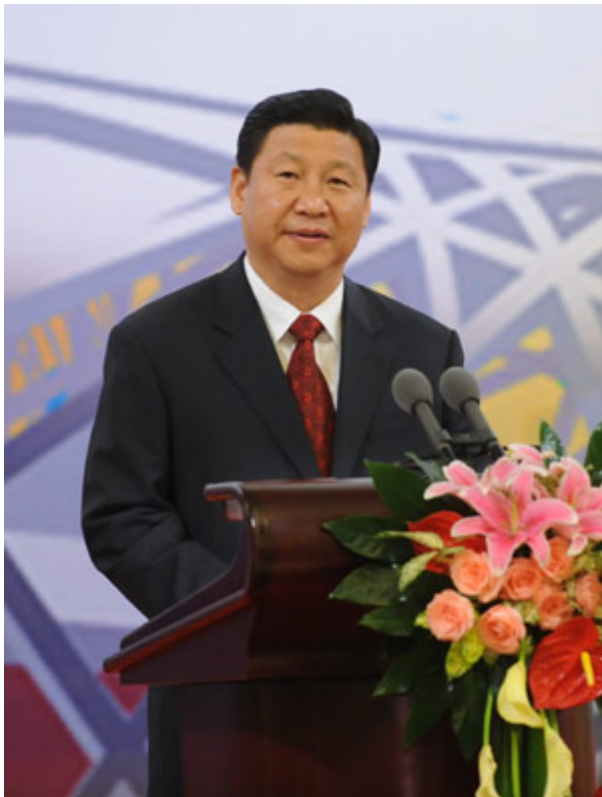
Hundreds of protesting garment workers blocked streets in **Bangladesh's** capital Dhaka after a female worker was found dead, having apparently fallen off a factory roof.

Bangladesh has added 13.29mn new cell phone subscribers during July 2009-June 2010, taking the total number of users to 59.98mn. **Bangladesh's** prime minister has blamed the garment industry, a mainstay of the impoverished country's economy, for paying inhumanly low wages — a burning issue that has fueled unrest and crippled production.

Heavy rains have caused floods in various parts of **Nepal** leaving many people injured or missing.

CHINA

Political Front:



Chinese Vice President has pledged to step up exchanges and cooperation between the Communist Party of **China** (CPC) and other Asian political parties. The Communist Party of **China** (CPC)'s discipline watchdog has ordered state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to improve their collective decision-making mechanisms to curb corruption and financial risk.

Geo-strategic Front:

Chinese growing relations with *Africa, Senegal, Switzerland, Italy, France, Angola, Thailand, Laos* and *ASEAN* grabbed attention. **Japan** has also emphasized on the need to boost ties with **China**.

Meanwhile **Chinese** Foreign Minister held a meeting with the *US* Secretary of State. During meeting Hillary Clinton opposed **Chinese** nuclear reactor sale to **Pakistan**.

Economic Front:

Hong Kong-based Morgan Stanley's chief Asia economist has expressed optimism about **China's** economic outlook and claimed that **Chinese** economy was expected to expand by more than 10 % this year. Effective economic

management by the government has helped **China** to grow faster and to overcome the impacts of global economic crisis. **China** and India replaced long-standing Western suppliers of goods to the *United Arab*

Emirates (UAE) to become the dominant exporters to the Gulf nation. **China's** property market has seen soaring investment from foreign institutional investors.

Social Front:

Chinese President has urged greater efforts to reform the nation's cultural system to boost **China's** "soft power." A senior Chinese official has called for more social and economic development in the nation's Tibetan-inhabited regions to improve people's livelihoods.

KOREA

Geo-strategic Front:

The U.S.-led U.N. Command (UNC) and **North Korea's** military ended their third round of working-level talks without tangible results. In the meantime the *United States* announced new sanctions against **North Korea**, targeted against its leadership, and warned of serious consequences if it again attacked the South. **North Korea** denounced new U.S. sanctions against its regime and said next week's naval exercises involving South **Korean** and American forces posed a threat to regional peace. **North Korea** further threatened a physical response to naval drills off the **Korean** peninsula. **China** has also signaled its opposition to next week's naval drills by the U.S. and **South Korea** and urged all parties to refrain from actions that might increase tension on the **Korean** peninsula.

Economic Front:

Hyundai Motor Co., **South Korea's** largest automaker, and its workers union have reached a tentative agreement on a wage increase for this year, averting a strike. **South Korea's** Gross domestic product grew 1.3 % in the second quarter from the prior three months, when it gained 2.1 %.



Social Front:

A growing number of foreign students choose **Korea** as their destination to study. The number has already topped 75,000.

JAPAN

Geo-strategic Front:

Foreign Minister Okada and his **Chinese** counterpart have agreed that both countries should strive to conclude at an early date negotiations aimed at signing a treaty over joint gas field development in the East **China** Sea.

Economic Front:

Japan Airlines Corp. has started the process of selling 95 midsize and large aircraft, including jumbo jets, as part of its business turnaround program. §

Events of the week in

Africa zone

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

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: The Scramble for a flag bearer with the ruling party in **Nigeria** over the zoning issue has generated heat among several political groupings which has caused a split among the Northern governors.

At border of **Mali and Mauritania** six suspected al Qaeda militants were killed, while four other members escaped the operation led by the **Mauritanian** army.

In **Gambia** a judge has sentenced to death eight men, including The **Gambia's** former army chief, for their parts in a coup plot last year in the Country.

Doubt over January Election Date of the 2011 elections in **Nigeria** as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is now in a serious dilemma over the date while seeking N55bn for Fresh Voters registration.

Meanwhile the **Nigerian** Senate has passed the new Electoral Act, putting the conduct of Presidential and National Assembly elections ahead of Governorship and Houses of Assembly elections.

Amid the lingering contention over the retention or jettisoning of the zoning arrangement within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), President of **Niger Delta** Professionals in the Diaspora, Mr. Teddy Obaseki, has admonished ethnic minorities in the country against decisions that would go against the zoning arrangement. **Nigeria's** Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Odein Ajumogobia, has joined the debate on zoning of the presidency and declared that **Nigeria** has outgrown the formula adopted by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for sharing offices between the North and South in 1999. Meanwhile the agitation for zoning of political offices should not arise because the North has had its share of leadership positions in the past, elder statesman Chief Solomon Lar has said. According to him, the demand for zoning



heightened in the past after it became clear that the North had wronged other sections of the country in the choice of leaders.

Guinea's top court last week overruled challenges to the results of a hotly contested June 27 presidential poll, paving the way for a run-off between the West African state's top two candidates. The court added that votes from five districts, including two loyal to the third-place finisher, were thrown out due to "severe irregularities." The No. 1 bauxite-exporting nation is seeking to replace a military-led government with what would be its first freely elected regime since independence from *France* in 1958 amid widespread concern the results could trigger unrest.

Central Africa: The appeals chamber of *ICC* ruled to put the Release Mr. Lubanga Dyilo (Warlord) a former rebel leader from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on hold pending the determination of the prosecution's appeal of the verdict remain under the custody of the ICC.

In the **Central African Republic** the army confirms the control over an army base after the *Rebels* in the country attacked the base near the country's border with **Sudan**.

A leading member of **Burundi's** opposition Forces for National Liberation (FNL) has called on supporters of his party as well as other opposition parties to boycott the parliamentary election as was done during the Presidential election.



East & the horn of Africa: The US State Department expressed disappointment over **Chad's** failure to arrest the **Sudanese** leader Omar Bashir during his visits to the country, as it was nominally obliged to do as an ICC signatory country.

The *United Nations* acknowledge the steps taken by **Eritrea and Djibouti** to resolve their border dispute through mediation by **Qatar**, and ready to provide technical support if needed to facilitate a settlement.

The African Union has agreed to change the mandate of its peacekeeping mission, *Amisom*, in **Somalia** into peace enforcement in an effort to engage the Al Shabaab militia.

Nationwide tension and potential violence preceded the August 4 vote in **Kenya**, to Vote for or campaign against the proposed Constitution. Close to 70 % of **Kenyans** have voted in favor of the country's new constitution, according to preliminary results, all but ensuring it will replace the colonial-era British document that preceded it.

Southern Africa: The island of **Seychelles** has convicted 11 *Somali* pirates on attempting to hijack a **Seychelles** coast guard boat last December.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: Humanitarian agencies and relief organizations pushed for continued economic support from the international community on behalf of the drought-ridden African countries in the Sahel region, like **Niger** and **Mali** at the United Nations last week for their level of food insecurity.

According to reports **Africa** has seen a slow but marked decrease in the number of internal "refugees" during the last decade and has become more peaceful. While internal displacements continue to rise in the world at large.

African Union's current president **Bingu** wa Mutharika said at the opening of the AU summit on the Issue of ICC "To subject a sovereign head of state to a warrant of arrest is undermining African solidarity and African peace and security that we fought for so many years,".

As **Gambia** celebrated its national holiday tagged "Freedom Day" last week, about 89 national and international non-governmental organizations in countries called on President Yahya Jammeh to stop "widespread human rights violations with total impunity".

Sources have told news agency AFP that the *French* military stepped up action making fresh efforts to free Michel Germaneau the 78-year-old hostage, held in **Mali** by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Aqim). French officials deny that an operation is taking place but **Mauritania's** army is said to be moving in on the group in its desert stronghold.

A judicial inquiry in **Ivory Coast** into corruption allegations against Interior Minister Desire Tagro cleared him on Monday of charges including stealing money meant for victims of a toxic waste dumping.

Central Africa: Representatives of the United Nations and the **Sudanese** opposition movement, the Justice and Equality Movement, have signed an agreement on the protection of children in the Darfur conflict area.

Meanwhile the top officials from United Nations food and refugee agency has expressed hope that security will soon improve to allow people of **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** to return home and begin farming their lands.

East & the horn of Africa: The main international backers of **Somalia's** government have pledged additional resources for the drive to defeat al-Qaida-linked militants trying to establish a beachhead in the **Horn of Africa**.



14

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: About half the babies exposed to HIV may not be getting the antiretroviral (ARV) drugs they need to be born HIV-free and stay that way, say the findings of a four-country study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA). The study, conducted in **Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa** and **Zambia**, found that only 51 percent of HIV-exposed infants had received a single dose of nevirapine before and after birth, the basic tool in prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT).

POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: Ghana is expected to generate revenue from energy export through an estimated 75-million-dollar power transmission project that would link her to **Burkina Faso** and other countries in **West Africa**.

Meanwhile **Liberia** recovering from civil war has signed a one-year oil supply contract with **Nigeria** that will allow it to take 20,000 barrels of **Nigerian** crude per day and resell to bolster its Economy. Also Petroleum Engineers on all oil platforms in **Nigeria** last week declared that the country could double its current production, which stands around two million barrels per day, by 2030.

Ivory Coast's SIR refinery has taken a 50 billion CFA (\$98.37 million) loan from Groupe Banque Atlantique to buy crude oil at 80,000 barrel-per-day. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

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

WESTERN EUROPE

Iceland is set to start accession negotiations with the **European Union**.

UNSC members along with other UNGA members are geared at working out a global “norms of accepted behavior in cyberspace, under the auspices of the United Nations.

At the financial front The **British** Prime Minister David Cameron’s policy has shown that despite being a Euro-skeptic, British attitude to financial management will not be different from the trend across Europe. Cameron is geared at cutting deficit and reducing the hand of government in the overall running of things, a stark differential position from Obama’s big government policy.

Lord Eliza Manningham-Buller, former director of the **MI5** agency between 2002 and 2007 revealed to the **Iraq** Inquiry team that Saddam Hussein had no connection with 9/11 and all intelligence shows Iraq was neither a medium or short term threat, instead implicitly she argues *American* leadership should be

blamed for the havoc in Iraq and how Iraq war diverted attention away from fighting terrorism. Her view tallies with scholarly view that *Iraq* war boosted terrorism and anti-western sentiments across Europe.

British Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke said the ministry of justice is prepared to tighten up the universal jurisdiction rules acknowledged by Britain, but foreigner will ceased to be prosecuted under the rule saved with substantive evidence, so as not to jeopardize Britain's image.

The **Spanish** parliament rejected a ban on the burqa or niqab in the public sphere though prefer not to be worn in government building. **Spanish** Muslim organization believes the veil issue in Spain has no ground but only for political goal scoring.

IMF's recent assessment report shows considerable progress in **Greece's** public finances although clear risks are still visible in the healthcare and social security system.

Substantive global representation and greater role in world system can make Africa lead global recovery. This was the position aired by the former **British** Prime Minister Gordon Brown for African leaders' summit in Kampala, Brown's submission centers around the more untapped potential and unrealized talents in Africa.

Israel has investigated the *Gaza* flotilla crisis but the result believe to lack transparency. An independent inquiry is set to begin under the **U.N. Human Rights** Council for the same purpose.

Criticism of BP is yet to be over even after the block of the spill at the *Gulf of Mexico*. The oil company is being accused of attempting to hide information from the public and trying to safe its face from further public outcry, therefore asking scientist not to disclose their research until the government gives final approval for the company's restoration plan for the whole of the *Gulf*.

Ivoriens would definitely laud the ruling of an Amsterdam district court that fined Trafigura a **Swiss**-based company one million euros for dumping health hazard substance on Abidjan city. The ruling also received praises from the Greens but Trafigura sees it unworthy and plans to appeal.



CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Report has it that **Albanian** ruling Democratic Party (DP) is ready to compromise with Socialist Party's (SP) on certain issues and only if the latter will not boycott the parliament. Hence possibility of having a joint committee to investigate the June 2009 general elections which is the main cause of the political stalemate will be possible.

Meanwhile, members of **Albanian** parliament approved of budget change hoping to spur development but rejected by the opposition as reform that will deepen, rather than end the economic crisis.

On July 22, 2010, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations seated in The Hague (The Netherlands), ruled that **Kosovo's** 2008 declaration of independence and secession from the Republic of **Serbia** over the latter's objection did not violate international law. The ICJ ruling, adopted by 10 votes to four, was issued in the form of a non-binding Advisory Opinion following a request from the UN General Assembly initiated by **Serbia** in late 2008. Upon the ICJ's declaration that

Kosovo's independence does not violate international law, the streets of **Kosovo** became replete with celebrations and hope of strong statehood hangs in the air. Meanwhile, the ruling is expected to pave way for more recognition of **Kosovo** even though **Serbia** and **Russia** retain their non-recognition stances. Oppositions in **Serbia** have asked the prime minister to resign due to the ICJ ruling. Meanwhile, both EU and the UN have agreed to co-ordinate future talks between **Kosovo** and **Serbia**,

Albanian judiciary system is tagged by European Commission (EC) expert as one-sided, concerned about lower level corruption while higher up corruption gets little or no attention. **Albanian** authorities welcomed the ICJ rulings on the legitimacy of **Kosovo's** independence.

After months of heated debate, the Federation of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (FBiH) parliament has approved a law on determining the salaries of public servants and a law on the salaries of police officers. The law is expected to expedite new IMF loan for the country.

Elections in **Kosovo** newly created Serb-dominated municipality of Partesh/Partes was a success as political power gets down on Serbs in the region to govern themselves.

Political misunderstanding between ruling and opposition is prevalent across the region and **Macedonia** is no exemption where there is political tension. Macedonian opposition accuses that on behalf of the ruling party; police spied and tried to record their conversation with a group of disgruntled workers. Representatives of both parties however have agreed to set an inquiry into the matter.

Opposition and public in Serbia are irked by the new telecommunications law which requires telephone and internet operators to monitor communications and maintain records, which can be accessed at any time by police and security services, without a court order. Many see it as unconstitutional, though opposition wants police to request court permission before such law could be used.



At the Economic front **EU** economic and finance ministers approved a proposal by the European Commission (EC) to launch an excessive deficit procedure for Bulgaria. The country must bring its deficit to below the bloc's 3% of GDP limit by 2011.

Report from **Croatia** will be instrumental to clarify and ascertain former **Bosnian Serb** leader Radovan Karadzic's view that in addition to humanitarian aid, Islamic countries provided **Bosnia and Herzegovina** with weapons, some of which were smuggled via **Croatia**.

Despite the favorable ICJ's ruling for **Kosovo**, the court nevertheless instructed a re-arrest of former **Kosovo** Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, as his 2008 release was unworthy after further investigation shows intimidation of witness.

EULEX's corruption investigation in **Kosovo** is unabated as organized criminals are thrown into the judiciary net. **Kosovo** Central Bank Governor Hashim Rexhepi was also arrested as part of a corruption investigation.

According Reporters without Borders (RWB) **Kosovo** journalists are a target of threats from nationalist militants and extremists of all kinds if they try working more professionally.

The **European Commission** (EC) believes **Montenegrin's** strategy to fight corruption and organized crime is weak because it lacks main goals, deadlines and monitoring mechanisms.

The **Bulgarian** government has finally approved an agreement in support of the Nabucco gas pipeline, an EU-backed project aims to transport up to 31 billion cubic metres of natural gas from the Caspian region to Europe.

Bulgaria and **Italy** becomes the 3rd and 4th EU members after *Spain* and **Malta** to ratify the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with **Serbia**. Other EU countries are expected to ratify the agreement that will move Serbia closer to the EU.

As **Croatia** makes rapid inroad on its EU membership, Zagreb is expected to complete a total of 21 conditions in the judiciary chapter of its accession talks with the EU. News has been in the air that **Croatia**-EU membership could be realized by 2011.

The European Commission (EC) published progress reports on **Bulgaria** and **Romania**, praises **Bulgaria** but criticizes **Romania** for not curbing the powers of its anti-corruption body. The report was not receptive to the **Romanian** Constitutional Court that holds the report falls short of the ground reality.

The visit of **Croatian** President Ivo Josipovic to Belgrade was to boost bilateral co-operation and resolve pending issues, such as the return of refugees in **Croatia**, the border issue, missing persons, and minority rights.

He lost the last general election and became the head of opposition. Jaroslaw Kaczynski, brother of the former **Polish** prime minister believes the Polish government is not handling well the inquiry into the death of his brother. Jaroslaw Kaczynski's criticism of the government is also criticized as ploy ahead of 2011 parliamentary elections.



The wind was finally cleared as soon as **Slovak** new Prime Minister Iveta Radičová, agreed to accept the European safety net for indebted economy. **Slovakia** before then was hesitant joining the 750-billion euro European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) an issue that became a campaign issue in last **Slovakia's** June election.

There is a growing change in female electoral participation in east and central Europe particularly in **Czech Republic**. According to reports female politicians are drawing support and are becoming noticeable like their western counterparts.

At the economic front IMF was instrumental in bailing **Hungary** out of its financial recession, but Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is affirmative to discussing his country budget with EU while IMF gets sidelined. Orbán rejects austerity measures in favour of a pro-growth policy to woo voters. Separately, **Hungarian** Parliament passed a controversial tax on banks defying warnings from the country's international creditors that the levy would hamper growth.

Polish economy continues to show a growing strength as retail sale rose than expected. Meanwhile, the Polish government does not intend to trim spending and the Central bank hopes to increase rate as balancing force for the growing economy.

The new **Czech** government is championing a tough budget deficit cut, raising credit rating and to implement the severest austerity package in the history of the republic. The measure will not be new but an integral element of austerity measures unfolding across Europe after the Greek financial crisis.

Ukraine's economy is expected to experience substantive growth as its trade transaction with *Russia* reaches 50 billion U.S. dollars and an increased export, although Moody's forecast does not expect Ukraine to escape budget deficit likely to stand at 6 percent of GDP in 2010.

Latvian government was gladdened by the recent IMF's resolve to commence 7.5-billion-euro (9.5-billion-dollar) international loan installment to Latvia. The latter smile was broadened by EU decision to open the door for Latvia to receive a 200-million-euro (260 million dollars) aid.

Although a strongly Catholic country, in **Poland** gambling is rampant; and gays, lesbians, bisexuals are demanding equal right for sexual minority. The European Commission is concerned about **Poland's** gambling law and sexual minorities are doubtful if they can get equal right.

All former communist countries have always tried to end their *communist-Russia* history by either putting out of sight communist legacy or rejecting certain communist history of their country. **Lithuania** like other **Baltic** states is being urged by Russia to discontinue with falsification policy geared at deleting certain aspects of historical events of the 20th century.

Moldova will be receiving humanitarian help in form of technical aid and two crisis experts from **Estonia**. The aid follows the flood that recently hit **Moldova**.

Lithuania's government has approved the construction of a floating liquefied natural gas plant in the Baltic Sea, an effort to decrease its dependence on *Russian* energy supplies. **Lithuania** gets all its natural gas from **Russia** and has faced the unexpectedly supply cut during the last few months due to rows between **Russia** and **Belarus**.

RUSSIA

The good performance of the **Russian** economy is eye catching but nonetheless, IMF Board of Governors has offered a note of caution to Moscow to cut its budget deficit.

Investors are urged not to be dissuaded by negative media portrayal of **Russia** but should rather fathom that since 2000 and the end of 2009, **Russia's** stock market and economy comparatively has been doing well than western market. This will be true for the new level of relation between *Germany* and **Russia**, as companies from the former are set to contribute to **Russia** development in non-strategic sectors.

Although they have formally signed a Custom Union, but that has not erase the price tussle between **Belarus** and **Russia**. The former has no readiness to accept **Russia** gas rate beyond \$150 1,000 cubic meters. Meanwhile, **Russian** Finance Ministry has hinted tax hike on gas with the aim of bringing in an extra 180 billion rubles over three years.

The recent bombing of the Baksan Hydropower Plant in Kabardino-Balkaria will make **Russian** law enforcement agencies take serious measures on security at strategic sites, including hydropower plants and other power facilities.

Belarus and **Russia** are not just members of a common Custom Union but trade partners unsettled on gas price. Tension between the countries is further ignited as media from the two countries portrays each other to be authoritarian.

Heat waves is threatens lives in **Russia** and not sparing agricultural production. The heat is a record high stealing almost three hundred lives and contributed to the worst drought in 130 years.

Swapped **Russian** spies are still under state security radar before their fate to live as ordinary citizen will be determined.

Russian Orthodox Church is saddened by the low level of youth in church activities and their perverse social behaviors hence the church is bent on missionary effort to guarding youth towards faith.



Russian Energy Ministry plans to develop Trebs and Titov oil fields with (\$2 billion) with an extraction possibility of 70 million tons of reserves.

The rising heat in **Russia** and its effect on agricultural production has forced the government to reverse its grains intervention strategy.

Russia is taking a bold step to cement its foreign relation particularly in the north of Europe where **Russia** has energy and economic interest. Meanwhile, **Russia** is urging foreign countries not to grant citizenship to persons having criminal record. On a different note, trouble between the US and **Russia** is yet over as another Russian faces trial in **USA** for international drug trafficking **Russia** accuses the USA of violating numerous international rules upon his arrest.

Russian Foreign Ministry is throwing its weight in US neighborhood urging *Colombia* and *Venezuela* to restore a dialogue based on mutual trust with an aim to maintain peace and stability in the region.

Russia's military industry will hit export of \$9 billion by end of the year. India and **Venezuela** are among top nations finding the Russia military market comfortable. **Russian** armament department will be boosted by trillion of rubles in order to complement the task of strategic nuclear forces and ground forces.

Russia is bidding for French military hardware is now a concern for NATO allies seeing it as transferring of technology to former foe.

START ratification could be delayed by republicans of US Senate on the ground that **Russia** has been granted too many concessions.



US/CANADA

2 1/2 million jobless Americans will soon get about \$300 for being laid off and unable to find work in the aftermath of the recession. The checks became ripe after Congress approved the measure.

With calls to wind up the war the White House and the Congress might be thinking of a budget trim, a proposal unwelcoming to Pentagon bureaucracy. Meanwhile, White House is still trying to reach an understanding with Senate Republicans to approve its new arms control treaty with *Russia* by committing to modernizing the nuclear arsenal and making additional guarantees about missile defense.

The *Arizona* immigration law has caused an uproar and divided the American public. Trying to establish the legality of the law, U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton is expected to judge the legitimacy of the law, but she has raised another serious question on the porosity of U.S border, which in fact needed adequate attention.

The accusation of a white blogger in the US led to the firing of Shirley Sherrod, an African American and Georgia State Director of Rural Development for the United States Department of Agriculture. The core member of NAACP, was accused of having for racial discriminatory remarks as posted extracts of Sherrod's address at a March 2010 NAACP event. The decision to fire her was reversed when the full video revealed a different interpretation of her remarks.

British Prime Minister Cameron's recent visit to the White House was capped by the reiteration of the special areas in **US-British** relation, whatever the differences both countries are still trustable allies. Relations of both countries got chilled in the wake of the BP oil spill in the *Gulf of Mexico*, and Americans were still troubled by the release of Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, the *Libyan* intelligence agent who had

served eight years of a life sentence for his role in the December 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

It remains an open question whether U.S and EU will change their policy towards **Cuba**, as the communist island released around 52 political prisoners. Both the US and EU have conditioned good ties with **Cuba** only when political and social reforms take place on the island.

LATIN AMERICA

Brazil could be influenced by neighborhood effect in the region wherein women get certain quota in politics. **Brazil's** political landscape is characterized by gender imbalance and the Lula's government now plans to change the trend by adopting quota system adopted by others in the region.

Mr. Serra, presidential candidate for the **Brazilian** opposition party's (PSDB) links the ruling (PT or Workers' Party) with the Marxist rebel group (FARC) of **Colombia**, however Serra notes that it does not suggest Workers' Party is involve in human and drug trafficking. The essence of the allegation is suspicious amid an election run-up, wherein Serra hopes to defeat the Workers' party.



For **Chileans** going to monitor **Venezuelan** elections is a political regional responsibility but Caracas sees it as meddling in domestic political affairs.

Argentina's economy minister is very hopeful of 6 % economic growth this year. Meanwhile, **Argentine** president's visit to *China* appears to have diffused the recent row between the two countries. The visit spurred *China* agreeing to extend its transportation technology to **Argentina**.

The **Brazilian** economy hangs in competing views. According to Reuter's poll the forthcoming election would affect the economy, a view unacceptable to the government who sees **Brazil's** economy growing by 7% even after the election.

IMF predicts a boosted economy for **Colombia** if **Colombia** and **Venezuela** could shove aside their differences, but economy minister of **Colombia** believes that a trade obstruction by **Venezuela** will make no difference because already their level of trade had plunged.

Mexican government predicts a growing economy but unforeseen by the **Mexican** business community, whose businesses have been hampered by the violence associated with drug cartels.

Not all **Venezuelans** subscribe to President Chavez's nationalization project, for some **Venezuelan** economy is better on private business as it pays 70 % of country's total tax.

Equal right law for sexual minorities was passed by **Argentine** Senate pushing the Catholic populated country as the first **Latin America** to adopt such kind of law. The approval of the law could not be obstructed by the opposition and Catholic Church.

Lula's government is committed at making the dream of hosting the 2014 FIFA world cup a reality as the government revamps the funds for the project. **Brazil** has been under attack of lacking the will to host the global sporting event.

Mexican drug violence remains a serious concern for both the government and the public as random killings increases across the country.

Brazil will not be left out from the forthcoming energy summit in Washington, where Sao Paulo will be showcasing its energy clout and technology. Environmentalists argue against **Brazil's** plan to constructing giant hydroelectric dams in the Amazon, seen as detrimental to the lives of the natives.

Brazilian oil company Petrobras will be buying 18,000 tones steel from China due to high prices in the domestic markets. The steel is to be utilized in the making of transport vessels in **Brazil**. Such transaction will further boost their BRIC fraternity.

President Hugo Chavez urges that social networking sites and other hi-tech products are instrumental for good governance, while he favors using these avenues to know public views of his government, technology in his view should not be seen as property of capitalism.

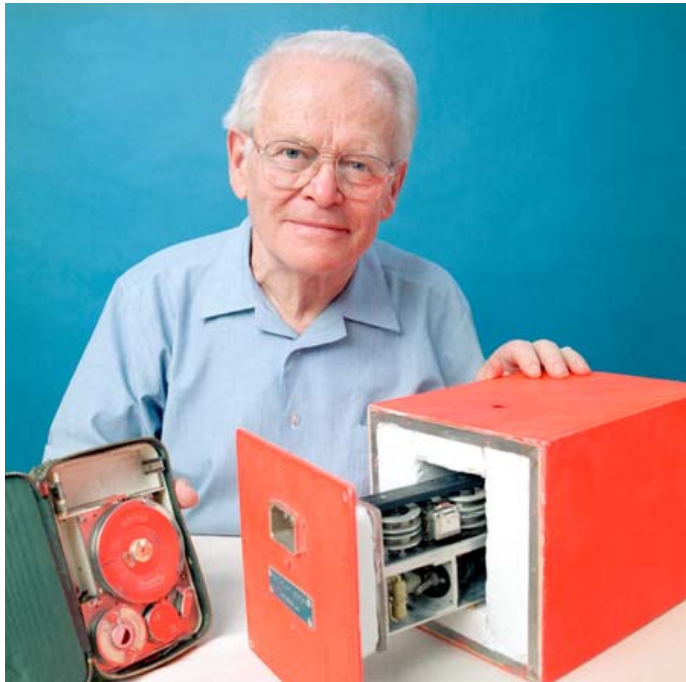
The direction of **Brazil's** foreign policy and economy growth is commanding respect for the **Latin America** giant. President Lula is also lauded for his diplomatic clout hence foreign leaders are making a right choice to strengthening their relations with Sao Paulo.

Tension between **Colombia** and **Venezuela** is once again rising over the allegation that the latter is support FARC rebel group, upon which Caracas has called her ambassador from **Colombia**. The *United States* seems to be at the centre of contention; **Colombia** is alleged by Venezuela of dancing to the tune of Washington to wage proxy war on **Venezuela**. Meanwhile, **Ecuador** is moving towards an understanding with **Colombia** after the election of President Santos.

The ALBA summit reiterated is pledge to stand with *Iran* nuclear programme and condemns the attack on an *Iranian* mosque as cowardice. Meanwhile, **Venezuela** is planning to mend difference with the *Vatican* upon the criticism of Catholic Church community and Vatican on his 21st century socialism. *Netherlands* and **Venezuela** are prepared to respect each other sovereignty after **Venezuela** accused the *Dutch* of air space violation.

AUSTRALASIA

Australia's future lies in Asia hence to downgrade the essence of the region will be fruitless. This is the new message coming from Prime Minister *Julia Gillard*, who weeks back cast doubt on the feasibility of a new "Asia Pacific community" forum suggested by ex-PM Rudd. Her new view cannot be disconnected from an attempt to make the region accept her new immigration policy aims at having regional refugee centre in **East Timor**, a policy objected by few in the region.



Ex PM Rudd could still have more on his plate even after being ousted as prime minister. The UN is thinking of inducting him as part of a panel for development assignment, a position that necessarily will not make Rudd leave his parliamentary seat.

David Warren, an **Australian** scientist who invented the "black box" flight data recorder has expired. His remarkable invention has contributed hugely to flight accident investigation as whatever transpired before flight accident is known through the black box.

The new plan by **Australian** Prime Minister Julia Gillard to have Citizen Assembly across the country that will decide on global warming and environmental law is being criticized. Critics believe she is succumbing to the demand of the powerful mining industry in the wake of election she hopes to win. Ex-PM Rudd was ousted for policy offensive to the mining sector. §