

Friday on the facebook

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



Who are we?

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

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

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

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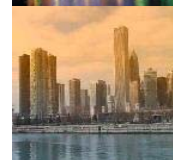
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Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of 32 surveys. 4 of these are multi-country surveys, 2 are cyber surveys, & the rest are national surveys. 7 polling organizations have been represented.



Topic of the week:

Turkey's Trust in military fades amid coup debates, anti-terror weakness

► 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: *Today's Zaman:* A recently conducted opinion poll has shown that the **General Staff** is suffering from a significant loss of confidence in the eyes of the public, which observers believe is directly linked to the military's unappreciated aspiration to intervene in politics rather than focus on its fight against terror.

The General Staff ranked third last among all other state institutions, according to the poll conducted by the *Ankara-based MetroPOLL Strategic and Social Research Center* between Aug. 5 and 11. The General Staff was preceded by the police force, the Presidency, Parliament, the Prime Ministry and the government. Pollsters said the General Staff recorded the lowest in the surveys of the past three years.

"The decline in public confidence in the General Staff has two main reasons: the military's attempts to intervene in politics and the coup plots it is said to have prepared to this end, and its failure in the fight against terror," stated Mehmet Metiner, a *Star* daily columnist. For the columnist, the General Staff loses more prestige in the eyes of the public the more it strives to become an actor in politics.

The General Staff is often associated with the military in **Turkey**. In other words, people usually think of the military itself when the case is related to the General Staff.

"The attempts by the military to stage coups d'état against democratically elected governments, and the right it sees itself as having to take necessary action to unseat the governments [it considers dangerous to its existence] has significantly changed people's perception of the military. Such factors have created social unease," Metiner noted.

The *Turkish military*, which played a role in the establishment of the Turkish Republic, has long seen itself as the protector of the regime and the secular order in the country. It has ousted four governments thus far, and is believed to be engaged in plans to “get rid of” the **Justice and Development Party (AK Party)**, which it considers a threat to “secular Turkey.”

Civilian prosecutors have exposed many plans, believed to have been drafted by members of the military, to overthrow the AK Party government. The General Staff, however, denies their authenticity. It argues that the plans were fabricated by “enemies of the military” to discredit the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK). However, separate examinations by the *İstanbul Council of Forensic Medicine* (ATK), the İstanbul Police Crime Laboratory and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) vouched for the authenticity of the plots.

According to *Metiner*, the General Staff’s attempts to influence the judiciary over the course of the **Ergenekon** case has also led to a decline in people’s confidence in the General Staff. Ergenekon is a clandestine criminal organization accused of working to overthrow the government. Dozens of its suspected members, including those from the military, academia and the business world, are currently in jail on coup charges.

On various occasions, Chief of General Staff Gen. İlker Başbuğ defied the law and stood by military members on trial. Observers believe the self-positioning of the general against the law is a covert message for the judiciary to stop future indictments of military officers on coup charges.



“There is also the impact of the military’s failure to achieve success in its fight against the Kurdistan Workers’ Party [PKK] terror in the recent decline in public confidence in the General Staff. People have started to question why the war against the PKK has not ended in 26 years. The General Staff is, however, silent on many issues,” *Metiner* added.

The terrorist PKK was set up in 1984 as a result of **Turkey’s** long-standing Kurdish question. The organization has sought to establish an autonomous Kurdish state in eastern Turkey since then. More than 40,000 civilians and security forces have been killed in clashes thus far. The General Staff is frequently the target of harsh criticism due to its inability to end the PKK terror.

Gülây Gökürk, a columnist for the *Bugün* daily, agreed with *Metiner* on the point of a loss of public confidence in the General Staff because of the **Turkish** military’s failure to end PKK terror. She also said the General Staff’s refusal to communicate with the public on military failures in counter-terrorism efforts has shaken people’s trust in the General Staff.

According to the columnist, the General Staff made a critical mistake by not responding to the public’s questions on allegations that the military failed to act against PKK terrorists at the Hantepe outpost last month despite intelligence provided by Heron unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

“There is still no military explanation on the Heron allegations. ... The damn silence persists. And as the silence persists, suspicions in the hearts of millions of people leave a place for disappointment and frustration,” Gökürk wrote in her column last week.

Turkey was shaken by claims that surfaced in early August suggesting that the military failed to act against terrorists in Hantepe despite intelligence provided by Herons to 30 security units during every second of a terrorist attack on an outpost in the area in mid-July. The attack resulted in the deaths of seven soldiers. According to the claims, security units, including the General Staff, watched the attack live through intelligence provided by the Herons but did not send any additional firepower to the scene of the assault to save the wounded soldiers.

Although nearly one month has passed since these claims were first voiced, the General Staff has not issued a single statement on the matter.

SOURCE: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-219711-trust-in-military-fades-amid-coup-debates-anti-terror-weakness.html>

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

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

► MIDDLE EAST

Iraqis More Approving of Own Leadership Than of U.S. (Click for Details)

Iraqis approved more of their own country's leadership than U.S. leadership in early 2010 -- the reverse of their sentiment in 2008. Iraqis' relative confidence in their own leadership at the time of **Gallup's** most recent survey, which was conducted shortly before the elections in March, could be taken as a positive sign as the U.S. diminishes its military presence in the country and Iraqis take more control.

August 26, 2010

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

► WEST ASIA

Trust In Military Fades Amid Coup Debates, Anti-Terror Weakness (Click for Details)

A recently conducted opinion poll in **Turkey** has shown that the General Staff is suffering from a significant loss of confidence in the eyes of the public, which observers believe is directly linked to the military's unappreciated aspiration to intervene in politics rather than focus on its fight against terror. **MetroPOLL Strategic and Social Research Center**

August 22, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [Military Issues/ Defence](#)



Africa zone

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

► SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Witchcraft Believers in Sub-Saharan Africa Rate Lives Worse (Multi-country survey) [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Belief in witchcraft is widespread throughout [sub-Saharan Africa](#), according to recent [Gallup](#) surveys, and potentially affects how those who believe see their lives. Studies in 18 countries show belief varies, but on average, **55%** of residents personally believe in witchcraft.

August 25, 2010

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



Euro Americas zone

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



EUROPE

▶ WEST EUROPE

**Most Britons Endorse the Creation of Social Mobility Tsar Position** [\(Click for Details\)](#)

People in [Britain](#) are satisfied with the Coalition Government's decision to create a social mobility tsar position, but the politician who has been appointed to this job is a contentious choice, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

August 25, 2010

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

Britons Support Use of Speed Cameras [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Many adults in [Britain](#) believe relying on speed cameras to detect traffic violations is a good idea, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). **53 %** of respondents support the use of these devices.

August 22, 2010

[Society](#) » [Media/ New Media](#)



AMERICAS

▶ NORTH AMERICA

Animosity Over Potential Mosque Near Ground Zero Increases in United States [\(Click for Details\)](#)

The controversy over a plan to build a mosque and a 13-story community center in lower Manhattan, a few blocks from Ground Zero, shows no signs of slowing down, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

August 26, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

Public Remains Conflicted Over Islam [\(Click for Details\)](#)

The public continues to express conflicted views of Islam. Favorable opinions of Islam have declined since 2005, but there has been virtually no change over the past year in the proportion of [Americans](#) saying that Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence. As was the case a year ago, slightly more people say the Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than other religions (**42%**) than say that it does (**35%**). [Pew Research Center](#)

August 24, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

Americans Oppose Renewing U.S. Combat Operations in Iraq (Click for Details)

Americans are about twice as likely to oppose as they are to favor renewing U.S. combat operations in Iraq if Iraqi forces are unable to maintain security there. These views are shared by Democrats and independents, but a slight majority of Republicans disagree. **Gallup USA**

August 26, 2010

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

Islamic Center Tops Media Agenda (Click for Details)

A statement of support for religious freedom by President Barack Obama fueled an ideologically driven debate in the media over a proposed Islamic center in New York last week. A milestone in the Iraq war, continued economic travails and a mostly hung jury in a corruption case involving a colorful former governor also vied for attention. **Pew Research Center**

August 24, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

GOP Maintains Edge in Midterm Voting Preferences (Click for Details)

Gallup tracking of 2010 midterm congressional election voting preferences shows **47%** of registered voters saying they would vote for the Republican candidate and **44%** for the Democratic candidate if the election were held today. Though down slightly from last week's seven-percentage-point Republican lead, the GOP has held an advantage each of the past four weeks, the first time either party has done so this year.

August 24, 2010

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

Record Surge in Positive Ratings of Auto Industry (Click for Details)

Americans' opinions of the automobile industry brightened considerably after reaching an all-time low last year, and now tilt more positive than negative for the first time in three years. The 15-point increase in the percentage rating the auto industry positively ties the largest one-year improvement in **Gallup's** 10-year history of measuring public opinion on major U.S. business industries.

August 23, 2010

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

Americans' Views of Public Schools Still Far Worse Than Parents' (Click for Details)

Americans continue to believe their local schools are performing well, but that the nation's schools are performing poorly. More than three-quarters of public school parents (**77%**) give their child's school an "A" or "B," while **18%** of all Americans grade the nation's public schools that well. **Gallup USA**

August 25, 2010

[Society](#) » [Education](#)

U.S. Parents Want Teachers Paid on Quality, Student Outcomes (Click for Details)

The large majority of parents with children in the public K-12 school system would like to see teacher pay revolve around teacher performance, not the standard scale of pay. Seventy-two percent of public school parents say teachers' salaries should be tied to the quality of their work. Additionally, **75%** say teachers' salaries should be somewhat or very closely tied to their own students' academic achievement. **Gallup USA**

August 25, 2010

[Society](#) » [Education](#)

Economic Confidence Remains Low Throughout the United States (Click for Details)

Most **Americans** remain worried about the current state of their country's economy and are becoming more pessimistic about the future, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion poll** has found.

August 25, 2010

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

Obama's Middle East Problem (Click for Details)

President Barak Hussein Obama's meetings with Middle Eastern leaders next week will be his most extensive engagement yet with an issue that has been a weak spot in his largely positive international image.

[Pew Research Center](#)

August 27, 2010

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

Americans Continue to Rate Real Estate Industry Negatively ([Click for Details](#))

[Americans](#) rate the real estate industry much more negatively than positively, the third year in a row [Gallup](#) has found a net-negative evaluation of this industry.

August 27, 2010

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

Five Years After Hurricane Katrina ([Click for Details](#))

Five years after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, a majority of Americans (**57%**) say that the nation is no better prepared for hurricanes and other natural disasters than it was in 2005. However, the public does see progress in rebuilding New Orleans and the Gulf region: **69%** say there has been a lot or some progress made rebuilding New Orleans and the Gulf, up from **56%** in 2006. [Pew](#)

[Research Center](#)

August 26, 2010

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

Muslims Give Obama Highest Job Approval; Mormons, Lowest ([Click for Details](#))

Muslim [Americans](#) continue to give President Barack Obama the highest job approval rating of any major religious group in the U.S., while Mormons give the president the lowest ratings. [Gallup USA](#)

August 27, 2010

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

Adult Smoking Ranges From 13% to 31% Across U.S. States ([Click for Details](#))

Roughly one in five adult [Americans](#) smokes, according to [Gallup](#)-Healthways Well Being Index data from 2009. At the state level, the percentage of adult smokers ranges from **13%** in Utah to **31%** in Kentucky and West Virginia.

August 26, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

Airline Industry Image Grounded in Negative Territory ([Click for Details](#))

[Americans'](#) general displeasure with the airline industry continues for a fourth straight year, with **41%** viewing it negatively and **30%** viewing it positively. [Gallup USA](#)

August 26, 2010

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

Americans Praise Flight Attendants for Their Courtesy and Respect ([Click for Details](#))

In the wake of the highly publicized incident involving Steven Slater, American flyers express a high level of satisfaction with the way flight attendants perform their duties, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

August 24, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

Confidence Takes a Dip as Canadians Remain Anxious About Economy ([Click for Details](#))

Although a majority of [Canadians](#) think the national economy is in good shape, people are still anxious about the future and confidence in federal politicians to make the right decisions is low, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion poll](#) has found.

August 27, 2010

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

Canadians See More Benefits from NAFTA than Americans (Click for Details)

Canadians offer a more positive review of their participation in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) than Americans do, a new two-country **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

August 26, 2010

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

Two-in-Five Canadians Would Scrap Long Gun Registry (Click for Details)

As a decision on the future of the **Canadian** Firearms Registry draws near, Canadians hold differing views on whether the so-called long gun registry should be scrapped, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

August 25, 2010

[Society](#) » [Social Problems](#)



► **LATIN AMERICA**

Brazil's Lula Keeps Solid Ratings (Click for Details)

Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva remains highly popular, according to a poll by **Ibope**. **78 %** of respondents say Lula's performance has been good or very good, up three points since June.

August 23, 2010

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

Almost Two Thirds of Peruvians Dismiss Garcia (Click for Details)

Most people in **Peru** continue to disapprove of President Alan García's performance, according to a poll by **Ipsos**, Apoyo, Opinión y Mercado published in *El Comercio*. **63 %** of respondents express dissatisfaction with García's leadership, down two points since July.

August 23, 2010

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

Argentineans Expect Néstor Kirchner Comeback (Click for Details)

Most people in **Argentina** think former president Néstor Kirchner—also the husband of current president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner—will run for office in the 2011 election, according to a poll by **Poliarquía Consultores**. **54 %** of respondents expect Kirchner to be the ruling party's candidate.

August 23, 2010

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



GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS

Majorities of Americans and Britons Believe the War in Iraq Was a Mistake (Click for Details)

People in the **United States** and **Britain** regret the decision of their respective governments to engage militarily in Iraq in 2003, and are now more likely to brand the war as a failure rather than as a success, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

August 28, 2010

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

Canadians Hold Better View of Obama's Performance than Britons (Click for Details)

Canadians hold a much more positive view of United States President Barack Obama than Britons, a new two-country **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

August 24, 2010

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

Canada, U.S. and Britain Reject Smoking Ban (Click for Details)

Most people in the **United States**, **Canada** and **Britain** are against legislation that would completely ban smoking, according to a poll by **Angus Reid Public Opinion**. **61 %** of Americans, **47 %** of Canadians and **54 %** of Britons share this point of view.

August 23, 2010

Society » Health

CYBER WORLD

**Older Adults and Social Media** (Click for Details)

While social media use has grown dramatically across all age groups, older users have been especially enthusiastic over the past year about embracing new networking tools. Although email continues to be the primary way that older users maintain contact with friends, families and colleagues, many users now rely on social network platforms to help manage their daily communications -- sharing links, photos, videos, news and status updates with a growing network of contacts. [Pew Research Center](#)

August 27, 2010

Society » Media/ New Media

Blogs Debate New York Mosque (Click for Details)

For the second week in a row, the debate over a planned mosque near the World Trade Center site raged in the blogosphere. But this time, a different set of voices dominated the conversation in support of Muslims right to build mosque as a legal right. [Pew Research Center](#)

August 26, 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:**

Unlike his predecessor **Turkish** new Chief of General Staff has said war against terror 'can't be won without guns'. He has emphasized the role of military to counter terrorism.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Erdogan has asked members of MHP to support his democratic initiative during referendum held this week.

Geo-strategic Front:

Recently signed security pact between **Russia** and **Armenia** seems to be like the one signed between **Turkey** and **Azerbaijan** a few days ago. In the light of these developments in Caucasus many analysts have started assuming **Turkish-Russian** competition in the region in near future. Meanwhile **Turkish** State Minister has asked European Union to play its role in sorting out permanent solution for **Cyprus** issue.

Israel has expressed serious concern over **Turkish** engagement in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. Meanwhile **Turkey** has sent 195 more pre-fabricated houses to help **Pakistani** flood victims.

Economic Front:

Turkey's grain board has decided to allow private companies to import 330,000 metric tons of duty-free European Union wheat this year as part of measures to ease price swings in the domestic market. Gazprom, *Russian Energy Company*, has increased the amount of natural gas transfer to **Turkey** and taken it to 37 million cubic meters.

Social Front:

Constant rise in temperature in different **Turkish** cities has adversely affected crop production. Besides that **Turkish** Agriculture Association has decided to keep prices high during the month of Ramadan.

GCC

Political Front:

Bahrain's top *Shiite* politician said that last week's crackdown on Shiite protesters has destroyed a decade of stable sectarian relations as the country heads into parliamentary elections scheduled for October.

Several soldiers and Al-Qaeda members have been killed during the last week in **Yemen**. Meanwhile the **Yemeni** government has opened talks with Shiite rebels on implementing a February peace deal that halted the last round of fighting in the northern mountains. As a result *Yemeni* Shiite rebels signed an agreement with the government laying out a timetable for implementing previous accords.



Geo-strategic Front:

All **Gulf countries** have sent aid packages to *Pakistani* flood victims. In this regard **Saudi Arabia** has issued directives to send two field hospitals to *Pakistan* to provide health services to the flood-affected people. The **UAE** pledged US\$ 5 million in support of a *Pakistan* Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan launched by the UN last week. The State of **Kuwait**, on the basis of its approach too has announced to provide a donation of ten million dollars to victims of *Pakistan's* floods. Also a **Qatar** Charity, in collaboration with **Qatar** Airways, has set up an “air bridge” to fly in relief for millions of *Pakistanis* affected by devastating floods. **Qatar** Charity said it would airlift 80 tones of emergency relief items, totaling around QR2.2mn, this week. All the while **Oman** expressed deep concern over the loss of lives and the damage to the infra structure caused by floods in *Pakistan*.

Jordanian King paid a visit to the **Saudi** King and discussed various aspects of cooperation between the two countries and ways of their enhancement in all fields. The nuclear regulatory bodies of the **UAE** and the US have inked a deal for cooperation in areas like safety, security and safeguards of the nuclear installations.

Economic Front:

Credit remains relatively tight, in the Gulf, where the property-market correction and troubled regional conglomerates are hampering the banking sector's recovery. The **UAE** companies invested nearly \$ 720 million (Dh2.65 billion) in *Iranian* power projects last year, becoming the largest foreign direct investor in the country's energy sector. *Germany* came second with investments worth \$ 445 million in its energy sector.

Oman crude for immediate loading has dropped \$ 1.64, or 2.2 %, to \$ 72.50 a barrel. The world's lowest input costs have placed **Saudi Arabia's** petrochemicals suppliers in an enviable position and are helping them capture global market share. Meanwhile **Abu Dhabi's** investments in its massive hydrocarbon sector have slumped by more than 12 % during 2009 for the first time after a steady increase over the past three decades.

Social Front:

Amnesty International has urged **Saudi** authorities not to medically paralyze a man in retribution for similar injuries he allegedly caused during a fight.

Saudi Arabia's leading supermarket chain has broken the country's strict taboo on women working in public with a pilot program of women cashiers. **Saudi** Ministry of electricity has claimed that electricity crisis has ended over there.

The **Middle East** region has been making efforts for higher broadband penetration. The 'Middle Eastern Digital Media, Broadband and Internet Market' report said the young population would be the one of the main drivers of growth as they grow up with Internet use.

FERTILE CRESCENT

Political Front:



El Beradi has reiterated his claim that November elections should be boycotted to bring real change in **Egyptian** politics. Therefore most of **Egypt's** opposition parties have urged the Muslim Brotherhood to boycott legislative elections in November. In the meantime a Muslim Brotherhood activist has said that his party would need some time to take power in the country.

Lebanese PM has stressed the need to hold dialogue in order to resolve disputes among various groups.

Meanwhile a source in the **Iraqi** National Alliance disclosed that 35 members of the State of Law Coalition [SLC] headed by outgoing Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki have contacted the IISC

and expressed their determination to split off from the SLC and join any alliance that brings together the Al-Iraqiya Coalition. **Iraq's** Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and former premier Iyad Allawi have resumed negotiations aimed at forming a government after falling out briefly over a sectarian row.

Geo-strategic Front:

The Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank approved a grant for **Egypt**, a loan of \$1.2 billion **Egyptian** pounds to support the development of wind energy. Meanwhile 800 million pounds will be provided by the Clean Technology Fund, which will be a first for the fund in the *Middle East and North Africa*. The project will support **Egypt's** strategy towards renewable energy, which is attaching a high priority program to generate electricity on a wide range of renewable energy sources.

Lebanese PM has paid a visit to *Damascus* and held a meeting with Basher Al Assad. While some US congressmen have been pushing to cut \$100 million in military assistance budgeted for **Lebanon** over fears of *Israel's* security and Hezbollah's leading role; many analysts fear that this would make Hezbollah stronger and will erode the US' credibility in **Lebanon**. Meanwhile the United Nations Interim Force in **Lebanon** (UNIFIL) has delivered 39 vehicles to the **Lebanese** Army. The Organizers of **Lebanese** ship heading towards Gaza have postponed their plan as Cyprus denied entry to the aid ship. Orders have been issued to the security forces to be on the highest state of vigilance and alert, especially at this critical stage as the US combat forces pull out of **Iraq** and **Iraqi** security forces prepare to assume full combat responsibility.

Arab League chief has expressed little hope about direct talks between *Israel* and the **Palestinian** Authority.

Social Front:

According to news reports Islamic countries seem keen to invite scholars from **Egypt's** Al-Azhar, the Muslim world's prestigious institution.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front:

Executive power chiefs have received instructions in **Azerbaijan** concerning upcoming parliamentary elections. Some 100 protesters have demanded that former Mayor Seidakmat Ermatov be reinstated. Meanwhile strong resistance has erupted in **Kyrgyzstan** against having police from the *Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe* (OSCE).



190 criminal cases had been commenced on the fact of crimes committed by high ranking **Kyrgyz** officials during the era of *Kurmanbek Bakiyev*. General Prosecutor Office of **Kyrgyzstan** has completed investigation of April events when over 80 people were killed near the Government House in Bishkek. Meanwhile two political parties have refused to participate in the election campaign.

Geo-strategic Front:

Armenia's Foreign Ministry has warned Azerbaijan for its efforts to push the United Nations General Assembly for a fresh resolution that accuses Yerevan of occupying **Azerbaijani** lands and thereby hampering a peaceful resolution of the *Nagorno-Karabakh* conflict. Meanwhile **Azerbaijan's** Defense Ministry has rejected as “laughable” a claim by Yerevan that *Russia* could back **Armenia** in case of a new conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. **Armenian** Ministry made such a claim after signing a defense deal with *Russia*.

Kazakh President has refused to go for nuclear armaments. *Russian* and **Kazakh** experts have regarded his refusal as historic. Seeking to diversify its financial industry after a banking crisis, **Kazakhstan** has been drawing on *Arab* and *Malaysian* investment in an effort to build an Islamic finance industry among its 13 million Muslims.

June events in **Kyrgyzstan** have forced Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) countries to change the organization’s charter. US President Barrack Obama has ordered to allocate up to 9.5 million dollars in assistance to displaced people in **Kyrgyzstan**. Meanwhile **Kyrgyz** University students' new academic year has been postponed in order to prevent the students being used by different political groups during the upcoming election campaign.

The first sitting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of **Tajikistan** and **Kazakhstan** took place in the **Kazakh** capital Astana on August 24. **Tajikistan** and **Armenia** too have stressed the need to enhance their bilateral relations. A senior **Tajik** security official has disregarded **Kyrgyzstan's** concerns about the infiltration of Islamic militants from **Tajikistan** into **Kyrgyzstan**.

Economic Front:

India has expressed intention to invest in oil and gas sector of **Azerbaijan**. Meanwhile **Turkmenistan** has expressed willingness to open up Caspian development to U.S. and other companies.

Social Front:

Azerbaijan's Supreme Court has upheld the November 2009 sentences given to jailed bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizada. Meanwhile EU's foreign policy Chief Catherine Ashton has decided to take a stand on the case of **Azerbaijan's** "donkey bloggers." The head of a European human rights watchdog has visited jailed **Kazakh** rights activist Yevgeny Zhovtis to congratulate him on being awarded the group's annual prize.

Police in Almaty detained a group of journalists and kept them at a police station for three hours without any explanation. In other news a group of women market merchants in the southern **Tajik** city appealed against pressure to stop wearing the hijab. Meanwhile a prominent 12-meter golden statue of **Turkmenistan's** former dictator Niyazov has been taken down in the capital Ashgabat -- a move further eroding the personality cult around the late Central Asian leader.

Authorities in **Uzbekistan** have incinerated nearly a half ton of confiscated Afghan heroin worth an estimated street value of \$150 million in Europe.

A disabled **Uzbek** man has ridden over 500 kilometers in his wheelchair -- in the hope of crowning President Islam Karimov on Independence Day.

IRAN

Geo-strategic Front:

Iran has hailed its recent military advances as proof that it is technologically self-sufficient and ready to confront threats, even as the country remains under four sets of United Nations sanctions for refusing to scale back its nuclear program. *France* has warned Tehran of military conflict in the region if a nuclear agreement with world powers is not reached. Meanwhile *Pakistani* former head of ISI has called **Iranian** nuclear program to be a positive development for the Muslim World. Besides that **Iran** has expressed satisfaction about fuel supply at European airports despite anti-Iran sanctions. **Iran** has produced 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of enriched uranium.



The crown **Mavlonkhon Turaev** wants to present to the **Uzbek** President

Iran has expressed determination to open a new chapter in its cooperation with the *United Arab Emirates* especially in oil and energy sector. *Kuwait* has expressed safety concerns over **Iran's** new nuclear reactor on the opposite side of the Gulf, fearing fallout from possible leaks. **Iran's** government has asked Russia to turn the production of reactor fuel for a new **Iranian** power plant into a joint project that may supply similar facilities planned across the Persian Gulf nation.

Iranian Defense Minister has expressed willingness to provide military help to *Lebanon*, a day after Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nassrollah called on the *Lebanese* army to seek **Iran's** support. Suspected Kurdish rebels have blown up part of an *Iranian-Turkish* pipeline, shutting down the natural gas supply to *Turkey*. Meanwhile **Iran** has unveiled its first locally made long-range unmanned aerial drone.

Economic Front:

Iran has expressed readiness to hold a meeting with economy ministers of *Syria*, *Iraq*, and *Turkey* to discuss setting up an economic bloc in the region. **Iranian** authorities have arrested five employees of *Swedish* direct-sales cosmetics firm Oriflamme and shut its Tehran office amid reported *Iranian* allegations of a massive pyramid scheme. Foreign investors including companies from *Germany* and *UAE* have invested more than one billion dollars in **Iran's** power plant industry. **Iran** has officially begun pumping crude oil from the Hengam oilfield shared with neighboring *Oman* in the Persian Gulf, after a \$400mn two-year development. Meanwhile *Turkey* has vowed to continue joint projects with **Iran** despite sanctions imposed by some western countries. Tehran has withdrawn its assets from European banks to counter new financial sanctions imposed on the country over its nuclear program.

Social Front:

An imprisoned **Iranian** activist has sued Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) over allegations that the telecommunications company provided the Islamic regime with a monitoring system it used to spy on the opposition Green movement.

FIFA president has been invited to **Iran** to assess the development of women's football in the country. *French* first lady Carla Bruni- Sarkozy has published a letter in three national media outlets supporting an **Iranian** mother sentenced to death by stoning after being convicted of adultery.

Three anti-government protesters who died in a notorious jail have been dubbed "martyrs" by an **Iranian** official body, a move which would ensure benefits for their families.

AFGHANISTAN

Political Front:

Ahmad Wali Karzai, the powerful half brother of the **Afghan** president, has rejected allegations he took millions of illicit dollars out through Kandahar airport. A former US staff sergeant has been charged with accepting a bribe to allow a government contractor to steal \$1.4 million worth of fuel from an army base in **Afghanistan**.

The US Senator Kerry has paid visit to **Afghanistan** and has asked afghan President to take appropriate measures to curb corruption. Meanwhile people of different regions have expressed concerns regarding security situation during September 18 elections as 938 polling stations have been closed because of growing security risks. Unidentified gunmen kidnapped a district chief in Asadabad. A NATO air strike killed a woman and two children, as well as six Taliban, in the western province of Farah. In East six children were killed during NATO operation. Meanwhile four NATO-led International Security Assistance Force service-members were killed in separate incidents in the country's volatile south.

Geo-strategic Front:

The *US* has asked *Pakistan* and **Afghanistan** to work in close collaboration. **Afghan** Foreign Minister has paid a two-day visit to *India* in order to boost their bilateral ties. The international community has decided to spend \$30 billion to equip and train *Afghan* soldiers and police in 2011, in addition to \$21 billion that has already been spent over the last eight years. *France* has provided **Afghanistan's** Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) with \$127,000 in equipment. Meanwhile the *Turkmenistan* government has announced an aid of 1,000 tones of flour to the people of **Afghanistan** during the holy month of Ramadan. In the meantime *Norway* has announced to donate \$36.7 million to **Afghanistan's** education ministry over the next three years.

Economic Front:

A deal to lay a pipeline taking gas from *Turkmenistan* to *Pakistan* and *India* through **Afghanistan** is expected to be signed in October this year.

Social Front:

A campaign for removing security barriers from Kabul roads has been launched.

Residents of southeastern Khost province have complained about a shortage of trained teachers in government schools. Meanwhile the **Afghanistan** Natural Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) has expressed serious concern regarding possible food shortages in the winter, but the agriculture ministry denied its concern. Farmers and orchard owners in some districts of central Parwan and Kabul have lost about **80 %** of their crops due to the recent rains. Floods caused by heavy rain have killed at least 17 people and damaged hundreds of homes in eastern Nangarhar and central Logar provinces.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front:

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has alleged that her political rival and the then government had "direct links" with the grenade attacks on a 2004 party rally in which 24 people were killed and over 400 injured. **Bangladesh** Jamaat-e-Islami has finalized its new name to face changed situation if the party is banned and to continue its politics under a new banner. The High Court has declared ratification of martial law by the **Bangladesh** parliament in 1986 to be unconstitutional. Leaders of Awami League (AL), other political parties and professionals have called upon for launching mass public movements to ensure execution of the war criminals by completing their immediate trials. All the while the cabinet's approval to



amend the anti-corruption law has drawn mixed reaction. In a major decision, the cabinet has decided to allow six million non-resident **Bangladeshis** to vote in all elections in **Bangladesh** from their country of residence.

After failing to elect a new prime minister despite five rounds of vote spread over a month, **Nepal's**



parliament has now decided to hold an unprecedented sixth round of elections amidst growing protests at home and concern among the world community. One of the Maoist leaders has regarded monarchy as an important part of **Nepal** and claimed that absence of monarchy in **Nepal** has allowed foreigners to intervene in the country's internal politics.

The **Sri Lankan** government has appointed the director of operations of the Sri Lankan Army Maj. Gen. Shavendra Silva as the country's new deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

Economic Front:

Sri Lanka's benchmark share index closed near flat as a rise in financial stocks on speculation of new import tax cuts offset traditional month end forced selling.

Social Front:

Bangladesh has been ranked 88th among the “best” 100 countries in the world by the Newsweek. The rankings are based on indicators like education, health, quality of life, economic competitiveness and political environment.

Nepalese have arranged their traditional Cow Festival that gives a chance to common people to mock their rulers. Meanwhile thousands have been affected and several lives lost in floods due to heavy rainfall for past few days in **Nepal**. also according to reports an increased number of **Nepalese** workers in foreign countries have lost their jobs. Tamil migrants to Canada have been given the free use of telephones to call their loved ones in **Sri Lanka** after losing contact with them for more than 14 weeks, including 12 spent on the rusty MV Sun Sea that smuggled them into *Canada*.

INDIA

Political Front:

The civil Nuclear Liability Bill has been passed from Lok Sabha unanimously after months of hectic negotiations followed by a compromise between the government and the Opposition over the legislation, which is critical of **India's** atomic industry.

The recent upsurge in **Kashmir** valley has caused concerns among **Indian** authorities. In this regard PM Man Mohan Singh has highlighted the need to “revisit” standard operating procedures and crowd control measures by security forces to deal with public agitations. Despite the fact that all opposition parties have been criticizing ruling regime for its inability to maintain peace and stability in *Kashmir*; difference of opinion exists in their ideas regarding handling of the issue. BJP out rightly denies the option of granting autonomy to the region. Leftists however consider autonomy to be a viable option to resolve *Kashmir* issue.

Indian Home Minister has pointed out involvement of Extremist Hindu Organizations in spreading radicalization in the society.

Geo-strategic Front:

India and *Japan* have discussed the parameters for a civil nuclear accord which, they hoped, would be negotiated quickly.

Economic Front:

Bringing the much needed relief to slowdown-hit sectors of the economy, the **Indian** government announced more allowance worth Rs 1,052 crore.

Social Front:

After announcing 10 % reservation in jobs for Muslims in the OBC category, the state government has started efforts to include at least 80 % of the Muslim population in the category only to make them eligible for the facility.



The **Indian** government has served notice on global Internet major Google Inc for wrongly depicting the **Indian** map on its website and asked to immediately rectify it. It has also warned other websites to show India's international boundaries correctly or face legal action. Meanwhile *Cyber* crimes seem to

be on the rise in *Tamil Nadu* and there has been a three-fold increase this year in *Coimbatore* compared to the first seven months of 2009.

EAST ASIA

Political Front:

A political analyst from the **Indonesian** Institute of Sciences (LIPI), strongly condemned the system for not allowing new, qualified leaders to emerge. He further added that at the national level, the system was limited because it still adopted the political culture that only Javanese and Islamic figures could assume state leadership positions.

Geo-strategic Front:

Indonesian President has decided to hold direct talks with **Malaysian** Prime Minister to discuss the problem over border of the two countries. The current border issue between **Thailand** and **Cambodia** has been more complicated by the emergence of patriotism in **Thailand** and the internal political game played by local politicians.

China and **Cambodia** have pledged to enhance cooperation in law enforcement, counter-terrorism, drug control and fighting transnational crime. **Vietnam** and the US held their first-ever defense dialogue on August 17.

Economic Front:

Gross domestic product in **Indonesia** grew 6.2 % in the second quarter from a year earlier, surpassing the estimate of economists surveyed by Bloomberg News. Meanwhile exports are expected to grow by as much as 14 % in 2010. In the meantime, with its huge labor force and relatively stable political and social climates, **Indonesia** has been increasingly regarded as one of the best places to invest in labor-intensive industries. In order to deal with the issue of inflation, the country's central bank, Bank **Indonesia**, has decided to hold its benchmark interest rate at 6.5 % this week, despite a jump in annual inflation to 6.22 % in July.

The recently released UNCTAD World Investment Report 2010 has indicated that foreign direct investment (FDI) in **Malaysia** declined by a massive 81% in 2009. The camp of former President Gloria Arroyo has expressed satisfaction about the 7.9 % economic growth that the country posted in the second quarter of the year.

Vietnam's trade deficit has narrowed, boosting the government's effort to shrink the shortfall that led to currency devaluation last week. The deficit was \$900 million in August from a revised \$978 million in July. The supply chain industry currently accounts for 10 % of **Singapore's** economy.

Social Front:

Around 20 members of the Islamic Defenders' Front gathered in front of the Jakarta Prosecutor's Office demanding the arrest of Playboy's Editor-in-Chief as soon as possible. The recent bus hijacking in Manila has placed the **Philippines** under an unpleasant media spotlight this week.

ASEAN

The 10 members of ASEAN have ratified the **ASEAN** Charter. **China-ASEAN** trade has expanded smoothly since signing of free trade agreement in January.

Universal McCann said in its recent survey that the **Philippines** has the highest percentage of Internet users that watch videos online, even though the country has relatively low number of households connected to the web.

CHINA

Political Front:

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) has opened its bimonthly session to read a series of draft laws. **China's** top legislature has started discussing a draft law amendment that aims to further specify the rights and duties of lawmakers.

Meanwhile the **Chinese** Vice President has called for more efforts to promote the building of Communist Party of China (CPC) organizations at grassroots level and in non-public-owned enterprises.

China's anti-corruption authorities have called for "steadfast determination" to publish government budgets. **Chinese** Premier has urged government officials at all levels to strictly follow the laws and regulations in a bid to steer away from corruption and ensure the good of the public.

Geo-strategic Front:

Vietnam and **China** have vowed to enhance trade and investment cooperation in the coming time. **China** and **Thailand** have decided to strengthen military ties. All the while **China** and **Canada** have forged tourism links under ADS agreement. **China** and **South Africa** have also announced to upgrade their relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership". Visiting South African President said that labeling China's engagement with Africa "new colonialism" was untruthful. Meanwhile **China** and **Cambodia** have pledged to enhance cooperation in law enforcement, counter-terrorism, drug control and fighting transnational crime. **China** has also emphasized on the need to strengthen cooperation with **Japan**.

Foreign Ministers of **China** and **Kyrgyzstan** held meeting in Beijing and pledged to push forward the Sino-Kyrgyz relations of friendship and cooperation. Namibia has expressed keenness to strengthen ties with **China**. **China** has expressed keenness to enhance trade ties with **Arab and Central Asia** countries. **China** has also voiced its support to the efforts to counter **Somali** piracy in accordance with the international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

China's special representative for **Korean** Peninsula affairs held meeting with **South Korea's** top nuclear envoy Wi Sung-lac for talks on restarting the long-stalled six-party discussions on denuclearization of the **Korean** Peninsula.

Chinese Vice President held talks with his **Uruguayan** counterpart to enhance the bilateral relations. Meanwhile the **Singapore** University of Technology and Design (SUTD) and **China** Zhejiang University (ZJU) have signed an agreement of collaboration in education, research, student exchange and competitions. The future development of U.S.-China ties was one of the key topics discussed when **Chinese** vice Foreign Minister met with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State in Virginia.

China has denied reports that a **Philippine** high-level delegation would visit Beijing this week to brief officials on the investigation into the hostage crisis in which eight Hong Kong tourists were killed. Meanwhile as **India** put on hold bilateral defence exchanges, **China** said that the two countries would act in the spirit of "consultation and unity" to develop military ties, but remain mum on issue of denial of permission to a top **Indian** General to visit **China**.



China's top legislature has ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. China has provided a total of 120 million Yuan worth of humanitarian supplies to Pakistan in three batches. **China** has also granted two donations to *Burundi* totaling 6.5 million U.S. dollars to support the country's development projects.

Economic Front:

Trade value between **China** and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has increased by 49.6 % in the first seven months and has reached to US\$ 161 billion. The *United States* has repeatedly blocked investment from Chinese companies on national security grounds.

The assets of **China's** insurance sector totaled 4.57 trillion Yuan (672 billion U.S. dollars) at the end of July 2010. **China's** top economic planner said that **China's** economy still faced complicated domestic and international conditions. **China's** government funds expenditure surged 134.3-pct year on year in the first seven months of 2010 as compensation for land purchases grew rapidly. Meanwhile Profits of **Chinese** industrial enterprises in 24 regions climbed 61.1 % year on year to 1.88 trillion Yuan (275.90 billion U.S. dollars) in the first seven months.

Top **Chinese** lenders ICBC and Bank of China have signaled a peaking of earnings growth after strong second-quarter profits, as they slowed their lending and focused on asset quality. A report on **China's** widening income gap and a potentially high level of unreported income earned by the rich has come under fire. The report, entitled Gray Income and National Income Distribution, suggested **China's** "gray income" reached 5.4 trillion Yuan (\$794 billion) in 2008. The National Statistics Bureau however declared the report to be unreliable.

Social Front:

China would expand its installed hydropower capacity to 300 million kilowatts by 2015 from the current 200 million in an effort to cut carbon dioxide emissions. Illegal buying and selling of human organs has been written into a draft amendment to **China's** Criminal Law to intensify the crackdown against the illegal trade.

Drunk driving and street racing have been written into a draft amendment to **China's** Criminal Law as crimes. **China** has decided to impose heavy penalties on people for forcing others to labor. **China's** top legislature has proposed a reform in income distribution be launched as soon as possible, aiming to increase residents' income and narrow the gap in wealth.

Meanwhile the **Chinese** central government has spent 2.43 billion Yuan (357 million U.S. dollars) on flood control and drought relief this year.



HONGKONG & MACAU

A bus carrying 21 tourists and one tour guide from **Hong Kong** was been hijacked in the *Philippine* capital Manila. *Philippine* President has asked the people of **Hong Kong** for "understanding" in relation to the hostage-taking incident that claimed the lives of eight of their nationals, and apologized if any of his actions -- though unintentional -- had offended them.

At the economic front the average earnings of employees working in **Macao's** major sectors registered year-on-year increase from 0.5 % to 6.4 % in June 2010.

KOREA

Political Front:

North Korea has developed a radar absorbing paint to conceal its fighter jets, warships and tanks from surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft flown by **South Korea** and the *United States*. **North Korea** has restored economic reformist Pak Pong Ju to its leadership.

Geo-strategic Front:

The top U.S. envoy to **South Korea** has urged *Seoul* to take action on *Iran* in line with its important role in the international community and join Washington's campaign to curb the Middle Eastern country's nuclear ambitions. The top U.S. envoy to *South Korea* has urged *Seoul* to take action on *Iran* in line with its important role in the international community and join Washington's campaign to curb the Middle Eastern country's nuclear ambitions. The government has come up with a financial rescue plan to help small- and medium-sized exporters that may be adversely affected by the deterioration of relations with *Iran*, if **Korea** joins the U.S.-led international sanctions against the Middle Eastern state. Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter arrived in **North Korea** on a mission to secure the release of an American citizen who has been detained for seven months for illegal entry. **South Korea** and *Bolivia* have agreed to deepen discussions for a possible joint venture on developing lithium deposits in the South American nation.

Economic Front:

LG Electronics Inc. has announced its plan to invest \$500 million in *India* over the next five years for research and development and capital expenditure. **Korea** seems to be keen about growing inflation. Meanwhile **South Korea's** current-account surplus has reached a 16-month high after weakness in the won and the global recovery bolstered the nation's exports.

Social Front:

North Korea has evacuated more than 5,000 people in a region bordering *China* following heavy rain and flash floods submerged houses and farmland. The medical costs that have been covered by the national health insurance scheme per household are 1.68 times larger than the insurance premium paid by a household last year. The government and ruling party have been in talks to consider resuming food aid to **North Korea** that has been halted due to deteriorating inter-Korean relations. **North Korea** has requested emergency aid from the U.N. to cope with flooding in the *Sinuiju* region.

**JAPAN****Political Front:**

Around 900 citizens from **Japan** and *South Korea* gathered to call on the **Japanese** government to offer complete compensation for the damage it inflicted on the *Korean* people during its 35 years of colonial rule from 1910 to the end of the war. Meanwhile a new division is to be set up in the prime minister's office to formulate **Japan's** assistance plan for *Afghanistan*.

Tokyo Electric Power Co. has loaded a nuclear reactor in *Fukushima* Prefecture with MOX. A former secretary-general of the governing Democratic Party of **Japan** may run against Prime Minister Naoto Kan in a party presidential election. **Japan's** Prime Minister has faced a fight to lead the ruling party from his most powerful rival, hampering the two-month-old administration's efforts to combat deflation and a surging currency.

Geo-strategic Front:

About 85 government officials, academic experts and civic group representatives from 18 countries gathered in Saitama to discuss concrete steps toward a nuclear-free world in a three-day U.N. meeting on nuclear disarmament. Meanwhile *Jordan* and **Japan** have decided to sign a nuclear cooperation treaty to allow **Japanese** companies to export atomic technology to the Middle Eastern kingdom.

Economic Front:

Prime Minister has planned to set up a special team to help promote job creation for young people including students graduating from university. Toyota Motor Corp. would produce 740,000 hybrid vehicles worldwide in fiscal 2011, an increase of 7 % from this fiscal year.

The yen retreated from a 15-year high versus the dollar on speculation **Japanese** authorities will act to stem gains that risk derailing the nation's recovery. **Japan's** unemployment rate unexpectedly fell for the first time in six months in July as the economy added more jobs. The jobless rate dropped to 5.2 %.

Social Front:

The first contingent of a 200-strong **Japanese** military helicopter unit left for *Pakistan* to join international relief efforts in the flood-ravaged country.

About 100 young people began a five-day international conference in Aichi Prefecture to discuss how to prevent further deterioration of ecosystems prior to a Convention of Biological Diversity meeting to be held in Nagoya in October. According to reports DNA from survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 65 years ago may help doctors gauge whether certain cancer treatments can trigger genetic defects that can be passed on to patients' children. §

Events of the week in

Africa zone

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

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa:

Nigeria: Former vice-president Atiku Abubakar last week alleged that the inordinate ambition of General Ibrahim Babangida to remain in office "indefinitely" was the primary reason he annulled the June 12, 1993 presidential election won by Bashorun MKO Abiola.

Meanwhile all is now set for the endorsement of **Nigerian** President Goodluck Jonathan for the 2011 presidential election by governors of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the south west zone of the country.

Elections:

Liberia: The National Elections Commission (NEC) has declared that all is now set for the conduct of **Liberia's** second post war democratic elections following more than two years of rigmarole leading to setting the process on pace.

Cote D'Ivoire: Ivory Coast election may not resolve its conflict and the prospect of peace in the country after the government announced an election date has left *Ivorians* cautiously optimistic about the future.

Nigeria: Barring last minute adjustments, the forthcoming Presidential and National Assembly elections are to be held on January 8, 2011, while January 15, 2011 is fixed for the governorship and state house of assembly polls.

Central Africa:

In Gabon: The President Ali Ben Bongo Ondimba says he will continue working closely with the African Union as well as the United Nations Security Council to resolve conflicts on the African continent.

Congo-Kinshasa: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said that the recent savage rape and assault of scores of civilians in the remote and troubled far east of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC) is a "brutal reminder" of the obstacles faced in keeping the peace in conflict zones. The Secretary-General also urged the U.N. Security Council to consider new measures to protect civilians in **Congo**, where more than 150 villagers were raped by rebel groups in late July.

Elections:

Burundi: Amnesty International has called on Burundian authorities to investigate allegations that state security officials tortured 12 opposition politicians during the country's recent elections.

Rwanda: Congratulatory messages for President Paul Kagame's landslide victory continue to pour in, the latest being from the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso.



Southern Africa:

A Madagascar court sentenced deposed leader Marc Ravalomanana in absentia to forced labor for the deaths of dozens of protesters during a march on the presidential palace last year.

Zimbabwe: Just few days after hopes were raised at the Southern Africa Development Community summit that **Zimbabwe** is set to make substantial political progress, President Robert Mugabe has once again turned his back on reforms he signed to nearly two years ago.

Elections:

Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe's electoral body does not expect elections planned for next year to take place because it still needs to carry out reforms and is not adequately funded to hold a credible vote, its chief told state media last week.

While in **Malawi** according to reports the nation's November local government elections are to be postponed yet again, a development that has hit female candidates hard – and mostly in their pockets. It could mean that the country will have less female candidates to vote for when they finally go to the polls.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa:

Nigeria: Two Chinese workers abducted in southwest **Nigeria's** Ogun state last week were successfully rescued by police, according to an official of the Chinese Consulate in Lagos. Meanwhile a recent report released by *Human Rights Watch* (HRW) has ranked the **Nigerian** Police extremely high on corruption, extortion, brutality and rights' abuses.

In **Northern Nigeria** Members of the outlawed **Boko Haram** sect appeared to have resorted to guerrilla warfare as they waylaid and shot dead three policemen in *Damaturu* and *Maiduguri*, centers of the deadly violence sparked by the group in July last year.

Mauritania: According to the Spanish government two Spanish aid workers were freed after being taken hostage by *al Qaeda* in North Africa nearly nine months ago.

Niger: The population of **Niger**, one of the poorest countries in the world, is growing at an unsustainable rate, according to the authorities and civil society groups. If current growth rates of 3.3 % per

year remain unchanged, by 2050 **Niger's** population will have reached 50 million. The current population is 15.2 million - and even at this level there is widespread malnourishment.

Central Africa:

Central African Republic: The United Nations World Food Program says tens of thousands of people in **Central African Republic** face malnutrition if the WFP cannot secure urgent funding. According to the UN World Food Program, it needs an additional \$15 million in funding over the next eight months to continue feeding 600,000 people in the country.



Southern Africa:

Malawi: A new study by the Journalists Union of **Malawi** (JUMA) says over **80 %** of the journalists employed in the country's media houses work under "demeaning and exploitative" conditions.

Zimbabwe: In a pre-dawn raid last week, **Zimbabwe** Republic Police bashed down an informal settlement in Harare making scores of people, including children, homeless. Many of those whose shacks were destroyed by police were refugees from similar massive attacks on urban dwellings five years ago.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa:

Ghana: according to reports USAID supports **Ghana** Health Service with \$ 4 million, projecting a four-year programme during which it would assist the Ghana Health Service (GHS) in three regions.

Nigeria: President Goodluck Jonathan has assured that **Nigerians** should expect stable electricity supply by December 2012. Meanwhile CBN has released a N130b intervention fund.

Lead poisoning has killed at least 160 in **Zamfara State** since June, when visiting doctors' realized children in the region were dying in unusually large numbers. Investigating scientists traced the source of the poisoning to soil contaminated with lead which had been dumped in water sources by miners.

Chad: In parts of **Chad** acute malnutrition levels far exceed the international emergency threshold, according to a new study – fallout, partly, from crop failure hitting already fragile communities where access to basic health services is low and aid agencies are scarce. Also Flooding across **Chad** has destroyed homes, crops, livestock, wells and latrines in communities already pummeled by food shortages and high malnutrition, according to the UN.

Mali: Nomadic communities in northern **Mali's** desert regions are facing one of the most serious droughts of the last twenty years.

Niger: Further heavy rains in **Niger** have caused the number of people displaced by flooding to soar from 111,000 last week to 198,740 this week, says the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which is calling on donors and aid agencies to urgently send shelter materials, blankets and mosquito nets.

UN Aid Agencies Responding to Cholera Outbreak in the three neighboring West African countries of **Cameroon, Nigeria, Lake Chad Basin and Niger** have reported that the epidemic has infected nearly 4,000 people and killed more than 260 others since May; the **United Nations health** agency blamed the epidemic on poor hygiene and inadequate access to clean water.

According to an aid monitoring group **AidData** a recently launched geo-coded global map outlining how much individual donors have given to which aid projects and where, will highlight aid gaps, imbalances and duplication, and through this, improve donor coordination.

Southern Africa:

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has welcomed a new campaign launched by the **Angolan** Government to reduce maternal and infant mortality, and encouraged authorities to ensure the necessary budget resources to improve health for women and children.

A new type of migration is taking place in **Zimbabwe**. While in the past people crossed the borders into **South Africa** and **Botswana** seeking work and fleeing from their repressive circumstances, now according to reports, a silent migration of HIV-positive children seeking antiretroviral treatment (ART) is taking place.

Mozambique: the United States says it will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to help fight AIDS in **Mozambique**, where some 1.5 million people are living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.



POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa:

Liberia: Moving closer to joining the growing ranks of **African** oil producers, **Liberia** has selected one of the world's largest oil companies as lead partner to explore potential offshore reserves. The Government has signed up *Chevron* as its oil exploration partner.

Another report revealed that **Liberia** has reason to celebrate US\$4.8 billion Dollars debt waiver coupled with the improvement of its investment climate propelled by the UP led administration, with another multi-million dollar company, SFR, a lubricant oil company, has expressed interest in doing business in the country.

Cameroon: *Cameroon, China* Cooperation has intensified as both countries are devising new ways of partnership through which industrialization and particularly the mining sector could receive a boost for their mutual benefit.

Nigeria: NSE Probe; the forensic investigations into the financials of **Nigerian** Stock Exchange (**NSE**) may have claimed its first casualty, as the Assistant General Manager in charge of Management Services, which includes Administration and others, (names withheld) has been placed on an indefinite suspension.

Meanwhile market capitalization, which measures the value of equities listed in the market, fell from N6.108 trillion to N5.992 trillion, while the **NSE** All-Share Index went down by 1.9 % from 24,976.65 to close at 24,503.61.

According to Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Josephine Tapgun, Federal Government of **Nigeria** is now working on a new tariff regime to protect local industries in the country. Meanwhile the **National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA)** has lamented the high interest rate charged on credit in the country.

Some good news came the way of **Nigeria's** aviation industry last week as the country attained the *United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA)* certification, known as Category 1 Status. Meanwhile the management of the nation's apex maritime regulatory authority, *Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)*, has started a partnership with the United States of America (USA) on safety and security exercise to protect the country's asset in the *Gulf of Guinea*.

Central Africa:

Rwanda: A long awaited mega commercial centre project by the US in the country slated to cost 200m dollars (approximately Rwf 117.6bn) was launched last week in Kigali city. Meanwhile President Paul

Kagame has called on investors to add value to what they produce prior to exporting, since it will not only improve the quality of the country's exports, but will bring in higher revenues for investors and the country.

Gabon: A special adviser to **Gabon's** leader has said the construction of the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) forms part of President Ali Ben Bongo Ondimba's plan to make the country competitive and provide jobs to thousands of **Gabonese**.

A south **Sudan** official said in statements to Bloomberg the only way for **China** to retain its millions-worth of oil assets in **Sudan** is to cultivate a "strong" relationship with the semi-autonomous region of south Sudan and recognize the outcome of a referendum due in January 2011 on the region's possible independence.

Southern Africa:

In **South Africa**, Striking South African state workers defied a court order to return to work last week and police fired rubber bullets to disperse strikers who were blocking the entrance to a Johannesburg hospital. More than 60 protesters were arrested nationwide for obstructing roads and destroying property in violent demonstrations. President Jacob Zuma of **South Africa** has accused striking state workers of abandoning the sick at hospitals and said he expected a deal to be reached soon to end the labor action by about 1.3 million. Meanwhile the army has deployed more 1,800 medical staff to 47 public hospitals throughout **South Africa** to substitute for striking doctors and nurses as the nine-day industrial action becomes increasingly ill-tempered.



Zimbabwe: An auction of **Zimbabwean** diamonds has created an air of expectation that the country's economic plight will be eased or even improved, but the stones realized as little as a fifth of their value, and most of the proceeds are expected to benefit controversial mining companies.

A delegation of Chinese business people from Shanghai announced in Maputo last week that they intend to invest 13 billion US dollars in a number of projects in **Mozambique** over the next five years. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

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

WESTERN EUROPE

Political Issues

According to the latest Euro barometer survey, almost half of **EU** citizens believe their countries membership of the **EU** has yield little as unemployment and a troubled economy grips the bloc. The survey showed that the dissatisfaction for EU is issue centered; disappointment was astonishingly less salient

among countries relatively hit by the economic crisis. Nonetheless, the **EU** still sees its confidence level much higher than national governments and parliaments.

The extent to which EU should meddle in national affairs of its members is one of the troubling debates within the bloc. EU integration though success has not be immune from contentious issue of red line between the EU and member state. In a recent ruling by the **German** constitutional court, the court ruled that EU decisions may only be checked if European institutions seriously overstep their powers.

Roberto Maroni, **Italy's** interior minister projected the anti-immigration policy of his government as he wanted the EU to grant Italy permission to deprive Roma from free movement in **Italy**. His argument revolves around the economic burden posed by the illegal immigrants, yet it is unlikely the EU would consent to such a demand.



Meanwhile the **EU** is concerned over recent expulsion of Roma by the **French** government. Viviane Reding, the European commissioner for justice is set to investigate whether **France** has violated **EU** law. This same concern is shared by UN anti-racism panel asking *Paris* to avoid collective and mandatory repatriation, discriminatory statements and should rather address the Roma issue on individual circumstances. The Roma issue did not fail to capture the attention of the Vatican, asking **France** to be modest in its action, Paris however reminds the Vatican of separation between religion and the state.

Iran is not just under the UN or western radars for its nuclear activity but it is once again criticized for ill treatment of minority ethnic groups. According to the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, minorities in the Islamic republic are not on same page with ethnic *Iranian* in term of freedom of expression and access to social services.

The death of three **Spaniard** troops in *Afghanistan* has reawakened the public resentment towards the *Afghan* war. The public wants **Spaniard** troops out of *Afghanistan*, even though the Socialist government has not yet revealed any timetable for such public bidding.

Economic Issues

Last week recorded a strong **European** market after months of market drops. The rebound could be linked to the soaring **German** economy and at the same time due to the recovering trend of equities in Asia and on Wall Street.

In an economy just rolling out of recession and still relying on foreign financial assistance, payment of pensions has been largely paid to ghost pensioners. **Greece's** Deputy Labour Minister George Koutroumanis disclosed that hundreds of wrongful pension are paid to dead names still on pension list..

The new levy about to be introduced by the **German** government is a clear message to financial institutions that they can always help themselves in times of crisis if they had prepared for the unexpected. The **German** government wants to start levying banks and to use the proceeds of the levy in bailing out banks during crisis instead of leeching taxpayers.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Humanitarian efforts by the **EU** for the flooded people of *Pakistan* remains ringing news, as EU fears that its huge effort is being undermined by threat of Taliban and inaccessibility of the most needed to its aid. **EU's** effort has once been challenged as meager. The **EU** has donated more than half of the benchmark stated by the **UNO**.

There might be certain concern from Washington on the need for transparency in the funds for flood crisis in *Pakistan*, but exigent approach to the crisis in more a concern for U.N.'s International

Telecommunication Union asking donors to wire money to the National Bank of *Pakistan* or *Switzerland's* UBS AG to "assist the flood-affected victims" and rebuild telephone networks.

The **British** government is pondering on how to resolve the increasing number of prison inmates in the country. Some policymakers hold the view of short time prison sentence while other believe community sentences will better reduce the tendency for re-offending. Meanwhile, Royal United Services Institute is also alerting the **British** government of how **British** jails are potential breeding ground for terrorists.

Net migration to the **UK** rose by more than 20 percent last year to 196,000 from 163,000 in 2008. The figures from the Office for National Statistics showed the number of immigrants arriving in the **UK** in 2009 fell by 4 percent to 567,000, from 590,000 in 2008. However, the number of people leaving the country last year dropped further by 13 percent to 371,000, from 427,000 in 2008.

Geostrategic Issues

German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle visited *Serbia* and restated **EU** stance that Kosovo's independence is a dawn reality, asking *Serbia* to see that the map of southeast Europe is completed. **EU** wants *Serbia* to mellow down her rhetoric after the ICJ's ruling though *Belgrade* still wants UNO to debate on the contentious issue.

The imprisonment of a non violent *Palestinian* activist by the *Israeli* government has raised the eye brow of the **EU** foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton. Her critical assessment of the judgment was resented by *Israel* as unusual and unworthy of a foreign dignitary to interfere in domestic affair of a foreign country.

EAST EUROPE

Political Issues

The **Dutch** government rejects any complicity in the *Srebrenica* massacre, on the pretext that during the war **Dutch** troops were only acting under the banner of the UN; however a new investigation sponsored by the relatives of *Srebrenica* massacre victims is about to begin in the **Dutch** city of Arnhem to investigate the role of UN-Dutch troops in the massacre.

The US officials in the region are not desisting from dissuading **Bosnian** Serb authority not to make a parallel between **Kosovo** and **Republika Srpska** (RS). Washington insists that as an entity of **BiH**, it has no right to secede.

Romanian government has thrown its support behind the territorial integrity and sovereignty of **Moldova**, against the secessionist Transdniestr. Transdniestr is a breakaway territory between the Dniester River and the eastern **Moldovan** border with **Ukraine**. Transdniestr is trying to use **Kosovo** as a case precedent to secede from Moldova.

The *European Commission* shows its appreciation at the pace of **Croatia**-EU accession. Zagreb has managed to close 22 out of 33 chapters and there is a forecast of **Croatia** being the next EU member.

In the wake of the ICJ ruling in favor of Kosovo there has been huge condemnation for the independence rumors aired within Serb dominated north of **Kosovo**. The **Kosovar** government has pledged to extend 13m euros to the municipalities run by **Kosovo** Serbs, an effort expected to bait the north from the unruly conduct.

The fight against corruption and organized crime has become a joint effort across the region; it has led to different extradition agreements. **Serbia** and **Montenegro** inked similar agreement and hope solving cross border crime through it. Meanwhile, **Montenegrin** NGOs are resenting the new drafted anti-corruption



strategy and action plan by the government on the ground that they were not consulted in making it and the draft does not really address ground reality.

Similar action was seen in **Romania**, as the **Romanian** parliament passed the state anti-corruption bill, which was adopted in the 137-seat senate by a vote of 78-0, with one abstention.

Economic Issues

IMF mission head Albert Jaeger praised **Serbia's** government prudent fiscal policy and stressed the importance of adopting a law on fiscal responsibility. However, Jaeger rejected Economy Minister Mladjan Dinkic's proposal to raise public wages and pensions as early as next month due to the lower than expected government deficit.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

People across the region commemorated the 100 years birthday of Mother Teresa, acknowledging her dedication to humanity. In **Kosovo**, authorities released a postage stamp in her honour.

According to reports an **Albanian** song praising Osama bin Laden in **Macedonia** resonates the view that there is a soft corner for extremism in the region.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Albania is facing its share of the global climate change as wildfire grips the country. The fire is reported to have engulfed hectares of vineyards and olive groves.

Geostrategic Issues

Bulgarian and **Romanian** government do not find the forceful expulsion of ethnic Romas from *France* satisfactory. Both countries have shown their resentment and the European Commission is urging Bucharest and Sofia not to allow the incident to influence their ambitions to join *Schengen*.

RUSSIA

Political Issues

President Dmitry Medvedev has rejected the proposal by **Chechnya** president, who wanted the title of president to be limited only to Moscow rather than being a common title for all regional heads. Medvedev holds that such an issue would be better decided by the federation themselves.

Economic Issues

As part of the general economic policy, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin intends to raise import duties on foreign cars to encourage international car producers to build new plants in **Russia** and to boost the local market. Meanwhile, The **Russian** presidential council for financial market development believes that making Moscow an international financial hub is only possible through federal, state and private support. The council rejected an initiative put forward by the Moscow Mayor to spend some 4 trillion rubles (\$130 billion) over the next 10 years to be shouldered alone by the federal.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Russian authorities are still struggling with piracy which has turned itself to threat for the economy and at the same time denting the country's image.

As people around the world celebrate the 100 years birthday of Mother Teresa, **Russian** authority has planned to erect her monument as recognition for her dedication to life and the helpless.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue



Russia-Iran relations have been a bit sour recently but putting a finishing touch to *Bushehr* nuclear plant by **Russia** has reduced that sour rapport. As **Russia** fuels the plant there has been angry resentment from *western* and *Israeli* observers which **Russia** is trying to water down.

Russia is expected to further extend its gas tentacles to Asia as Moscow and Beijing enter into a multidimensional pipeline project, while Novatek also finding direct route to export its liquefied natural gas to Asia.

The summer heat wave might be subsiding, but the havoc created by the natural disaster is something that **Russians** will have to overcome in due course of time.

Geostrategic Issues

Washington has again lauded the support given by **Russia** for the new UNSC sanctions on *Iran*. According to a report both capitals believe they share similar concerns over *Iran* and the latter having nuclear bomb is more dangerous for **Russia** as a neighbor. Meanwhile *Israel* is also not comfortable with sale of **Russian** weapons to *Syria*.

Russia and *Armenia* in recent times are ganging up in finding solutions to the protracted border issue in the region and more importantly to increase bilateral ties. Leaders of both countries met during the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) informal summit held in the *Armenian* capital on August 20-21. Meanwhile according to reports the *French* President Nicolas Sarkozy is proposing a new cooperation that will include **Russia**, *EU*, *NATO* and the Organization for Security and Cooperation.



Despite its two years support for *South Ossetia* and *Abkhazia*'s independence, the secessionist state has not been able to sustain peace. Georgia remains irked at **Russia**'s 2008 attack and its support for South Ossetia's independence, which **Georgia** still counts as its part.

US/CANADA

Economic Issues

American public and political opponents are asking President Obama about the extent to which his stimulus package has brought a change to the economy. Americans bearing low purchasing power and facing housing crisis as well as irked wealthy equally complaining of tax hike have voiced issues that are expected to be flared up by republicans as the midterm elections draw in.

American National Center for Health Statistics declares a striking figure pointing at the declining rate of birth rate in the country. According to the centre, birth rate dropped for the second year in a row since the recession began in 2007. Births fell 2.6 percent last year even as the population grew. Interestingly, the uncertainty economic is said to be accountable for the drop.

Canadian banks recorded a profit fall more than expected due to weak trading income, a signal that recovery is still underway.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The proposed mosque near Ground Zero in the **US** is expected to be listed as part of a tax-free financing institution, if the mosque could demonstrate an ability to pay off borrowed bonds and comply with the laws concerning tax-exempt financing, which requires that such institution will benefit the general public and their religious activities are funded separately.

The **American** mosque debate has raised questions across the globe. For some the debate further reiterates America's hatred for Islam, while some in *Europe* believe America is now waking up to its own

debate of Muslim visibility in public sphere. But Americans are still confident that their society gives room for debate in comparison to other societies.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The oil spill on the *Gulf of Mexico* has brought gain and loss simultaneously. For some the cleanup processes increased their sale tax revenue and boosted their businesses, while other remained shattered by the growing fear that the areas around the Gulf is un-conducive for business as usual. But the greatest concern for both parties is the uncertain moratorium on oil drill; if it becomes effective, it will further exacerbate the level of unemployment and hikes energy price for the areas and country at large.

Meanwhile the inquiry panel asked to investigate the spill on the *Gulf of Mexico* was not satisfied with BP's response. The company is not ready to single out anyone as responsible for the accident instead stood by a company-wide safety culture that ensured every employee is responsible.



LATIN AMERICA

Political Issues

The Internet has taken **Brazilians** to another level of electioneering process as presidential candidates avail Internet social networking sites for campaigning. The new avenue is adding to the print and electronic platform for political participation as more youth are indulged. Meanwhile, Ms. Dilma Rousseff is still riding on President Lula's popularity though Lula himself is criticized for one sided support of a particular candidate.

For newly elected **Colombian** President Santos many issues would need streamlining in order to place the country on a right track. After **Colombian** constitutional court ruled against having US military base in the country, the president has started contemplating reviewing the military agreement and at the same time trying to find a soft negotiation platform between the state and the troublesome FARC rebel group.

If the survey result that only 36 percent people of **Venezuela** wants Chavez once again in power should be trusted then that is an indicator of fall in Chavez's popularity. Chavez's policies have been widely criticized as undemocratic and tramping on private ownership.

Economic Issues

Being the largest Soy oil exporter, and 75% of its Soy oil worth \$1.4 billion remained un-purchased by *China*, this will be devastating to the **Argentine** economy. Both countries have been at trade loggerhead, **Argentina** has been blocking *China* from dumping its textile and edible into local market, leading *China* to stop the import of Soy oil.

Brazilian finance minister envisages an economic growth up to 7%, but not without a controllable inflation. Meanwhile a bi-partisan speculative report by the US Congress supports the plea of *South Africa* asking for the membership of BRIC.

Venezuela's central bank reported that the economy of **Venezuela** shrunk 3.5 percent in this year as compare to the previous year and its oil sector and private sector is further speculated to have decline.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The **Brazilian** government has extended its humanitarian hand to *Pakistan's* flood affected victims; a total of \$1.2 million in aid has been donated through UNHCR to *Pakistan*.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Argentine President Fernandez Kirchner is tussling with Royal Dutch Shell PLC. The company is challenging the government for trying to take its prerogative right of oil price increase, as reported agreement between Shell and the government only grants such right to Shell.

In **Brazil**, Petrobras is set to commence a deepwater oil exploration with 5 billion barrels of oil shares which is opened to investors. Meanwhile, *Brasilia* is intensifying effort to make its environment cleaner, sustainable and manageable through a climate fund, which enjoins all stakeholders benefiting from environmental resources to pay into the fund.

The **Chilean** government is seeking NASA's help to authenticate the fate of trapped **Chilean** mine workers.

Despite **Mexico** being in the spotlight for drug related crimes, **El Salvador**, **Honduras** and **Guatemalan** have been singled out by a UN report as countries having top murder cases.

Cancun state of **Mexico** is expected to host the world for another round of talks on climate change, where **Mexico** is wooing neighbors to take active role in the conference.

A report by the UN and a New York Times' article alleges that *Chavez's* government is clamping down on opposition and there is little or no freedom of expression in **Venezuela**.

Geostrategic Issues

Brazilian President Lula is increasingly expanding his diplomatic clout in global affairs. Yet again Tehran is asking him to mediate with Council of *Vienna* over its nuclear impasses. This could be another chance for Lula to further engrave his statesmanship status.

Colombian President Santos will be credited for friendly policy towards neighbors. The new administration is geared at resolving **Colombia's** long brawl with **Venezuela** as both countries have entered different levels of agreement under the auspices of UNASUR and active role of **Argentina** and **Brazil**

The tempo of drug war is increasingly becoming a regional menace and **Mexico** is at the top of the issue. The recent rampage in **Mexico** intensified this concern and **Mexico** is calling on regional governments for consolidated effort at rooting the menace out of the region. Meanwhile **Mexicans** are still grappling with the debate of drug legalization.

AUSTRALASIA

Political Issues

It has been 70 years since **Australia** has had a hung parliament, as major political parties have failed to secure 76 majority votes needed to form a government. Both labour and liberal parties are now wooing minority parties to form a government. Nonetheless the inconclusive elections saw the election of the first Aboriginal and Muslim lawmakers in the lower house, as well as its youngest (20 years) with university student.

Economic Issues

Amid an uncertain elections outcome, **Australian** financial system was gripped with fear with a drop in **Australian** dollar and bond. Investors were reported to be cautious of how to invest as the country faces a hung parliament in 70 years.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

A part of Western **Australia** was irked by a terrorist assignment students were expected to do. The school board has withdrawn the assignment owing to the sensitivity of the matter, but the teacher argues that the task wanted to help the student better understand the trend and manner terrorism affects the live of people. §

