

Friday on the facebook

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



Who are we?

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

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

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

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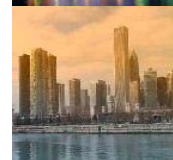
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Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of **24** surveys. **4** of these are multi-country surveys, **1** is a cyber surveys, & the rest are national surveys. **8** polling organizations have been represented.



Topic of the week:

Iraqis Cite 'Services' as Top Problem, 'Security' Concerns Decline

▶ 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: Trends Since December 2009 Survey

A latest **IRI** survey indicates a divided mood among the Iraqi people – more so than in **IRI's** December 2009 survey – with **59 %** of respondents indicating that their country is heading in the wrong direction and **41 %** indicating the right direction. This wrong direction rating represents a shift in opinion about the future of the country, with the number of respondents who believe that Iraq is heading in the right direction dropping 10 points from a **51 %** majority in December 2009.

Significantly, however, respondents' optimism concerning their personal and household economic future rose between the December and June polls. When asked if they felt that their household economic well being would improve, **63 %** thought it would improve and 13 % thought it would worsen. This shift is noteworthy as corresponding figures were considerably lower in the December 2009 survey.

A majority of respondents also see wages and salaries as either better (**36 %**) or at least the same (**37 %**) over the past year, suggesting, in turn, that the predominant dissatisfaction with Iraq's overall direction stems more from perceptions of national rather than personal troubles.

One source of this malaise is the widespread view that basic services (water, electricity, sewage, etc.) have deteriorated over the past year. At the same time, a majority of Iraqis continue to see a negative general economic situation (**56 %**) and a worsening of unemployment in the country (**63 %**).

As seen over the course of IRI polling, Iraqi people continue to display optimism towards the security situation within the country. This survey indicates that **73 %** of respondents acknowledge an improvement in security, representing an eight point decrease from **81 %** in December 2009.

When asked how the Iraqi National Government has performed a majority, **61 %**, cite favorably, a three point increase from December 2009. Conversely, the Council of Representatives received decidedly mixed reviews with **38 %** of respondents indicating that they approve of the new body, while **62 %** either disapprove or remain undecided.

Issues

Top Concern: Services, Not Security

The June 2010 poll showed a distinct shift from December 2009 on the *single* biggest problem facing Iraq as a whole. The latest figures for this are: Basic services such as water and electricity, **69 %**; security, **20 %**; and unemployment, **9 %**. The top two were reversed in December 2009: security, **43 %**; and basic services, **23 %**.

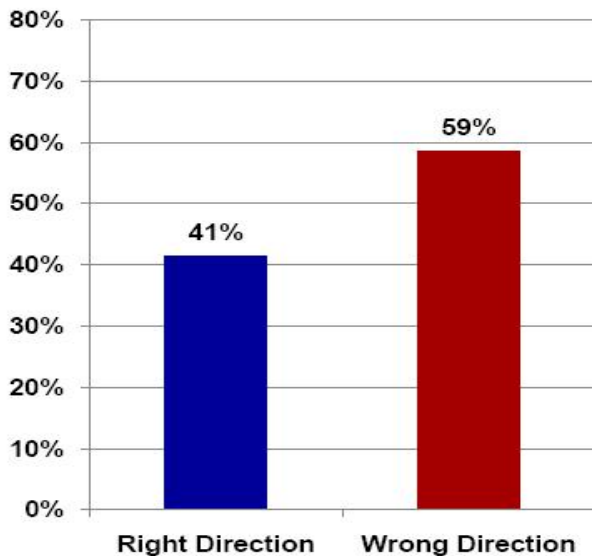
Security is cited in June 2010 as *one of the top three concerns* by **59 %**, behind basic services at **74 %**. In the December 2009 poll, the economy and security were virtually tied as top three issues with Iraq voters. When asked to name the top three issues they wanted the prime minister and the Council of Representatives to focus on, **76 %** cited economy-related issues as one of their top three choices and **72 %** cited security. However, a majority of Iraqis agreed that security has improved in the country (**81 %** better – **18 %** worse). Voters were less sure about the economy, with **40 %** rating the economy positively and **57 %** rating it negatively.

SOURCE: [http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2010%20September%2016%20IRI%20Iraq%20Index,%20June%203-July%203,%202010\(1\).pdf](http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2010%20September%2016%20IRI%20Iraq%20Index,%20June%203-July%203,%202010(1).pdf)

ALSO SEE:

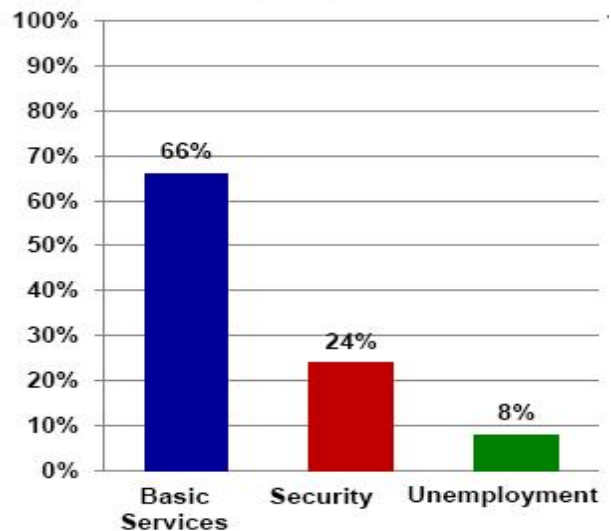
[http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2010%20September%2016%20Survey%20of%20Iraqi%20Public%20Opinion,%20June%203-July%203,%202010\(3\).pdf](http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2010%20September%2016%20Survey%20of%20Iraqi%20Public%20Opinion,%20June%203-July%203,%202010(3).pdf)

National



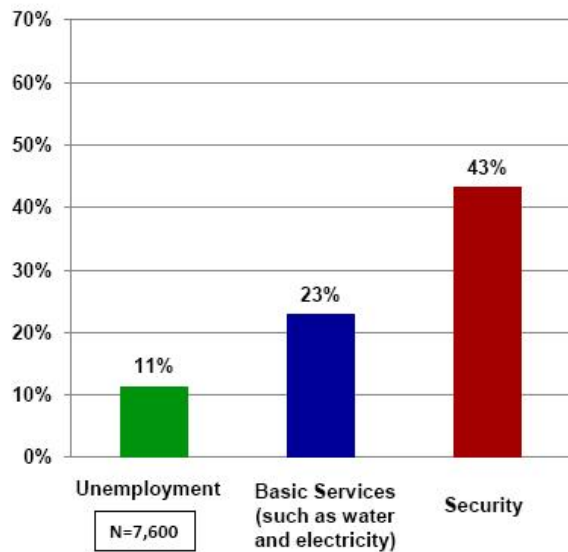
In your opinion, would you say things in Iraq are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction?

National

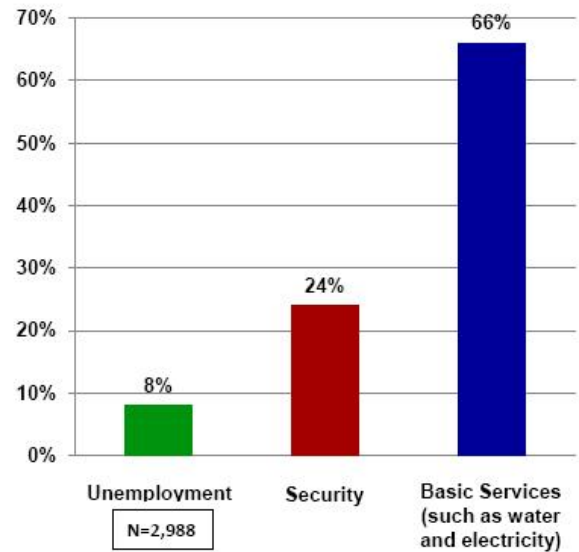


Not personally, but in terms of Iraq, what in your opinion is the single biggest problem facing Iraq as a whole? (Comparison)

December 2009



June 2010



Not personally, but in terms of Iraq, what in your opinion is the single biggest problem facing Iraq as a whole?

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

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



► MIDDLE EAST

Iraqis Cite 'Services' as Top Problem, 'Security' Concerns Decline [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Recent IRI survey of [Iraqi](#) public conducted by [Pechter Middle East Polls](#) shows that though more Iraqis feel that the country is going in the wrong direction but still 'security' concerns have declined. Iraqis mention 'services' such as water and electricity as their single most important problem.

September 16, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Infrastructure](#)

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

Multi Country Poll- U.S. Leadership Gains Approval in Parts of Asia [\(Click for Details\)](#)

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [US image](#)

Multi Country Survey Brazilians & Chinese Upbeat about Their Country, Despite Its Problems [\(Click for Details\)](#)

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



Africa zone

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

▶ SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Nigeria: Goodluck Jonathan and the 2011 Presidential Elections (Click for Details)

Despite growing speculation about whether President Goodluck Jonathan will run for President in the upcoming 2011 presidential elections, the president is yet to declare his intentions. A recent survey conducted by **NOI** Polls shows that the majority (81%) of **Nigerians** believe that Jonathan should run for President.

September 12, 2010

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

Nigeria: Attahiru Jega, INEC and Nigerians' Hopes for the 2011 Elections (Click for Details)

In a recent survey conducted by **NOI** Polls, 80% of **Nigerians** said that they were aware of Attahiru Jega's appointment as INEC chairman and majority have confidence in the INEC leadership to conduct free and fair election and they intend to vote.

September 12, 2010

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

The Nigerian Banking Sector (Click for Details)

In a recent survey conducted by **NOI** Polls, **Nigerians** were asked if they were aware of the ongoing banking reforms by the CBN. About four in ten respondents (42%) said they were unaware of the reforms while 58% of the respondents said they were aware of the reforms.

September 06, 2010

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



Euro Americas zone

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



EUROPE

▶ EAST EUROPE



Dynamics of Attitudes of the Populations of Ukraine and Russia towards One Another (Click for Details)

A recent survey of [Russian](#) and [Ukrainian](#) populations by [Kyiv Institute](#) shows that people on both side of the fence have highly favorable opinion of each other's countries and a reasonable majority wants to have free movement across borders.

September 16, 2010

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



▶ WEST EUROPE

Multi-country survey: Domestic Violence against Women ([Click for Details](#))

A [Eurobarometer](#) survey finds that domestic violence remains very common across Europe: one respondent in four across the [EU](#) knows a woman among friends or in the family circle who is a victim of domestic violence. Since the previous survey, the proportion of Europeans (on a comparable EU15 basis) that say they know a victim of domestic violence in their circle of friends or family has increased from 19% to 25%.

September 2010

[Society](#) » [Gender Issues](#)

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [International Human Rights](#)

Europeans, Development aid, and the Millennium Development Goals ([Click for Details](#))

[Eurobarometer](#) poll finds that Europeans attach high importance to development and cooperation among the [European countries](#). They believe poverty to be the major problem for developing world and contribute financially in eradicating it.

September 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [International / Regional Organizations](#)

Hostile views to Catholic doctrines ([Click for Details](#))

Pope Benedict XVI's historic visit to the [UK](#) was generally judged a success by most commentators and the first post-visit surveys suggest a small improvement in perceptions of the Pope. But a [Populus](#) poll for The Times revealed considerable underlying hostility in Britain to the views of the Catholic Church.

September 17, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

Divided opinions on coalition, economy and cuts ([Click for Details](#))

In the [UK](#) most voters (59%) think the coalition is 'doing well overall' so far, according to the latest [Populus](#) poll for The Times. But the poll also reveals a stark difference of view between men and women when it comes to central aspects of the government's agenda.

September 17, 2010

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



AMERICAS

▶ NORTH AMERICA

Americans Trust U.S. More on Foreign Than on Domestic Affairs ([Click for Details](#))

[Gallup's](#) annual Governance survey finds 57% of [Americans](#) expressing a great deal or fair amount of trust in the U.S. government to handle international problems. That is down from 62% a year ago, but remains higher than the percentage trusting Washington to handle domestic problems, now at a record-low 46%.

September 23, 2010

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

Trust in Legislative Branch Falls to Record-Low 36% ([Click for Details](#))

A record-low 36% of [Americans](#) have a great deal or fair amount of trust and confidence in the legislative branch of government, down sharply from the prior record low of 45% set last year. Trust in the judicial branch and trust in the executive branch also suffered sharp declines this year but remain higher than trust in the legislative branch. [Gallup USA](#)

September 24, 2010

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

Independents Oppose Party in Power ... Again ([Click for Details](#))

For the third [American](#) national election in a row, independent voters may be poised to vote out the party in power. The Republican Party holds a significant edge in preferences for the upcoming congressional election among likely voters, in large part because political independents now favor Republican candidates by about as large a margin as they backed Barack Obama in 2008 and congressional Democratic candidates four years ago. [Pew Research Center](#)

September 23, 2010

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

Americans Confident in Own Bank, but Not U.S. Banks ([Click for Details](#))

The percentage of [Americans](#) saying they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in U.S. banks stands at 18%, continuing a trend of low confidence recorded throughout the economic downturn. [Gallup USA](#)

September 24, 2010

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

How You Feel About Midterms Depends on Your Party ([Click for Details](#))

About two thirds of the [American](#) public sees coverage of this year's elections as focused primarily on strategy and conflict, not candidate positions, while a comparable percentage says the 2010 congressional elections are more important than most. [Pew Research Center](#)

September 22, 2010

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

Recession or Not, U.S. Job Market Woes Persist ([Click for Details](#))

Even as Wall Street rallies on the National Bureau of Economic Research announcement that the recession ended in June 2009, [Gallup](#) finds -- more than a year later -- that 88% of [Americans](#) believe now is a bad time to find a quality job.

September 22, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

On the Role of Government, Parties' Ratings Look Like 1994 ([Click for Details](#))

[Americans'](#) opinions about how well the Democratic Party represents their views on the role of government have soured in recent years. The percentage saying the party is doing either very or moderately well on this has dropped from 57% in October 2006 to 44% today. Over the same period, the Republican Party's image on the role of government has held fairly steady and, as a result, the GOP now leads on this dimension, similar to its position in October 1994. [Gallup USA](#)

September 21, 2010

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

Taxed Enough Already? ([Click for Details](#))

[Pew](#) finds that while the government, its agencies and its priorities have rarely seen such low levels of trust and favorability, more among the [American](#) public say that they pay about the right amount in taxes considering what they get from the federal government (50%) than said they pay more than their fair share in taxes (43%). Not surprisingly, just 3% were willing to say they pay less than their fair share in taxes.

September 20, 2010

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

Little Compromise on Compromising ([Click for Details](#))

There is little agreement among the [American](#) public about compromise in politics. About half (49%) say they most admire political leaders who stick to their positions without compromising, while slightly fewer (42%) say that they most admire political leaders who make compromises with people they disagree with.

[Pew Research Center](#)

September 20, 2010

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

In U.S., Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables Trails Access ([Click for Details](#))

On the heels of the news that [Americans](#) aren't consuming as many fruits and vegetables as recommended, an analysis of [Gallup-Healthways](#) Well-Being Index data from 2010 suggests access may not be the problem. Nationwide, 92% of Americans report easy access to affordable fresh produce where they live, as do at least 8 in 10 residents in all states but Alaska.

September 22, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

Almost Half of Canadians Would Abolish the Long Gun Registry ([Click for Details](#))

As the House of Commons prepares for a vote on the future of the [Canadian](#) Firearms Registry, many Canadians remain skeptical about the success of the legislation, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

September 21, 2010

[Society](#) » [Social Problems](#)



▶ LATIN AMERICA

Multi Country Survey Brazilians & Chinese Upbeat about Their Country, Despite Its Problems ([Click for Details](#))

At a time when global publics are mostly glum about the way things are going in their countries, half of [Brazilians](#) say they are satisfied with national conditions, and 62% say their nation's economy is in good shape. Of the 21 other publics included in the 2010 [Pew Global Attitudes survey](#), only the [Chinese](#) are more upbeat about their country's overall direction and economic conditions.

September 22, 2010

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



GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS

Americans, Britons and Canadians Hesitant on Middle East Talks ([Click for Details](#))

People in the [United States](#), [Canada](#) and [Britain](#) have reacted with skepticism to the announcement of high level talks between [Israel](#) and the [Palestinians](#), a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

September 21, 2010

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

U.S. Leadership Gains Approval in Parts of Asia ([Click for Details](#))

Approval of U.S. leadership in Asia has seen its share of ups and downs over the last two years as the Bush era ended and the Obama era began. So far in 2010, approval ratings remain higher than they were in 2008 in 10 out of the 18 countries surveyed. Approval increased most in [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#) and declined most in [Vietnam](#), [Indonesia](#), and [India](#), where residents are now significantly more uncertain. [Gallup USA](#)

September 20, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [US image](#)



CYBER WORLD

65% - Do You Sleep With Your Cell Phone? (Click for Details)

Two third of adult cell phone owners in **U.S.** sleep with their cell next to their bed. This ratio is even higher in youth which shows it is difficult to separate a cell owner from his/her cell and they remain available on cyber networks even when they are asleep. **Pew Research Center**

September 19, 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:

Turkish PM held meeting with his representatives and discussed some important issues regarding future of the country. Main points under discussion included President's tenure and date of general elections.

Geo-strategic Front:

Turkish Foreign Minister has assured of his efforts towards maintaining peace and stability in the Balkans. Also on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting the foreign minister expressed **Turkey's** desire to enhance its economic and commercial relations with the Organization of American States (OAS) and become an observer member to OAS in the future to coordinate its relations with countries in those regions. **Turkey** has also expressed willingness to establish an industrial zone in *Serbia*.

Turkish Parliament Speaker has asked *Israel* to apologize from **Turkey** and to accept to pay compensation to the relatives of those who were killed in *Israel's* attack on Mavi Marmara ship. In the meantime the commander of the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has urged *Israel* to sever its military ties with **Turkey**, which he described as a common enemy.

Nearly 183 million **Turkish** Liras have been collected so far within the framework of an aid campaign aiming at helping flood-hit *Pakistan*.

Economic Front:



American business community has expressed willingness to invest in **Turkey**. Meanwhile **Turkey's** employment figures had increased while the European Union's unemployment figures had been on the rise in the second quarter of 2010.

Social Front:

A public prosecutor in *Istanbul* has asked for a sentence against two journalists from the daily *Milliyet* on charges stemming from a story they published containing a declaration from a member of **Turkey's** most prominent outlawed organization.

Deputy Prime Minister's remarks suggesting decentralized exams instead of a central examination system have created controversy about the motives behind such a proposal.

GCC

Geo-strategic Front:

British Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt met with Ambassadors from the **Gulf Co-operation Council** (GCC) states at the Foreign Office to discuss methods of developing ties between the two sides. The **United Arab Emirates** has started developing its peaceful nuclear energy program to address the increasing domestic demand in electricity.



Oman has affirmed its commitment to co-operation with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and sisterly and friendly countries to use the nuclear power and technologies that have proven their efficiency and preference over other technologies in finding solutions for the issues and challenges of the sustainable development.

Economic Front:

Environment Agency-**Abu Dhabi** (EAD) has been trying to set up a Centre of Excellence in Renewable Energy Research in the Gulf region that could meet at least 10 % of electricity demands from solar and renewable energy mechanism by 2015-2020.

The *United States* has been a key economic and political partner of the **United Arab Emirates** and this close relationship has been greatly contributing to global energy security in an increasingly interdependent world. UK Commercial Secretary's recent visit to **Kuwait** aimed to boost the bilateral economic and commercial ties. The minutes of instruments of ratification of the agreement, signed between the governments of **Qatar** and Iran on the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income and capital, was signed at the Foreign Ministry headquarters in *Doha*.

Social front:

Saudi Arabia's Shoura Council has thrown its weight behind the King Abdullah International Foundation for Charity and Humanitarian Activities (KAIFCH) and has commended its objectives as spelled out by Prince Khalid bin Abdullah. Meanwhile the Ministry of Interior has slapped a total ban on "sectarian" gatherings as the government warned of an iron fist policy against those trying to drag the country into a sectarian Shiite-Sunni rift.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front:

The ruling New **Azerbaijan** Party (NAP) published a list of MP candidates for the upcoming parliamentary elections. The OSCE Mission to monitor the parliamentary elections in **Azerbaijan** was scheduled to start its activity on September 28.

Two members of **Kazakhstan's** unregistered Algha (Forward) opposition party have been detained by police in the western city of Atyrau.

The printing of ballot papers for **Kyrgyzstan's** October 10 parliamentary elections has started amid tight security. The **Kyrgyz** party has also started discussing the signing of a cooperation agreement with **Russia's** ruling United *Russia* party.

Authorities in **Tajikistan** have blamed Islamist militants for an ambush that killed at least 25 government troops in the country's eastern Rasht Valley. Later on the Interior Ministry in **Tajikistan** detained three suspected Islamist militants in connection with a recent suicide bombing.

Geo-strategic Front:

The U.S. President Obama held a meeting with the **Azerbaijani** President on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Meanwhile **Kazakhstan's** State Secretary and Foreign Minister too held a meeting with the US President in the framework of the 65th UN General Assembly session in New York.



Kyrgyzstan has closed its border with **Tajikistan** following the deadly clashes between an armed extremist group and **Tajik** military forces in **Tajikistan's** Rasht province. Meanwhile a *Russian* military official has announced to sign military cooperation with **Kyrgyzstan**.

Tajik President held meeting with *Thai* PM and discussed areas of cooperation between the two countries.

Issues of cooperation in the energy sector, industry, transport and communications, agriculture and culture remained on top of the agenda of the meeting between President of **Turkmenistan** and Federal Chancellor of *Germany* Angela Merkel. **Turkmenistan** has called for active Afghan engagement in major regional projects.

At the behest of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on September 19 the President of **Uzbekistan** Islam Karimov took off to New York with the purpose to attend the plenary session of UN General Assembly.

Economic Front:

Azerbaijan has transported 133.4 mln tons of oil via *Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan* pipeline and 15.4 bcm of gas via *Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum* pipeline so far. **Azerbaijan** has also announced its plan to ship oil to new markets including *Afghanistan*. **Azerbaijan's** Cabinet of Ministers discussed draft state budget for 2011. Meanwhile **Azerbaijani** Prime Minister and Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice President have agreed on future projects.

Two explosions in western **Kazakhstan** damaged a pipeline carrying natural gas in the country. The U.S. business circles have extended full support to the **Turkmen** initiatives including those relating to ensuring global energy security aimed at facilitating the creation of necessary conditions for reliable energy supplies. In the framework of the 11th meeting of the Steering Committee for *Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India* (TAPI) gas pipeline project the heads of line ministries of the participating countries signed a framework agreement on construction of the pipeline.

Uzbekistan has de facto nationalized the local branch of *Russia's* largest dairy manufacturer.

Social Front:

Relatives of two **Azerbaijani** bloggers jailed in a case condemned by rights groups have appealed to the U.S. President Obama to press for their release during talks with **Azerbaijan's** leader.

Devastating fires and droughts have led to the shortage of buckwheat in **Kazakhstan**. Meanwhile dozens of relatives of arrested **Kyrgyz** security officers gathered on the Old Square in Bishkek to demand their immediate release. A court in southern **Kyrgyzstan** has sentenced four men to four years in jail for using local mosques to set off deadly unrest in June.

In **Tajikistan** a branch of the Islamic Revival (IRP) in the city of Kulob has complained that authorities have been pressurizing women who wear the hijab, the Islamic head scarf.

IRAN

Geo-strategic Front:

U.S. and European diplomats walked out of the United Nations General Assembly hall when **Iranian** President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad said the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks possibly were orchestrated to bolster the U.S. economy and “save the Zionist regime.” Nearly 200 **Iranian** lawmakers have expressed support for President's remarks. President Obama called **Iranian** President's remarks as “offensive” and “hateful.”

President Obama has admitted to the uselessness of tougher sanctions against **Iran** in forcing the Islamic Republic into giving up its nuclear rights. In the meantime **Iran** has expressed readiness to set a date for talks with a group of six world powers to discuss the Islamic nation's nuclear program. **Iranian** President has further said that Tehran will consider halting uranium enrichment to the level of 20 %. Meanwhile the *Russian* Foreign Minister said **Iran** “heard the signal” and has started reviewing the proposals on its nuclear program. All the while The **Iranian** defense minister stated that *Russia's* failure to fulfill its agreement to supply Tehran with the S-300 missile defense system has indicated that Kremlin is untrustworthy.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki has held talks with his *British* counterpart on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. Mottaki strongly urged London to revise its policies concerning **Iran's** nuclear program, the wars in *Afghanistan* and *Iraq* and its "double standards" on human rights issues.

Iranian Foreign Minister has agreed to provide more aid to the flood-hit *Pakistani* people due to the magnitude of the damage.

Economic Front:

Iran's 19th international hand-woven carpet fair has opened with the aim of introducing the Persian carpet and expanding its export market.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki has played down the impact of US-engineered sanctions on the country over its nuclear program, insisting on **Iran's** continuous economic growth.

Social Front:

Computer-Security researchers have said that a computer worm that has infected industrial computers around the world may be part of a campaign targeting nuclear installations in **Iran**. **Iran** said its Bushehr nuclear power plant is safe after confirming some of its industrial computers have been targeted by a computer worm and that it is working to counter the cyber-attack.

Twelve people were killed and dozens injured in a bombing at an annual military parade in **Iran's** West *Azerbaijan* province. The **Iranian** Foreign Ministry blamed the attack on foreign “elements.”

AFGHANISTAN

Political Front:

Afghan president has called on his people to show a massive turnout despite Taliban threats, vowing to assure security for the voters. The voter turnout in the parliamentary elections was 50 % lower than the 2004 ballot when 8.5 million people exercised their franchise right. **Afghanistan's** Independent Election Commission has called the parliamentary vote successful despite militant attacks and low voter turnout. The Afghan Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) has received over 2,000 complaints on irregularities related to the country's parliamentary election. Meanwhile according to reports *Taliban* fighters have captured 12 campaigners of a Wolesi Jirga candidate in the northwestern province of *Badghis*.



Nine foreign soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash in **Afghanistan's** southern province. Three more US-led troops have been killed in separate bomb attacks in various parts of **Afghanistan**. Meanwhile US-led forces have killed at least six civilians and wounded several others in two separate incidents in **Afghanistan's** troubled east.

The CIA has reportedly set up an all-**Afghan** paramilitary group in **Afghanistan** under the pretext of hunting Taliban and al-Qaeda members in the border region with Pakistan.

Geo-strategic Front:

British troops have handed over control of "one of the most challenges areas of Afghanistan" to *US* forces. Meanwhile top *US* military Commander in **Afghanistan** General David Petraeus has cast doubt on the exact date of withdrawal for *American* forces from the war-torn country. The *US* Defense Secretary Robert Gates has announced no major changes in the **Afghan** war strategy ahead of President Obama administration's review in December.

Economic Front:

Turkmenistan, **Afghanistan**, *Pakistan* and *India* have signed a landmark agreement for a multi-billion gas pipeline project in Ashgabat. The **Afghan** government and *China* Metallurgical Corporation Group Corporation (MCC) have also inked an agreement.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front:

In **Nepal** at least 25 people, including policemen, were injured in a clash between students of a private university and law enforcers in the capital. Twenty one persons have been elected as Central Working Committee (CWC) members of the **Nepali** Congress (NC) from the quotas reserved for women, Madhesis, Janajatis and Dalits.

The Unified Communist Party of **Nepal** (Maoist) (UCPN-M) and the Communist Party **Nepal**-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) have requested House Speaker to play an active role to end the "meaningless" prime ministerial election. **Nepal's** Caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar however has denied any immediate possibility of unity among communist parties to end the current political deadlock created due to the ongoing PM election fiasco in the nation. President Yadav has asked all the political parties to remain dedicated towards institutionalizing democracy in the nation by ending the politics of violence.



The **Nepali** Congress has described the recent three-point agreement between the Unified CPN (Maoist) and the UML as a 'conspiracy'. Prime Minister dropped the idea of leading **Nepali** delegation to New York to address the 65th UN General Assembly after Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon refused to meet him.

The magistrate's court of the **Sri Lankan** capital has ordered the release of four aides of the former army chief who was convicted of corruption and conspiring to topple the country's government. Meanwhile **Sri Lankan** Opposition Leader has publicly denounced the charges brought by the government against former Army Commander and current parliamentarian retired General. **Sri Lanka's** Democratic National Alliance (DNA) has also called on religious leaders and the public to come forward to protect the rights of former Army Commander and DNA Leader retired General Sarath Fonseka.

Geo-strategic Front:

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the *US* lawmakers to adopt the New Partnership for Development Act moved by Congressman Jim McDermott and allow **Bangladesh's** duty-and quota- free access to *American* market as an LDC. Meanwhile **India** has given a loan of \$1 billion at nominal rate of interest to **Bangladesh**.

Nepal's caretaker government has decided to ink an agreement with **Indian** construction major GMR and its consortium for the 900 MW Upper Karnali hydropower project despite warnings by the former Maoist guerrillas that they would oppose it as well as 13 other projects, mostly involving **Indian** investors.

Economic Front:

Bangladesh's exports in August surged 31.25 % to \$1.79 billion from a year earlier, led by strong demand for the country's readymade garments. **Nepal** stood at 121st position securing 5.54 among the 141 economies in the Economic Freedom of the World Report. The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has completed the fourth review of **Sri Lanka's** economic performance under the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) and approved an immediate disbursement of about US\$ 212.5 million. **Sri Lanka** President has called for a genuine commitment to fulfill donor obligations to assist developing countries as the recent global economic and financial crisis has severely reduced the access to external resources and private capital flows for them.

Social Front:

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has placed the Environment Court Bill 2010 in the Parliament, seeking provisions for allowing citizens to file cases against polluters and for setting up at least one environment court in each district.



INDIA

Political Front:

In **India** Janata Dal (U) has ruled out the suggestion to hand over the disputed land in *Ayodhya* to the Janambhoomi Nyas for building a Ram temple by the Sangh Parivar. President of Janata Dal further added that settlement of the issue through a court verdict or a negotiated agreement between the parties to the dispute was the only two ways out of the problem. Meanwhile VHP and RSS have also agreed to accept court's verdict regarding the issue of Ram temple. Security has been further intensified in sensitive places in Uttar Pradesh, including *Ayodhya* and *Faizabad*, in view of the verdict on the *Babri Masjid* title suit on September 28.

Admitting that the police and administration had failed to rid Maoist menace in *West Bengal*, **Indian** Chief Minister has said that the ultras have to be tackled politically.

Terming the planned visit by an all-party delegation to *Jammu and Kashmir*, "eyewash," the hard line Hürriyet Conference leader Syed Ali Gillani has refused to meet it.

Geo-strategic Front:

India has expressed hope that despite boundary issues with *China* both countries could improve bilateral ties. An official US report on global governance has declared **India** to be the third most powerful nation after the *United States* and *China*. After a long discussion, **India** has agreed to be part of a regional initiative on *Afghanistan* along with *Iran*.

India and *Argentina* have signed an agreement for cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

India's indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile failed to take off during a user trial from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Orissa coast apparently due to a technical problem.

Economic Front:

In **India** the food price index rose 15.46 % while the fuel price index climbed 11.48 % in the year to Sept. 11. In the previous week, annual food and fuel inflation stood at 15.10 % and 11.48 %, respectively.

According to a Columbia University report, **India** has emerged as the world's 21st largest outward investor. Report shows that annual FDI outflows have jumped fifty-fold after 2000, and **Indian** firms have invested over USD 75 billion overseas in the past decade.

Social Front:

The News Broadcasters' Association (NBA) has issued specific guidelines to its member-channels on their coverage of the Allahabad High Court's judgment in the Ayodhya title suit, expected on September 28.

A report in the Daily Telegraph has claimed that **India** bribed 72 Commonwealth countries \$100,000 each to get the hosting rights for the scandal-hit 19th edition of the Games which started in Delhi from October 3-14. At least 25 villages have been destroyed by heavy flood in Bihar.

EAST ASIA

Political Front:

Thai PM has announced to hold early elections in the beginning of 2011 if opposition groups would stay peaceful. Political violence and bomb blasts have become serious point of concern for most of **Thais**.

Geo-strategic Front:

Indonesians have greatly appreciated the President Obama's announcement to visit their country.

Thailand has expressed positive hope to improve ties with **Cambodia** as former PM Thaksin has already stepped down from the role of advisor to **Cambodian** government.

The **Philippines** and fellow **ASEAN** members have announced to oppose any move by *China* to claim sovereignty over the *South China Sea*. In a bid to boost its military capabilities, **Cambodia** would get almost 100 tanks and armored personnel carriers from Eastern Europe next week.

Economic Front:

The **Indonesian** Rupee had recovered most of its losses against the dollar, and **Indonesia's** 2009 budget deficit stood at less than 1.6 % of GDP. In 2010 – just as the **Indonesian** Central bank predicted – the economy is well on the way to achieving growth rates of 7 %. IMF has declared **Indonesia's** banking system to be strong and well capitalized, as has been proven by impressive improvements in financial stability during the 2008-2009 financial crises.

A government think tank has identified a dozen growth industries such as oil and gas, biotechnology and Islamic finance to focus on in a drive to double **Malaysia's** income per capita and propel it into the ranks of “developed nations” by 2020. Despite **Malaysia's** proposed economic reforms, foreign investors are shunning the country's markets, opting for better investment opportunities in the region. A recent Bank of America Merrill Lynch report has dubbed **Malaysia** the “least-favored market” in the Asia Pacific after the country dropped from 10th to last in the latest Fund Mangers Survey. Meanwhile according to the UN calculations, 81% of the overseas investments have dropped in **Malaysia**. The financial experts on international trade have stressed the need to boost the country's bilateral trade volume with *Sri Lanka*, *China* and *Iran* for keeping the trade growth higher and to attain economic prosperity.

The **Philippines**, the world's biggest rice buyer, expects to import up to 1.5 million tonnes of the grain for 2011 after record purchases of 2.45 million tonnes for this year led to oversupply.

Cambodian Prime Minister has decided to appeal to the US President Obama to cancel a “dirty debt” of more than \$300mn.

Meanwhile **Vietnam** has once again been selected as the number one investment destination, outside of *Brazil*, *Russia*, *India* and *China* (BRIC).



Social Front:

More than 300 people have been killed on **Indonesian** roads during a mass exodus to celebrate the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr. Also two Batak Christian Protestant Church (HKBP) leaders were assaulted in **Indonesia**.

In the **Philippines** a leader of the Abu Sayyaf extremists linked to the kidnapping of two *American* missionaries and 17 others, including **Filipinos**, in 2001 has been killed in an encounter with government forces. Also the *Moro Islamic Liberation Front* (MILF) has altered its demand for the establishment of a separate Muslim state to bring lasting peace to strife-torn Mindanao. Besides that Typhoon Ketsana has recently hit **Philippines**.

New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) has scolded the **Thai** government over its handling of the ongoing insurgency in the three southernmost provinces, and condemned the militants there for carrying out target killings of public school teachers.

Germany has provided assistance to **Cambodia** for flood control system project that would benefit about 700 households with approximately 3,500 farmers and their livestock.

CHINA**Geo-strategic Front:**

Six warplanes took off from within **China** and launched long-distance "sudden attacks" in neighboring *Kazakhstan* in the ongoing anti-terror drill of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Sino-Russian ties have been on the positive track and have reached at peak currently. Meanwhile **Sino-Japanese** relations soared as *Japan* detained **Chinese** fishing trawler captain. The public in **China** has been angered by the incident and is staging protests both in major **Chinese** cities and on the Internet.

China has extended support for UN General Assembly to play an even greater role in handling international affairs. China has expressed hope that the four BRIC countries -- **China**, *India*, *Russia* and *Brazil* -- would further strengthen coordination and cooperation.

Chinese PM has called for large-scale **Sino-U.S.** economic and trade cooperation. **Chinese** PM and the US President discussed issues facing the two countries on the sidelines of UN conferences and stressed on the need to deepen bilateral ties. **Chinese** growing relations with *Egypt* and *Ghana* remained significant.

China has pledged to give an additional assistance of 200 million U.S. dollars to flooded *Pakistan*, totaling **China's** aid to 250 million dollars, its largest- ever humanitarian aid to a foreign country.

Economic Front:

The *European Union* (EU) has launched an anti-subsidy probe into wireless modems imported from **China**, after it targeted the same **Chinese** product with two separate investigations of anti-dumping and safeguards measures in June.

China's currency Renminbi (RMB), raised 62 basis points to a new record high at 6.711 per U.S. dollar. **China** has reduced the average import tariff rate to 9.8 %, much lower than the average of 46.6 % rate for developing nations.

As world leaders converge at the UN headquarters to review and boost the global efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a fact has become clear that **China** is taking the lead in this global endeavor.

The Ministry of Commerce has denied media reports that **China** had banned exports of rare earths to *Japan*, following the arrest of a **Chinese** trawler captain near the disputed region.



The *Beijing* Administration for Industry and Commerce recently released a report containing practical measures to support and encourage the development of foreign-funded enterprises in *Beijing* in terms of market accessions, annual inspections, oversight and management.

Social Front:

A senior official of the Communist Party of **China** (CPC) in charge of culture and publicity has pledged to deepen the nation's reform of its cultural sector over the next five years.

China has set up 4.1 billion square meters of energy efficient buildings in total, accounting for 21.7 % of gross urban construction areas, which has the capacity to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 23.4 million tons.

China has rolled out a blueprint to boost the nation's digital publication industry. Meanwhile **China's** phone subscribers rose to 1.13 billion by the end of August.

KOREA

Political Front:

North Korea has announced to hold a meeting of its ruling Workers' Party on Sept. 28 that is seen as linked to leader Kim Jong-il's plan to hand power over to his third son, Jong-un.

Geo-strategic Front:

Russian high official has denied handing over Cheonan Report to **South Korea**. Meanwhile **South Korean** Defence Minister has said that this years' 'white paper' will not describe **North Korea** as the country's main enemy.

South Korea and the *U.S.* have announced to hold anti-submarine drills off the Asian country's west coast between Sept. 27 and Oct. 1.

Economic Front:

Soaring consumer prices and the sluggish domestic economy have reduced donations to the underprivileged, leaving them more alienated during the Chuseok holiday.

Korea National Oil Corp. has received acceptances for 64.26 % of Dana Petroleum Plc shares in its hostile takeover battle for the *U.K.* explorer.

Social Front:

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has wished **Koreans** a happy harvest Chuseok holiday.

Korea has pledged to provide an international public-private partnership organization with \$1 million for the global campaign to donate life-saving vaccines to children in the world's poorest countries.

Korea has seen "unusual" weather, such as heat wave, record rainfall and early frost, in September.



JAPAN

Political Front:

The Democratic Party of **Japan** has announced its plan to assign former Cabinet members to head key committees in the House of Representatives to secure the ruling party's leadership in the divided Diet.

Japanese voter approval for Prime Minister Naoto Kan's Cabinet rose 18 %age points to 64 %, according to a Sankei newspaper survey. The disapproval rating dropped 19 points to 21 % from the last survey taken in August.

Geo-strategic Front:

Four of **Japanese** citizens have been held in *China* for allegedly videotaping military targets as tensions heightened over a territorial dispute that has damaged ties between Asia's two biggest economies. **China** has severed senior-level government contacts with **Japan**, halting aviation talks and suspending a meeting on

coal because of a recent dispute over **Japan's** extended detention of a fishing boat captain for a collision in disputed waters who **Japanese** prosecutors have decided to release, following intense pressure from *China*.

Economic Front:

The yen dropped against most of its major counterparts as traders speculated that **Japan** sold the currency to protect exporters. The currency slid as much as 1.1 % against the dollar in the biggest intraday decline since the Bank of **Japan** intervened on Sept. 15 before erasing most of the drop.

Japanese Prime Minister has pledged to offer \$8.5 billion over five years starting in 2011 to help improve the health of mothers and babies as well as education services in poor countries.

Social Front:

An international conference on biodiversity set to take place in **Japan** in October would attempt to set new targets for protecting organisms and conclude a global pact stating how genetic resources are to be used in drug development and other fields.

American model and actress Paris Hilton dropped her entry request and left **Japan** on a chartered flight after being stopped and questioned at Narita International Airport last month about her conviction for cocaine possession. §

Events of the week in

Africa zone

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

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: Ghana: At a time when world leaders were headed towards New York to attend the 26th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly meeting, **Ghana's** President, John Evans Atta Mills was touring *China* reportedly to attract investments and build stronger ties between the two nations.

Liberia: The country's President told the General Assembly at a UN debate that tackling corruption and mismanagement represents the greatest challenge that **Liberia** faces as it continues to rebuild its economy and society after the United Nations helped it end decades of civil war and misrule.

Cameroon: The National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, has lamented the incessant harassment of **Nigerians** by **Cameroonian** gendarmes in Bakassi Peninsula, saying the action amounted to a willful breach of the Green Tree Agreement brokered by the United Nations as part of measures to sustained peace in the area.

Nigeria: Former Vice President and presidential aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, have asked President Goodluck Jonathan to respond to allegations that his campaign funds

are taken from the nation's treasury. Meanwhile **Nigeria's** ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) has indefinitely suspended its party primaries, scheduled for October. The move gives President Goodluck Jonathan's opponents, especially northern PDP elites, more time to choose a strong northern candidate to challenge Jonathan, who is running for the PDP nomination after replacing the deceased Umaru Yaradua as president in May.

The *United States of America* has de-listed **Nigeria** from the list of major drug trafficking countries due to the laudable efforts of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

Guinea-Bissau's President told the UN General Assembly that the country needs sustained international support to help the fragile and impoverished nation tackle its major challenges, such as organized crime, high unemployment, environmental degradation and a poorly performing justice system.

Niger's head of State Salou Djibo has called for the United Nations and other international organizations to observe the forthcoming series of elections to restore the impoverished country to constitutional rule after February's coup d'état.

France's foreign ministry has confirmed that an *al-Qaeda group* is holding five of its citizens after abducting them from a uranium mine in **Niger**. **France's** defense minister has said that there is "every reason" to believe the five French nationals being held by militants are alive.

Elections: Ivory Coast: The head of the U.N. mission to **Ivory Coast** certified its final voter list as "fair and transparent", adding momentum to plans to hold elections at last after years of failure.

Guinea: Political fighting is preventing **Guinea's** electoral commission setting a new date for the West African country's delayed poll, raising the danger of unrest. However **Guinea's electoral commission** has proposed Oct. 10 as the revised date for the final round of voting in the West African country's first democratic election. Meanwhile the Member countries of the Economic Community of **West African States** (ECOWAS) have issued a three-week ultimatum to **Guinea** to organize a run-off election to restore constitutional order in the beleaguered country.

Nigeria: The request by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for a shift in the dates of the 2011 general elections has enjoyed the support of more civil society groups in the country who urged the National Assembly to give speedy consideration to the proposal. Meanwhile as the controversy over the date and which constitution should be used to conduct the election rages, a cross section of eminent lawyers last week supported the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for postponing of the 2011 elections.

Central Africa: Congolese President Joseph Kabila arrived in Ituri as part of a tour of the eastern part of the country, which has also touched the Kivus and Katanga. His visit promised a number of development projects for the region.

United Nations peacekeepers are patrolling the border between the Democratic Republic of the **Congo (DRC)** and **Uganda** after reports of arms trafficking by the rebel **Ugandan** Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) across DRC and southern **Sudan**.

Rwanda: Following the recent ruling by French Court that released genocide suspect Eugene Rwamucyo, the Prosecutor General Martin Ngoga termed the ruling as a temporary setback against **Rwanda's** drive towards according justice to those aggrieved by the perpetrators of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi.

Central African Republic: The United Nations will continue to help the Central African Republic (**CAR**) to consolidate peace after years of ethnic conflict and political unrest by enhancing political dialogue and the reintegration of former fighters into national society.



Meanwhile the **UN** and the **African Union** (AU) launched a joint task force on peace and security as the two organizations stepped up their cooperation in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace building across the continent.

East Africa/Horn of Africa: Sudan: Key leaders of north and south **Sudan** promised last week to ensure that next January's planned referendum on independence for the southern region will go forward peacefully and on time.

Meanwhile *United States* is urging **Sudan** to meet its obligations under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and hold a referendum on-time that could see the South of the country secede from the North, otherwise, Khartoum could face new sanctions.

Also *Amnesty International* said in a press release that the **Sudanese** authorities must halt the harassment and intimidation of journalists in the run up to the referendum on southern independence in January 2011, "No credible poll can be conducted in an environment where freedom of speech is being so openly violated,"

Somalia: The chairman of the **Somali** concerned group, an advocacy organization based in London has demanded the resignation of *President Sheik Sharif Sheikh Ahmed*, accusing the beleaguered leader of failing to meet the aspirations of **Somalis**. Meanwhile a recent clash in **Somalia's** capital, Mogadishu, between government troops and **Islamist** insurgents has killed at least 20 people and wounded at least 68 others. Medics say most of the dead are civilians. Also the head of *Britain's* security services has said al-Qaida plots targeting *Britain* are increasingly originating from **Somalia** and **Yemen**.



The US wants to strengthen its ties with **Somalia's** breakaway region **Somaliland** and semi-autonomous region of **Puntland**. The "aggressive" engagement could help to head off the Islamist insurgents. Meanwhile showing concern the **Kenyan** President Mwai Kibaki called on the Security Council to abandon what he called its hands-off approach to **Somalia** and strengthen the African peacekeeping force in the country to counter the threat from Islamist militants.

Eritrea is at risk of becoming a failed state, according to a new report from the International Crisis Group. It says internal repression coupled with international military conflict means the country is becoming increasingly isolated in the Horn of Africa.

Uganda: With less than six months until next presidential elections, international rights groups have gathered in **Uganda** to highlight the erosion of freedom of expression in the east African nation.

South Africa: **South Africa's** ruling African National Congress has planned to make a new tribunal to punish the journalists on dishonest and immoral reporting. A press freedom group is urging **South Africa** to abandon proposed controversial laws to limit information involving national security. Whereas *President Jacob Zuma* has defended the two proposed laws, saying they are needed to protect human rights.

Zimbabwe: New crisis arose in the country when **Zimbabwe's** Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai issued a tough assessment of the constitutional revision process led by a parliamentary committee. Meanwhile a Civic Group has urged dissolution of the Parliamentary Committee on constitution charging the committee has demonstrated its incompetence.

Zimbabwe's Mugabe Tells UN Western Sanctions Blocking Anti-Poverty Progress during the General Assembly in New York that "the devastating sanctions" were hindering **Zimbabwean** progress toward U.N Millennium Development goals on poverty and hunger, among others. He said that despite the

sanctions imposed by the United States, Europe and others, Harare had made great progress fighting HIV/Aids and maintaining quality basic education.

African nations pushed for permanent Security Council representation again at the UN General Assembly through the top officials from three African nations (**South Africa, Swaziland and Congo**) saying it was a travesty that the region that comprises so much of the body's work does not have a permanent place.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: Nigeria: Despite attempts by various government establishments and international organizations to stem human trafficking, it has been discovered that more **Nigerians** are at the moment stranded in **Mali** desperate to find their way to Europe.

Mali: According to aid agencies Good rains in much of northern **Mali** over recent months have caused pasture to regenerate and animals to begin to recover in parts of *Gao, Timbuktu* and *Kidal* regions, but extreme vulnerability persists for Gao-based farming communities, who have exhausted all their coping mechanisms and are unable to recover their livelihoods. However with rain comes the risk of illnesses for animals weakened by months of malnutrition, making this a critical time for veterinary care.

Mauritania: Al-Qaeda offshoot in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) accused the **Mauritanian** government of killing civilians in **Mali** and of being the agents of *France*. In a communiqué published by the website Nouakchott Information, AQIM denounced an aerial raid by the **Mauritanian** army. Senior officers also confirmed that **Mauritanian** warplanes attacked militants of Al-Qaeda's North African wing in **Mali**, as the head of **Mauritania's** ruling party urged support for a "holy war against terrorists".

The Economic Community of **West African States** (ECOWAS) last week adopted the Dakar Declaration that gives women equal participation and full involvement in all peace and security issues in compliance with a landmark UN Security Council resolution.

Five years before the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a new report card shows **sub-Saharan Africa** making substantial progress. However not all countries there are advancing at the same rate.

Central Africa: Burundi: Several mysterious killings in **Burundi**, where memories of civil war are still fresh, have spread fear and disrupted livelihoods, while authorities have sought to play down talk of renewed armed insurrection, blaming some of the deaths on bandits.

Rwanda: The Ministry of gender and family promotion has disbursed Rwf 122,748,645 to 10 districts to support orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) to help their households' start-up income-generating activities.

Meanwhile an increasing number of rape and defilement cases in *Nyagatare* district **Rwanda** are becoming the human rights' issue. According to the district's Intermediate Court, on average, 45 out of 50 cases handled by the court, in a month, are related to sexual abuse with most of the victims, children under 14.

South Africa: Many **Zimbabweans** in **South Africa** fail to surmount hurdles to legal residence, due to their failure to meet documentary requirements. This follows the call by **South African** authorities for them to come forward and establish themselves as legal residents before a December 31 deadline.



Zambia: The United Nations refugee agency is preparing to close two refugee camps in **Zambia** as the number of **Congolese** who have successfully returned home in a UN-backed programme over the past three years tops 40,000.

Also in **Malawi** in a refugee camp where 11000 refugees from **Democratic Republic of Congo** live together, according to reports rape, stress, hopelessness, domestic and gender based violence are widespread problems.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: Nigeria: An unprecedented outbreak of lead poisoning linked to a gold rush has killed at least 200 children in northern **Nigeria** this year, with a further 18,000 people affected.

Meanwhile according to an official about two million people in northern **Nigeria** have been displaced after authorities opened the floodgates on two dams. The dams are in *Kano* state, but about 5,000 villages in neighboring *Jigawa* state have been affected as well.

South Africa: A new measles outbreak has claimed lives of 70 children in **Zimbabwe's Mashonaland** Central province in the past two weeks in spite of a national vaccination program carried out earlier this year.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: Ghana: Ghana's nearly \$13 billion in Chinese loan agreements will be drawn on gradually as projects that require funding arise and only after financing terms are agreed, the government said.

Meanwhile **Ghana** oil ministry is making good progress in talks with *Chinese* investors interested in buying a stake in the nation's oil assets. **Ghana's** Bauxite and aluminum industries have also received a major boost, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with *Chinese* Firm, Bosai Minerals Group, to invest \$1.2 billion into the sector, by establishing a modern alumina refinery plant in the country.

Ivory Coast: Ivorian petroleum stocking company GESTOCI will invest \$400 million over the next five years to double its capacity to 680,000 tonnes, including building a new unit for stocking petroleum products in the major port of San Pedro, according to the firm's director general.

Nigeria: The delay in implementation of a new national minimum wage is causing some disquiet in the labour movement as the leadership of the **Nigeria** Labour Congress (NLC) is under immense pressure to call its members out on an industrial action.

Central Africa: Rwanda: Rwanda and *France* signed an Energy deal last month which will see *France* injects €3.3 million into RECO-RWASCO to support the national electrification programs.

East Africa/Horn of Africa: The 12th **East African Community** (EAC) partnership fund steering committee has approved a budget of approximately \$7 million for the 2010/2011 Financial Year (FY). The EAC Partnership Fund is a basket fund with contributions from development partners to support activities in the EAC.

The *Chinese* ambassador to **Ethiopia** Gu Xiaojie said his government is taking various measures to strike the balance on the trade volume exchange between **Ethiopia** and *China*, which is in favor of his country.

South Africa: **South African** President Jacob Zuma tried to mend strained relations with his trade union



allies who helped him come to power, promising to get tough on corruption and create more jobs in Africa's largest economy.

Zimbabwe: Billionaire Richard Branson urged people last week to invest in **Zimbabwe**, saying the world was wrong to wait instead of helping the politically unstable, poor southern African nation revive itself.

Despite re-engagement, Washington has declined to review sanctions on **Zimbabwe's** Mugabe saying supporters of Mr. Mugabe's former ruling ZANU-PF party have continued to violate human rights, most recently in the nation's constitutional revision process.

The **Mozambican** and *Chinese* governments signed an agreement in Maputo last week under which a team of 12 *Chinese* doctors will work in Maputo Central Hospital, the largest health unit in the country. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

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

WESTERN EUROPE

Political Issues

Selection of officers for the European External Action Service (EEAS) had a misgiving reaction from new **EU** members, thinking old **EU** members had shared the post among themselves through back room deal. But the statement by EEAS chief Catherine Ashton suggests that applicants from the new member states only concentrated on same jobs therefore reduced their opportunity to getting other portfolios.

The **EU** has tightened its anti-piracy law with new enforcement and diffuses the concern of civil liberties activists that such moves would undermine fundamental freedoms in the bloc. **EU** believes online piracy is detrimental to copyright and causes serious economic damage to artists, to creative industries and to all those, whose jobs depend on the use of internet.

Swedish parliamentary election has ended with no decisive winner, the center-right party led by Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt longs for left-wing opposition support instead of far-right **Sweden** Democrats, not generally favored for its anti-immigration policies.

After a long battle for the seat departed by ex-PM Gordon Brown, the labour party finally chooses *Ed Miliband* as its new leader, triumphing over his brother, Ex-foreign secretary David Miliband. But Prime Minister *David Cameron* challenges labour opposition of lacking alternative policy to bail out the economy from it present woes.

Economic Issues

One of the challenges to the **EU** has been the fear of losing state sovereignty and the anxiety of being overshadowed by powerful and old **EU** countries. One of the current most apprehensions was from **UK** fearing that the new established financial regulatory body of the **EU** will undermine its sovereignty, although the bloc has approved the financial watchdogs after address concerns. The financial watchdog is expected to reduce the repetition of the financial crisis within the *Eurozone*.

The **European** economic project is believed to be achievable if the bloc can re- launch a social market economy alongside its single market. The economic reality in the **EU** demands alternatives upon which **EU** citizens could be able to meet their economic needs.

German economy is taking the credit as a model for others; **German** economy continues to witness growth despite the troubling economic concerns within the **EU**. Such economic surge however might not be true for **Ireland**.

The economic reality facing governments across **Europe** could inform why the **British** government declined to acknowledge the financial request of the *British Queen*. For many **Britons** financially assisting the palace is unworthy, while others believe the monarch has it benefit to **British** economy.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

French labour leaders are chanting victory for the huge protest they were able to launch against the recent most upheaval, pension reforms.

Meanwhile, Roma expulsion is making headlines across **Europe** and debate among **EU** MEP. Although many have criticized **France** for its action but that does not suggest **France** is without supporters like **Italy** and **Spain**.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the leader of the world's Anglicans sees no issue in the appointment of a gay bishop, but the traditionally and historically standards that requires clergy to remain celibate could stop a gay becoming a bishop.

The *Vatican* will for a long time continue to see the harsh reactions of relatives and victims of sex scandal that rocked the Catholic Church. Protesters across **Europe** and *United States* are staging protest before the *Vatican* to express their grievance.

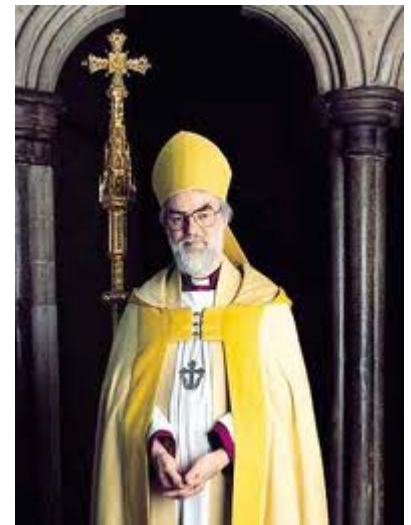
Normalization of ties could be best for the **EU** but not at the cost of Human right in terms of *Cuba* and *China*. The European Commission resolves to ban goods from *China* produced in forced labour camps and will want *Havana* to ensure more human rights protection.

Some in the **EU** wants a normalization of ties with *Havana* but such sentiment is not shared by all. **Spain** has been at the forefront of the normalization process, but if the **EU** accords one of *Havana* dissidents Human Right prize that could jeopardize the effort.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Despite their tough and committed ambition to nail *Israel* as Nuclear Capability State, the Arab sponsored resolution supported by *Iran* could not passed through **IAEA** approval. The resolution was defeated by 51 votes, against 46 votes in its support. Washington has attempted dissuading Arab members of **IAEA** from such a move because of sensitivity of the on-going Middle East Peace talks.

According to an analysis in the *World Politics Review*, the Nabucco natural gas pipeline remains a project victimize by geo-political and economic interest. All feeders for the pipeline are faced with many options and that is affecting Nabucco. On this backdrop the huge financial commitment of European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the International Financial Corporation (a branch of the World Bank Group) to see the *Nabucco* natural gas pipeline becomes operational by 2015 demand more political gimmick.



Geostrategic Issues

The new U.S Electronic Travel Authorisation System (Esta) requires **EU** citizens to pay \$14 entry fee through credit card for which **EU** citizens' data could be recorded. **EU** believes the system infringes on transatlantic cooperation and MEPs are thinking of retaliation.

The threat of militant groups in Africa gives **French** military legitimacy on the continent. *Paris* has been struggling with militants keeping **French** citizens as hostages and Paris believes military action can only be used to retract the action.

EAST EUROPE

Political Issues

Political tension remains a recounting issue in **Albania** as ruling and opposition parties are yet to find a solution to the disturbing issue of irregularities in June 2009 elections. The opposition is staging another protest meanwhile failed to participate in deciding the new chairman of the country's Constitutional Court.

Romania parliament formally displayed their resentment against Roma expulsion from France through a parliamentary consensus. Yet that does not hide the divide between the ruling and opposition parties over unpopular pension law.

Serbian political leadership will have to prove their political seriousness that will bridge the gulf between radical and liberal politic. The government has not agreed to the proposal of having an election as demanded by the opposition.

Economic Issues

The economic climate in the **Romania** has further push labour leader to stage protest against the government, accused of negligence toward the need of workers.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Albania government has given recognition to minority Serbs in the country by allowing the teaching of Serbian in school to children of **Serb** origin.

Ratko Mladic and *Goran Hadzic*, Brammertz are two fugitives denting **Serbia** before the UN war crimes tribunal. The latter is unhappy with **Serbia** lackadaisical attitude towards apprehending the two war crime accused.

Geostrategic Issues

The trouble between **Serbia** and **Kosovo** is not closer to resolution even after the ICJ's ruling. Pristina is rejecting any chances of status talk with Serbia even if they will sit together under the auspices of the UN. Meanwhile the issue of Northern Kosovo continues to divide the two countries.

The expulsion of Roma from *France* is termed offensive to **Bulgaria** and **Romania**, yet both countries have agreed not to allow the issue to dissuade their bid for Schengen membership.

The new **Macedonia-Serbia** agreement allowing citizens of both countries to move across the borders without passport is another pointer that despite the unsettled political climate in the region there is still room for co-operation.

RUSSIA

Political Issues



Poland and **Russia** have been at loggerhead but a new understanding over gas pipeline and supply might reduce the tension between the two countries. Meanwhile, *Poland* continues to flex muscle within the EU by urging the bloc to speed up reforms conducive to the new and less powerful member countries.

Poland is supporting the UN Millennium Development Goals project, as *Poland* itself has been a recipient of humanitarian aid, hence *Poland* is ready to share experience of receiving and extending aid to underdeveloped countries.

The *Slovak* Centre-Right coalition government is still battling with how to resolve budget deficit and cut public spending for the next fiscal year. The cut is expected to affect **Slovak's** defence ministry and its foreign military operations.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, has been in power since 1994 and will still be running for same office in the upcoming December 19 presidential elections.

Belarus would not be happy being the cause of *Kyrgyzstan* economic problem. The role of **Belarus** in *Kyrgyzstan* recent past trouble has been recounted as the former gave asylum to the former *Kyrgyz* president; therefore *Kyrgyzstan* refuses to join the trilateral union of *Kazakhstan*, **Russia** and **Belarus**.

The *Latvia's* Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis will be happy for receiving the support of leaders of neighbouring countries. The prime ministers of neighbouring **Estonia** and **Lithuania** weighed in their support for Dombrovskis amid the *Latvia's* forthcoming general election.

Economic Issues

Vladimir Putin, **Russia's** prime minister, trumpeted the prospect of strong economic growth and defended his accomplishments and hopes cutting **Russia's** budget deficit. Meanwhile, **Russia** does not expect to join the WTO by 2011 as expected.



As *Indonesia's* exports to **Russia** in the first half of this year reached US\$242 million, while the value of imports was \$540.3 million both see more prospective in their economic ties upon the agreement to be soon signed between leaders from both countries.

The centre-right **Czech** government has finally adopted a belt-tightening budget for next year limiting the public finance deficit to 4.6 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) set by the European Union for the country.

Meanwhile, the **Polish** government is facing its own share of protest over pay freezes proposed by the government in the 2011 budget.

Hungary and *Germany* are on the verge of strengthening their ties through co-operating on car production as **Hungarian** leader meets with German top car producer.

The seminar titled 'Focus CIS Region' paved the way for diplomats from CIS countries to throw open opportunities for *Indian* exporters and business houses for export of various products and setting up joint venture in the region.

The **Estonian** Consumer Protection Board issued a warning on Sept. 17 that when consumers begin to make travel plans, they should take into account the problems encountered by some with the activities of the aviation firm Air Baltic

Klaipeda Free Economy Zone has signed an agreement with a new investor Heidelberg Klaipeda for allocation of more than ten million LITAS in development of logistics terminal.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Exiled **Chechen** separatist leader Akhmed Zakayev has returned to London after **Poland** declined a request from **Russia** to extradite him on charges of murder, kidnapping and terrorism.

The **Czech** President Václav Klaus believes in quality education for all and he demonstrated that by opening the new academic year at the Economics and Public Administration Faculty of Prague's University of Economics.

The **Czech** Republic has refused to grant Google permission to expand its "Street View" because the mapping feature invades peoples' privacy.

Poland's Equality Minister is facing accusations of homophobia and there have been calls for her to quit after she said Catholic schools had the right to fire gay and lesbian teachers.

The issue of Roma remains in the headlines as **Hungarian** state television has rejected a political ad from a far-right party that talks about 'Gypsy criminals.'

Could this be another extension of Chinese Influence? Li Changchun, a senior official of the Communist Party of *China* (CPC), opened the first Confucius Institute in **Estonia** and first of its kind in the Baltic region.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The role of **Russia** in global food production cannot be veiled. The recent ban on grains by **Russia** as a result of its natural disaster is having ramification on global grains market and that explains why Russia will part of experts to deliberate on global worries on high food prices.

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin said after a meeting with Chinese officials that *Chinese* officials have not sought to revise an earlier agreement over the cost of oil delivered to *China* via a recently launched 67-km spur from the Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline

The **Hungarian** EU Presidency, to be held in the first half of 2011, wants to conclude *EU* legislation on regulating the disposal of nuclear waste and spent fuel.



Ukraine's coal industry ministry and China's state development bank reached an agreement on cooperation in the coal industry, a further boost to **Ukraine's** energy benefit. **Ukraine** will also be joining the European Energy Community on 24 September, ahead of the Group's Eighth Ministerial Meeting in Skopje.

Geostrategic Issues

Israeli leaders have sharply criticized Bill Clinton over comments the former U.S. president made this week calling **Russian** immigrants in Israel an obstacle to peace.

Israeli and **Polish** diplomats met at a conference in Jerusalem marking the 20th anniversary of the renewal of bilateral relations after breaking off ties in 1967. Israel attention in the region will not forget **Czech** Republic as Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman visits Prague.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko hails *Venezuela* for saving his country from an economic crisis by sending oil to Minsk after Russia stopped subsidizing shipments of crude oil to **Belarus**.

US/CANADA

Political Issues

The sluggish **American** economy has compounded the frustration of many **Americans** for Obama-led democrat government. Recent AP-GfK Poll suggests that voters are disenchanted by both parties yet republican voters are more enthusiastic than democrat to cast their votes. Tax cut and extension is another election potential issue which both parties are yet to get a consensus opinion on. Democrat party hopes to further dig into the issue after the midterm election.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of *New York* is showcasing himself as a new breed politician having broad horizon of politics and who is more problem solving oriented. His recent interview challenges the Tea party as just a fad, lacking leadership skill to resolve Washington's problem.

Young democrats and independents are believed to be disenchanted with Obama because his message of hope is bearing no reality; many of the campaign promises are fading into political wind and thus meant that the president would have to re-enchanted his base with campaign-style rallies.

Canadian minority government narrowly lost a bid to relax gun registry in the country. The opposition wants to retain the registry as measure to curb crimes, but rejected by the Conservative government as a waste of money bill which penalizes law-abiding hunters and farmers.

Economic Issues

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not happy with the less popularity of his government and the state of the economy, which informs the shuffle in his cabinet with more experienced person.

Canadian Department of Finance says fiscal policy is on track as budget deficit falls. The fall was from C\$5.8 billion to C\$473 million, followed by expenses declined and revenues increased.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Canadian engineering students assert that they have made Leonardo Da Vinci's dream a reality by making the Snowbird fly. They claim to have flown an engineless aircraft that stays aloft by flapping its wings like a bird. It is left with International aviation officials to certify the success of the claim.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Albert has long been debating the environmental implications of oil sands exploration with no specific conclusion but the government is offering a third party independent panel to further probe the issue as to how the exploration contributes to water pollution.



LATIN AMERICA

Political Issues

Few **South American** leaders will be part of world leaders whose attendance at the *UNGA* session will be missing. These leaders are reported to be deeply concerned about domestic issues holding them back from the UN session.

Brazilians are closer to cast their votes for the next president of the country, yet poll remains same that Ms. Rousseff is leading with a large difference and hopeful willing the presidential election in the first round.

Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez is wooing voters for votes with the promise of nationalization and socialism, meanwhile the Catholic Church wants opposition's votes to be respected and wants **Venezuela** to trail the part of Brazil in transferring power easily even to a woman.

Economic Issues

Argentina is pushing hard for a concerted trade partnership between the European Union Mercosur. The hope is that with strong bilateral agreements and free trade both blocs can trade better

NAFTA was a platform created to facilitate trade, but the tension between U.S and **Mexico** has become one of the shadows disturbing NAFTA. U.S meat industry wants the government to re-allow Mexican truckers into the U.S as a block on **Mexican** trucks has affected the meat industry.

Venezuela's finance ministry reported that Venezuela's steel production fell by 31 percent in 2009 and aluminum output decreased by 6 percent and alumina dropped 14 percent.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Thousands of **Argentines** students took to the street protested before national congress and presidential palace in Buenos Aires demanding quality education in their colleges and universities.

As part of its social welfare package, **Brazil's** labour minister said that the government has created 1.95 million new jobs to wither the strength of joblessness.

It is a sign of diplomatic normalization as **Colombian** and **Venezuelan** officers are working together in combating drug traffickers and rebel groups.

Meanwhile, a newspaper in **Mexico** questions the authority of the government; believe to be a lame government that cannot protect its citizens from the harsh threats and killings by drug lords.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The government of **Argentina** said that in 2009/10 wheat production has increased as compare to the previous years and harvest should be between 10 million and 11.2 million tons.

Due to its emerging economy and demand for energy, the **Brazilian** government plans to set up 10 hydroelectric power plants this year with an aim to generate 4,000 MW of electricity.

Rescue operation continues in **Chile** for the 33 miners trapped under 2,300 feet beneath the earth. **Chilean** President Pinera is doing all best that the miners are rescued by November.

Geostrategic Issues

New York presented an avenue for the foreign ministers of **BRIC** to deliberate on matter of greater interest to them. The ministers discussed cooperation among emerging market countries, the reform of the international financial architecture and global economic governance as well as international development cooperation

It has become a perennial tension between the two countries; **Argentine** forces are seen gearing up for the *Falkland Island* to show their sovereignty, a situation not welcoming to the British government.

Venezuela-U.S diplomatic tension remains on the broad, Caracas is rejecting Palmer as U.S ambassador to **Venezuela** on the premise that he has been meddling in Venezuelan domestic affairs.

AUSTRALASIA

Political Issues

Managing a fragile coalition is the big challenge confronting the **Australian** government. The Green party, one of coalition partners is demanding tax increase for mining, an expensive policy for Labour, and the Opposition Liberal party is threatening to break down the delicate government. The question is whether **Australians** are ready to go to the polls again.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The increasing trouble caused by asylum seekers in **Australia** is becoming an issue for **Australian** immigration policy of mandatory detention for asylum-seekers while their claims are processed. Detecting genuine and fake asylum seeker is what the policy has not been able to achieve.

The late nun Mary MacKillop who soon will become **Australia's** first Catholic saint was briefly excommunicated by the church in part because she exposed a paedophile priest, a new documentary claims.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

New Zealand was gripped by another low intensity earthquake, which according to report has not caused damage or injuries. §

