

# Friday on the facebook

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## Who are we?

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

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

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

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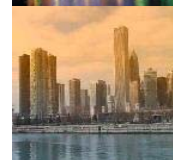
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# Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of 20 surveys. 2 of these are multi-country surveys & the rest are national surveys. 6 polling organizations have been represented.



## Topic of the week:

### **Estimated 1 Billion Adults Struggled to Afford Food in 2009**

► 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: In 22 countries, more than half didn't have enough money to buy food at times**

By Cynthia English and Julie Ray-- While the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reported last week that the recent volatility in food prices is not a sign of an impending food crisis, Gallup surveys in 113 countries in 2009 underscore people's vulnerability to such fluctuations. An estimated 1 billion adults worldwide reported not having enough money at times to buy the food they or their families needed. A disproportionate percentage of people in sub-Saharan Africa are affected.

*Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?*

Regional medians

	Yes	No
World*	26%	73%
Sub-Saharan Africa	56%	44%
Americas	32%	67%
Former Soviet Union	32%	67%
Asia	23%	77%
Middle East/North Africa	15%	83%
Europe	13%	87%

\*Based on surveys conducted in 113 countries in 2009.

GALLUP®

Across the 113 countries surveyed, a median of 26% adults reported struggling at times to afford food for themselves or their families. Consistent with what **Gallup** has documented in previous years, the percentage of adults struggling in 2009 was highest in *sub-Saharan Africa*. At least 4 in 10 adults in every country surveyed in this region, with the exception of Djibouti, reported problems.

In fact, of the 22 countries where more than half of adults reported difficulties affording food at times in 2009, 15 are in *sub-Saharan Africa*. Struggles to

afford food are not new to citizens in most of these countries. Food riots took place and there were fears of unrest in several countries, such as *Cameroon* and the *Philippines*, when global food prices surged in 2008.

### Countries in Which Half or More Residents Struggle to Afford Food

Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?

	Yes (2008)	Yes (2009)	Change from 2008
Cameroon	66%	73%	+7
Zimbabwe	79%	73%	-6
Comoros	-	72%	-
Niger	68%	71%	+3
Zambia	67%	69%	+2
Philippines	58%	68%	+10
Burundi	74%	67%	-7
Kenya	67%	64%	-3
Congo (Kinshasa)	-	61%	-
Azerbaijan	60%	60%	0
Tanzania	62%	60%	-2
Malawi	-	60%	-
Nigeria	55%	59%	+4
Ecuador	46%	58%	+12
Georgia	51%	56%	+5
Chad	54%	56%	+2
South Africa	56%	55%	-1
Dominican Republic	59%	55%	-4
Cambodia	53%	55%	+2
Ivory Coast	-	53%	-
Uganda	62%	52%	-10
Honduras	48%	51%	+3

- Survey not conducted in 2008.

### GALLUP

hungry. The United Nations' recent announcement that the number of undernourished worldwide has declined so far in 2010 is a positive indicator for the future.

**SOURCE:** <http://www.gallup.com/poll/143255/estimated-billion-adults-struggled-afford-food-2009.aspx>

In several of these countries, the proportion of residents reporting problems with affording food in 2009 remained relatively flat or declined since 2008. But the situation worsened by at least 10 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 in the *Philippines* and *Ecuador*.

Adults in *Europe* and the *Middle East* and *North Africa* region generally fared much better than respondents from other regions, with medians of 13% and 15%, respectively, struggling to afford food at times. However, residents in some countries in these regions were more likely than others to report problems affording food. At least 3 in 10 adults in *Yemen* (45%), the *Palestinian Territories* (43%), *Romania* (40%), *Turkey* (37%), and *Albania* (30%) said there were times when they didn't have enough money to buy food.



### Bottom Line

Gallup's global surveys in 2009 suggest higher or lower food prices could mean the difference in whether billions around the world go

## SUMMARY OF POLLS



### Asia zone

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

#### ► WEST ASIA

##### ***FATA Residents Oppose U.S. Operations*** (Click for Details)

A recent survey of **TFT** shows that residents of FATA (*Federally Administered Tribal Areas*) in **Pakistan** are highly opposed to U.S. military and drone attacks in the border areas of Pakistan. They are equally against the presence of Taliban or Al-Qaeda in the region. However, there is some support for Pakistani military operations.

September 2010

Foreign Affairs & Security » Terrorism

##### ***Multi-Country Poll- Estimated 1 Billion Adults Struggled to Afford Food in 2009*** (Click for Details)

Economy » Poverty

##### ***Multi-Country Poll- U.S. Approval Gains Nearly Erased in Middle East/North Africa*** (Click for Details)

Foreign Affairs & Security » US image



### Africa zone

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

#### ► NORTH AFRICA

##### ***Multi-Country Poll- U.S. Approval Gains Nearly Erased in Middle East/North Africa*** (Click for Details)

Foreign Affairs & Security » US image

#### ► SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

##### ***Multi-Country Poll- Estimated 1 Billion Adults Struggled to Afford Food in 2009*** (Click for Details)

Economy » Poverty



## Euro Americas zone

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



### EUROPE

#### ▶ WEST EUROPE

##### **Half of Britons Foresee Economic Recession Lasting Until 2012** (Click for Details)

There are no signs of optimism regarding an economic recovery in **Britain**, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found. In the online survey of a representative sample of 2,006 British adults, the vast majority of Britons (82%) describe the United Kingdom's economy as being in poor or very poor condition.

September 29, 2010

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

##### **Coalition Partners Cameron and Clegg Drop Below 50% in Britain** (Click for Details)

The proportion of **British** respondents who are dissatisfied with the two leaders has increased by double-digits since May. For the first time since the Coalition Government took office earlier this year, public approval for its two main players has dropped below the 50 % mark, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

September 28, 2010

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

##### **UK: Most blame bankers for recession** (Click for Details)

A recent poll of **Britons** by **ORB** found that blame for the recession is still pinned on "bankers" – whom 54% think are responsible for the mess we're in. This is higher than last year's figure.

September 2010

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



### AMERICAS

#### ▶ NORTH AMERICA

##### **Americans Predict GOP Will Win Control of House in fall** (Click for Details)

**Americans** are much more likely to believe the Republicans rather than the Democrats will win control of the U.S. House of Representatives in this fall's midterm elections. More than 8 in 10 Republicans believe their party will win, while 62% of Democrats think their party will win. Independents by almost 2 to 1 (50% to 28%) think Republicans will win. **Gallup USA**

September 28, 2010

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

##### **Nearly Half of Small-Business Owners May Never Retire** (Click for Details)

Nearly half, 47%, of small-business owners in **America** now plan to never retire until forced to do so for health reasons -- up from about 4 in 10 in 2005 and 2007 -according to a recent Wells Fargo/**Gallup** Small

Business Index poll. Another 41% plan to cut back on work but stay involved with their business when they retire.

October 1, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Enterprise/ Investments](#)

***Romney, Palin at Front of GOP Presidential Field*** ([Click for Details](#))

In [America](#) Mitt Romney and Sarah Palin lead other potential candidates in Republicans' preferences for the party's 2012 presidential nomination. Mike Huckabee, Newt Gingrich, and Ron Paul also receive more than 5% support from Republicans nationwide. [Gallup USA](#)

September 30, 2010

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

***GOP Retakes Congressional Generic Ballot; Obama Approval Drops to 45%*** ([Click for Details](#))

In [America](#) Republicans now have a 46%-41% lead over Democrats in a generic congressional ballot test, and President Barack Obama's approval rating has dropped to 45%, a new [Zogby Interactive](#) survey finds.

September 27, 2010

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

***In Midterms, Dems Gain With Young Voters, Slip With Hispanics*** ([Click for Details](#))

Registered [American](#) voters aged 18 to 29 were more likely in September than in August to favor the Democratic candidate in their congressional district, resulting in the widest generational gaps so far this year in the vote for Congress. [Gallup USA](#)

October 1, 2010

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

***Distrust in U.S. Media Edges Up to Record High*** ([Click for Details](#))

For the fourth straight year, the majority of [Americans](#) say they have little or no trust in the mass media to report the news fully, accurately, and fairly. The 57% who now say this is a record high by one %age point.

[Gallup USA](#)

September 29, 2010

[Society](#) » [Media/ New Media](#)

***Obama 52%, Clinton 37% for 2012 Democratic Nomination*** ([Click for Details](#))

If [US](#) Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were to challenge President Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2012, she would currently have the support of 37% of Democrats nationally, while 52% would support Obama. [Gallup USA](#)

September 30, 2010

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

***One Recession, Two Americas*** ([Click for Details](#))

The Great Recession has divided [America](#) into two groups that are roughly the same size but that experienced very different economic downturns. For 55 % of Americans recession brought a variety of economic difficulties but for 45 % it was free of such difficulties as mentioned by the other group. [Pew Research Center](#)

September 24, 2010

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

***No Recovery for President Obama or Congress in United States*** ([Click for Details](#))

The approval rating for U.S. President Barack Obama remained stable month, and half of [Americans](#) continue to disapprove of his performance, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found.

September 30, 2010

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

***Americans Praise Carter for Work Done After Leaving White House*** ([Click for Details](#))

Earlier this month, former president Jimmy Carter stated that his role as a former president is “probably superior to that of other presidents.” A new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll shows that Carter indeed

outranks six other former [American](#) heads of state in this indicator. (32%) think Carter has done the most for the world after leaving office. Bill Clinton is second with 29%, followed by Ronald Reagan with 9 %.

September 29, 2010

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

***Americans Paint Bleak Picture of Own Finances and National Economy*** ([Click for Details](#))

People in the [United States](#) almost unanimously describe the country's economic situation as poor and few believe a swift recovery will materialize, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found. In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,012 American adults, 88 % of respondents say economic conditions are bad or very bad at the moment, up three points since the August Economic Panorama.

September 28, 2010

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

***U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey*** ([Click for Details](#))

In [America](#) atheists and agnostics, Jews and Mormons are among the highest-scoring groups on a new survey of religious knowledge, outperforming evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants and Catholics on questions about the core teachings, history and leading figures of major world religions. [Pew Research Center](#)

September 28, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

***In Canada, People in BC and Quebec are more concerned About Corruption*** ([Click for Details](#))

A majority of residents of three [Canadian](#) provinces express concern about the level of corruption they perceive, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll conducted for Maclean's has found. 55 % of Canadians are worried about corruption in their province. The areas registering the highest level of concern are Quebec (68%), British Columbia (61%), and Ontario (56%).

October 02, 2010

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

***Conservatives Lead by Eight Points in Canada as Greens Gain*** ([Click for Details](#))

The Conservative Party maintains the upper hand in [Canada](#) as the Green Party reaches double-digits for the first time this year, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found. In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,008 Canadian adults, 34 % of respondents (+1 since August) would support the governing Conservative Party in the next federal election.

September 29, 2010

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

**GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS**



***U.S. Approval Gains Nearly Erased in Middle East/North Africa*** ([Click for Details](#))

Approval of U.S. leadership is now similar or lower than what it was in 2008 in several of the [Middle East](#) and [North African](#) countries [Gallup](#) surveyed in 2010, erasing gains seen after the transition from the Bush administration to the Obama administration. [Egypt](#), [Syria](#), and [Algeria](#) are the exceptions, though in all cases approval remains relatively low.

September 30, 2010

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

***Estimated 1 Billion Adults Struggled to Afford Food in 2009*** ([Click for Details](#))

While the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reported last week that the recent volatility in food prices is not a sign of an impending food crisis, [Gallup](#) surveys in 113 countries in 2009 underscore people's vulnerability to such fluctuations. An estimated 1 billion adults worldwide reported not having enough money at times to buy the food they or their families needed. A disproportionate percentage of people in [sub-Saharan Africa](#) are affected.

September 28, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Poverty](#) §

## Events of the week in

## Asia zone

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

**TURKEY****Political Front:**

One of the country's leading pro-Kurdish figures, Ahmet Türk, the co-chairman of the Democratic Society Congress, or DTK, has called on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, to withdraw its armed members from the **Turkish** border to avoid instability.

The **Turkish** Parliament's General Assembly convened its session on 1<sup>st</sup> October after a break of more than two months and focused primarily on discussing the upcoming elections, adjustments to the Constitution and European Union laws. Meanwhile a **Turkish** court has sentenced the co-chairman of the country's main pro-Kurdish political party Selahattin Demirtaş to 10 months in prison for promoting a terrorist organization.

**Geo-strategic Front:**

**Turkey** has expressed disappointment over the US rejection of recently released UN report about *Israeli* raid against freedom flotilla. Meanwhile *United States* has expressed the need for **Turkish** cooperation in some issues like withdrawal of troops from *Iraq* and peace initiative in *Middle East*. In the meantime **Turkey** has urged the *Palestinian* group Hamas to stop rocket attacks on *Israel* and seek dialogue with *Europe* and the *United States*.

The **Turkish** and *Chinese* air forces secretly participated in a military drill in Konya, which did cast reaction from USA. Meanwhile the foreign ministers of **Turkey**, *Syria*, *Lebanon* and *Jordan* have agreed to step up cooperation as they move closer to creating a free trade zone, complete with visa-free travel in a cooperation scheme. As far as the issue of **EU** is concerned *Italy's* foreign minister backed **Turkey's** full European Union membership criticizing any formulas that would fall short of granting complete accession.

**Turkey** has been assisting *Pakistan* to cope up with the disaster brought by floods. In this regard a Nine-year-old Merve Tekinay from Konya received media attention when she donated one year's worth of her pocket money and her favorite doll to *Pakistani* flood victims.

**Economic Front:**

**Turkish** Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan complained while speaking at the Black Sea Energy and Economic Forum organized by the Atlantic Council about the delay in the Nabucco project that is designed to carry Caspian natural gas to *Europe*. **Turkey** has successfully come out of the global economic down turn having survived the negative impacts of debts unlike many other *European* countries.

**Turkish** finance Minister has identified unemployment as the key issue being faced by his countrymen. *Turkish-Portuguese* trade volume reached 580 million USD in the first seven months of 2010,

with a 35.3 % rise over the same period of the previous year. In the meantime Georgia has expressed keenness to build trade relations with Turkey.

**Social Front:**

Leaders of the Gulen Movement in **Turkey** have complained of being targeted by the terrorist groups.

**GCC**

**Geo-strategic Front:**

**Gulf** countries have perceived rising tensions in **Yemen** as a threat for the whole region. Meanwhile **Saudi Arabia** has urged the United Nations to implement the principles of its charter effectively without adopting double standards. It also criticized the use of veto power by some permanent members to block the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions. Addressing the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, **Saudi** Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal emphasized the need to implement the Arab Peace Initiative, which offers normal *Arab-Israeli* relations if the *Jewish* state withdraws from Arab territories occupied in 1967. Meanwhile **Algeria** has asked **Saudi Arabian** authorities for help in clarifying the circumstances surrounding the death of an **Algerian** teenager in *Makkah*.

**Economic Front:**

Inflation in five of the **GCC**'s six states soared to double-digit figures before the global financial crisis, but then eased with **Qatar**, for example, posting inflation of 15% before the crisis and deflation during it. But in recent months, prices have begun to rise again, with **Saudi Arabia** hitting an inflation rate of more than 5% and Kuwait recording 4% in July. **Dubai**'s benchmark index fell 0.9 %, trimming the gain for the quarter to 15 %. Emaar, developer of the world's tallest tower, lost 1.6 % to AED3.74 after it raised \$ 450 million from the sale of convertible notes. **Abu Dhabi**'s ADX General Index retreated 0.1 %, **Oman**'s MSM30 Index and **Qatar**'s gauge slipped 0.3 %. Meanwhile **Bahrain**'s measure rose less than 0.1 %. **Kuwait** stocks rose to the highest in four months as *Zain*, the country's largest mobile-phone company, got a purchase offer for a 46 % stake, boosting investor sentiment.



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**Social Front:**

**Gulf** governments have declared themselves “global leaders in sustainability.” **Saudi Arabia** is set to train mosque imams and preachers to resist extremist ideologies in a new government-run program. **Saudis** have become freer in the five years of King Abdullah's reign but civil rights remain far from institutionalized and vulnerable to political change. The New York-based rights watchdog in its annual report on **Saudi Arabia** has appreciated the king's reforms that have loosened some restrictions on women, boosted a sense of fairness in the judicial system, and increased freedom of expression. **Saudi Arabia** has achieved most Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations much before the 2015 deadline set by the international body.

**FERTILE CRESCENT**

**Political Front:**

Experts in *Cairo* have expressed uncertainty about the role that NGOs could play in the election process, with most observers and activists believing that local civil society would be unable to play as prominent a role in parliamentary elections as it did in 2005. Political experts claim that in the last decade **Egyptian** NGOs have been unable to promote the culture of civic engagement at a grassroots level.

**Egypt's** leading democracy advocate has defended his alliance with the country's largest but banned Islamist opposition group in an interview. El Beradi's call for reforms led main opposition party Muslim Brotherhood to join the group. But now a divide between the two blocks seems to be quite visible as Muslim Brotherhood has announced to participate in upcoming elections despite the fact that El Beradi has announced his party's boycott. Meanwhile other two opposition parties have also announced to take part in the elections hence El Beradi's Democratic Party has left the Quartet Bloc.

The *US* has appreciated **Iraqi's** efforts to form a coalition government.

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

The UN nuclear watchdog *IAEA* has approved an **Egyptian** site to host the country's first nuclear power plant. **Egypt** and *Iran* have signed an agreement to resume direct flights between their capitals for the first time since the two nations' diplomatic relations fell apart in 1979. **Syrian** judiciary has issued 33 arrest warrants for judges, officers, politicians and journalists of **Lebanese**, **Arab** and other nationalities in the case brought by former **Lebanese** General Security chief.

**Israeli** Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has accused that **Palestinian** side for staling peace talks, and claimed that renewing the construction of settlements in the occupied West Bank should not have any effect on peace talks. **Palestinian** President, Mahmoud Abbas, stated that he will not return to the negotiations table unless **Israel** halts its settlement activities in the occupied territories.

#### **Economic Front:**

**Iraq's** oil minister has said that the country's proven "extractable" oil reserves have raised to over 143 billion barrels. The new figure represents a significant rise on **Iraq's** previously announced proven oil reserves of 115 billion barrels.

#### **Social Front:**

The daughter of late **Egyptian** president Anwar Sadat is suing his former aide over claims the leader poisoned his predecessor Gamal Abdel Nasser.



### **CENTRAL ASIA**

#### **Political Front:**

Some 1,152 candidates for parliament have applied to district electoral commissions in **Azerbaijan**. Observation missions of international organizations have started their mission in **Azerbaijan** to monitor parliamentary elections in the country. The voters' lists have been finalized and sent to the Election Commission for the upcoming parliamentary elections in **Azerbaijan**.

A court in Astana has refused to issue an arrest warrant for **Kazakh** Health Minister over unspecified allegations stemming from an ongoing investigation. The poll conducted by the Institute of Political Solutions (IPS) revealed that **Kazakh** President Nursultan Nazarbaev retains trust of 79.9% respondents. **Kazakh** President has signed a decree providing for a 15-% reduction of the regular staff of organizations financed by the state budget, including the law enforcement and judicial authorities.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the poll of Perspektiva Consortium has shown that six of 29 parties, participating in the elections, will pass to parliament. Two separate trials of ethnic **Uzbeks** in southern **Kyrgyzstan** have been postponed by the judges after disruptions. Meanwhile as **Kyrgyzstan** gears up for crucial parliamentary elections on October 10, former Prime Minister's party has picked up a key endorsement from Russia's ruling United Russia party. Tajik authorities have arrested two armed supporters of former warlord and special police unit head in the mountainous Rasht district.

The **Tajik** security forces have killed a second escapee from a prison break last month. Meanwhile President has urged to strengthen fight against terrorism and extremism.

**Geo-strategic Front:**

**Azerbaijan** has extended support to *Pakistani* stance in *Kashmir* Issue. Meanwhile issues of opposing financing of nuclear terrorism have been discussed at a conference which opened in the capital of **Kazakhstan**. More than 150 representatives of the countries-participants in the Global Initiative of Combating Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, as well as observers from international organizations took part in the conference. The *Japan Atomic Power Company*, *Toshiba Corp* (6502.T) and a unit of *Marubeni Corp* (8002.T) have reached an agreement with **Kazakhstan** to provide data and cost estimates on the possibility of the country building its first nuclear power plant.



The permanent representative of **Kyrgyzstan** in the United Nations Organization has been changed. In other news a **Kyrgyz** citizen was wounded in a shooting incident on the **Kyrgyz-Uzbek** border on September 28. Meanwhile the U.S. has been accused of becoming soft on **Uzbekistan's** human rights record because of its close military cooperation with Tashkent on the Northern Distribution Network, which carries a significant portion of U.S.'s war materiel to *Afghanistan* via **Central Asia**.

**Economic Front:**

According to State Statistical Committee, Great *Britain* invested AZN 505 038.8 thousand capital in **Azerbaijan's** economy during the same time, up 30.8% compared with a year ago; hence has become leading Foreign Minister in the country.

**Kazakhstan** has repeated its idea that the creation of a global currency under UN control would significantly decrease the odds of a future financial crisis. Meanwhile *Russia's* largest hydropower company has signed a memorandum of cooperation on building renewable energy enterprises in the southern **Kazakhstan** with the regional government.

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team visited **Tajikistan** from September 13 to September 24 to hold discussions with **Tajik** authorities on the third review under a three-year extended credit facility arrangement with **Tajikistan**.

**Social Front:**

First Deputy General Prosecutor of **Azerbaijan** has recently stated that 35% of the illegally produced drugs in *Afghanistan* are being sent to rest of the world via Iran-Azerbaijan route.

**Kyrgyz** human rights advocates have urged the interim president Roza "to take immediate measures against illegal actions of law enforcement officers and judicial agencies...".

**IRAN**

**Political Front:**

An **Iranian** lawmaker has strongly condemned US ban against **Iranian** officials and declared it to be a move to undermine the **Iranian** economy.

A senior commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) lauded the strong public support for the leadership of the Islamic establishment in **Iran**, and cautioned that enemies are seeking to separate these two main pillars of the Islamic Republic.

**Geo-strategic Front:**

**Iranian** President in a meeting with his *Syrian* counterpart stressed the necessity of increasing resistance for bolstering peace and stability in the region. *Iraqi* provincial official has demanded Tehran to further boost its

aid and assistance in the reconstruction of war-ravaged *Iraq*, and stressed that Baghdad is seeking an increase in **Iran's** investment activities in the country.

Speaking at the beginning of the NAM meeting in New York, on the 50th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement's establishment **Iranian** Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said that fundamentals of the NAM are to campaign against imperialism, colonialism and hegemony of big powers and they should be safeguarded by its members.

Just days after *Russia* banned sale of its S-300 air defense missile systems to the Islamic nation, *Russia's* Lower House's International Affairs Committee's Head blasted **Iran** for the cancellation of the deal. Meanwhile head of the **Iran-Russia** Friendship League recently stated that **Iran** should identify new scenarios regarding *Russia* and should utilize the relation with *Russia* to its own benefits.

Speaker of the *Indonesian* House of Representatives said that members of the house fully support **Iran's** peaceful nuclear program. **Iran** has appreciated a vote on an International Atomic Energy Agency resolution urging *Israel* to join the NPT.

#### **Economic Front:**

Government of *Kenya* has expressed keenness to implement economic agreements and deals with **Iran**. An **Iranian** oil official underlined the country's self-sufficiency in supplying **Iran's** gasoline needs through domestic production, and stated that *Tehran* plans to boost exports of gasoline.



Recently-revealed data showed that the *French* and *Italian* oil companies have bought more crude oil from **Iran** despite tougher sanctions imposed against the country by certain states.

*Azeri* Minister of Industry and Energy reiterated that there are different and abundant grounds for bolstering mutual cooperation between *Tehran* and *Baku*. *Iran-Khodro*, the Middle-East's largest car-manufacturing company, announced that it has produced more than 351,270 sets of cars in the first half of the current **Iranian** year (started on March 21), which shows 28% of growth compared with the same period last year. **Iran** announced that it is now capable of manufacturing 70% of the equipment and parts needed in its oil and gas industries, dismissing western speculations that economic and industrial sanctions against *Tehran* have hindered the country's industrial progress. **Iran** has held talks with three European countries for joint production of aircraft and cooperation on aviation industries. The European Union imposed five- year tariffs against **Iran**, *Pakistan* and the *United Arab Emirates* on a material used in plastic bottles.

#### **Social Front:**

The Supreme leader's aid in international affairs has called for *Islamization* of the human sciences and said even the natural sciences can be reviewed by Islamic perspective. Meanwhile a Judiciary Spokesman has announced stoning sentence for Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani charged with adultery and murder of his husband.

## **AFGHANISTAN**

#### **Political Front:**

**Afghans** have held several rallies to protest the killing of civilians by US-led troops over the past months. Process of killings of security officials at the hands of the Taliban and that of the civilians by NATO troops is still underway. Quite recently at least six people, including an **Afghan** official, have been killed after a bomber on a motorcycle targeted a car in Ghazni province in eastern **Afghanistan**. Besides that 20 other

officials were killed in different attacks. Likewise, NATO troops have killed two civilians in the southern **Afghan** province of Helmand. 23 other civilians were also killed in different incidents.

In issues of human rights abuse, Jeremy Morlock is one of the US soldiers accused of killing **Afghan** civilians for fun and collecting their body parts as trophies. In the meantime thousands of Afghan civilians have been forced to flee and hundreds of families have been displaced due to fierce clashes in southern **Afghanistan**.

President Hamid Karzai, reiterating his stance, directed the Ministry of Interior to use all available resources to ensure the disbandment of private security companies.

**Social Front:**

The malformation of babies during child birth has increased by 20 % in **Afghanistan**.

**SOUTH ASIA**

**Political Front:**

**Bangladeshi** PM, during 65<sup>th</sup> UNGA session, has reiterated her commitment towards the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. Meanwhile Prime Minister has urged the UN Secretary General to involve **Bangladesh** in the policymaking and responsible duties of the United Nations as the country is capable of carrying out such trust.



In **Nepal** 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> round of votes were held in the last week but both failed to form government. After parliament's failure to elect a new Prime Minister, **Nepal's** Maoist party has called for the formation of a new power-sharing government. Another significant development in **Nepal** is that a staunch royalist and a member of the erstwhile Royal Cabinet, Mr. Radha Krishna Mainali has recently joined the **Nepal Communist Party-Unified Maoists Party** at a colorful ceremony held at the party headquarters. Meanwhile Speaker

of the House has declared Maoists and Royalists to be similar. Madheshis political party has alleged Election Commission, local administration and government for being anti-Madhesh. Caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal held a discussion with ten political parties in the government at his office in order to sort out ways to resolve the political deadlock.

**Sri Lanka** Prime Minister and Opposition Leader have handed over their nominations to the Parliamentary Council established by the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. UNP local government members and provincial councilors from the Kurunegala District have passed a resolution calling on UNP Leader Ranil Wickremasinghe to step down from the post of Leader and appoint Premadasa impending power crisis. Meanwhile a **Sri Lankan** court has rescheduled the trial-at-bar against former Army Commander and Democratic National Alliance Leader retired General Sarath Fonseka for October 4th and 5th. Also **Sri Lanka's** Marxist party has denied to accept the verdict given to the former Army Commander retired General Sarath Fonseka by the second court martial appointed and endorsed by the President.

**Geo-strategic Front:**

**India's** Border Security Force (BSF) Director General has handed over a list of **Indian** militant groups along with graphic details, locations and aerial photographs to **Bangladesh** Rifles Director General and urged him to take proper action to dismantle them. Meanwhile **Bangladesh** handed over 16 **Indian** separatists along with their family members to **Indian** authorities over the weekend.

The US has intensified its discussion on the **Bangladeshi** military presence in *Afghanistan*. All the while the Afghan Taliban called on **Bangladesh** to reject the US request.

*China's* exponentially increasing influence in **Nepal** has received further fillip with Beijing starting work on extending its railway from Lhasa to Xigaze or Shigatse.

**Economic Front:**

**Indian** textile maker and the world's largest manufacturer of denim have announced to set up a denim manufacturing plant in **Bangladesh** with an investment of \$66 million over three years. In current crisis situation government departments have been forced to cut spending to a minimum, suspending road building and sanitation projects in desperately poor rural areas, because the long-overdue annual budget has not been passed.

Consumer prices in **Sri Lanka's** capital Colombo rose 5.8 % in September from a year earlier, accelerating from 5.0 % in August. **Sri Lanka** has begun a study to build a nuclear power plant to meet growing electricity demand and is in talks with *Russia* and other countries to get technology and training.

**Social Front:**

The absence of a robust public health system over the years has resulted in emergence of infectious diseases in **Bangladesh** and the current onslaught of endemic anthrax is a reflection of this.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator has allocated US \$ 2 million to United Nations agencies in **Nepal**.

**Sri Lanka** has planned to formulate and enact necessary laws to protect children from exploitation and provide them with maximum protection.

**INDIA**

**Political Front:**

In **India** the ruling regime has recently revealed an eight point formula to resolve the *Kashmir* issue.

Sixty years after the matter first went into litigation; a Special Full Bench of the High Court of Allahabad has ruled that the disputed land in Ayodhya where the Babri Masjid stood for 500 years until it was demolished in 1992 shall be divided into three parts. A two-thirds portion is to be shared by two Hindu plaintiffs and one-third will be given to the Sunni Muslim Waqf Board. The Ayodhya verdict has been welcomed and greeted with a quiet sense of joy by the Bharatiya Janata Party and the larger Sangh Parivar headed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh as they felt it had paved the way for construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site,



vindicating their long agitation on the issue. Marxist Party has suggested that Court's verdict should be studied carefully. Meanwhile UPA has requested people to maintain peace. The Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM), one of the early litigants in the Ayodhya title suits however announced its plan to challenge the Allahabad High Court order to divide the "Ramjanambhoomi" land into three parts. Meanwhile Muslim groups reacted with disappointment at the dismissal of the Sunni Central Waqf Board (SCWB) suit and the three-way division of disputed land ordered by the Allahabad High Court in the Ayodhya title suits.

**Social Front:**

The U.N. agencies have found that maternal deaths in **India**, along with countries like *Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, and Tanzania* together accounted for 65 % of all global maternal deaths in 2008.

**CHINA**

**Political Front:**

**Chinese** Vice President has stressed the importance of education and training in guiding officials to maintain their hard working spirit and upright morality to fulfill their duties.

**Geo-strategic Front:**

**China** has deployed four transport helicopters to support flood victims in *Pakistan*. The deployment offers Beijing a chance to practice its disaster relief capabilities and form better relations with **Pakistan**, while projecting the image of a beneficent military throughout the region.

**Chinese** vice Premier said that **China** and the *Arab* states should work together to promote cooperation in the future.

*Russian* President has signed a series of political and commercial deals on his second state visit to **China**. **Chinese** President and his *Russian* counterpart also attended a ceremony in Beijing to mark the completion of the **China-Russia** crude oil pipeline.

**China** and *Cuba* have pledged to further boost their bilateral ties. Meanwhile **China** has expressed its concern over the situations in *Ecuador*, where clashes have left dozens of people injured. UN Secretary-General hailed **China's** strong support to the world body, saying he looks forward to his upcoming visit to Shanghai Expo in late October.

The *US* Secretary of State congratulated **Chinese** people on their National Day and reaffirmed U.S. commitment to working with **China** to deepen bilateral relationship. A senior official of the Communist Party of **China** (CPC) expressed **Chinese** readiness to work with the new leadership of the ruling Workers' Party of *Korea* (WPK) of the Democratic People's Republic of *Korea* (DPRK), to promote bilateral ties.

**China** called on Japan to make an effort to maintain relations as a dispute over islands both nations claim sent relations to their lowest in five years.

**China** and the European Union (EU) too are forging a reliable partnership as one's stability, growth and prosperity are in the interests of the other. **Chinese** Premier has vowed to double trade with *Greece* within five years, and to buy *Greek* bonds when the crisis-hit country returns to international markets.

**Economic Front:**

**China** has firmly opposed legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives to penalize countries that allegedly manipulate their currency values for trade advantages.

**China's** ZTE Corporation has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with *Cambodian* government to cooperate and participate in *Cambodia's* Economic Acceleration Platform (CEAP) project.

**Chinese** shares advanced as property stocks climbed despite the introduction of new measures to curb real estate prices. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index rose 1.72 %, or 44.98points, to close at 2,655.66. While the Shenzhen Component Index gained 2.18 %, or 244.68 points, to end at 11,468.54. Policy moves by the **Chinese** government to free the Yuan from a dollar peg would help the **Chinese** currency rise.



**Social Front:**

The **Chinese** people celebrated the National Day of the People's Republic of **China** on 1st October.

**China's** top economic planning agency said that it had mapped out measures to encourage private investment in the health care sector and may publicize them in October. Meanwhile according to reports **China's** top legislature has never considered scrapping the death penalty for those convicted of corruption in the draft amendment to the Criminal Law. **Chinese** President has urged the Communist Party of **China** (CPC) and the **Chinese** government to take more proactive measures to properly address social conflicts to promote scientific development and social harmony.

People in northwest **China's** Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region are being offered free HIV/AIDS tests and counseling. **China's** State Council, the Cabinet has issued a compilation of white papers on Tibet.

**China** has recently stated that its citizens' right to freedom of speech on the Internet is protected by law; hence they can voice their opinions "in a wide variety of ways on the Internet."

## **JAPAN**

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

**Japanese** former Foreign Minister Okada has criticized *Beijing* for demanding an apology and compensation over the arrest of a *Chinese* fishing boat captain, saying such a demand clearly showed *China's* undemocratic nature. Meanwhile Prime Minister Naoto Kan said that the "comprehensive judgment" of prosecutors led to the release of the *Chinese* fishing boat captain involved in ship collisions near the disputed Senkaku Islands, denying political influence affected the investigators' decision. **Japan** has also asked *China* to withdraw two fishery patrol boats from near the disputed Senkaku Island chain that is at the center of the worst diplomatic row in years between the two nations.

*China* finally released three of four **Japanese** detained last week for allegedly videotaping military targets. **Japan's** Defense Minister said that he would seek a meeting with his *Chinese* counterpart at a regional security forum later this month; *China* however hasn't responded yet.

Prime Minister Naoto Kan has made **Japan's** pitch for permanent membership on the U.N. Security Council, saying the non-nuclear country that has suffered the devastation of atomic bombings deserves a seat on the council in the 21st century.

### **Economic Front:**

Senior officials from Pacific Rim economies began two days of talks to deepen discussions on a proposed free trade zone in the *Asia-Pacific* region.

**Japanese** Prime Minister has instructed his Cabinet and ruling party members to draw up an extra budget for the current fiscal year to finance a stimulus package aimed at accelerating efforts to fight deflation.

### **Social Front:**

A **Japanese** health ministry bureaucrat has been arrested for allegedly taking bribes from a contact lens company in exchange for inspection information, triggering police raids on various places.

Roughly 6,800 people in **Japan** are estimated to die every year from lung cancer or heart disease caused by passive smoking, and more than half — around 3,600 — are exposed to secondhand smoke in their workplace.



## **KOREA**

### **Political Front:**

**North Korea's** Kim Jong Il appointed his son to the ruling party's second-highest military position, indicating **North Korea's** ailing leader intends to extend his family's rule of a totalitarian state that has armed itself with nuclear weapons while relying on donors to feed its 24 million people.

**North Korea** opened a conference of the ruling Workers' Party of **Korea** to elect its highest leading body. Kim Jong Un has been elected as vice president of the military committee of **North Korea's** ruling Workers' Party.

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

**South Korea** and the United States got engaged in a joint anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercise in the waters west of the **Korean** Peninsula. The **South Korean** military has been reinforcing troop information and education to deal with possible **North Korean** threats since the sinking of the Cheonan ship in March amid controversy over whether to label the North as the “main enemy” in the country’s defense white paper. **Korean** Deputy Foreign Minister claimed that **North Korea** won’t give up its nuclear weapons while U.S. aircraft carriers are deployed near the **Korean** peninsula.

**Economic Front:**

**South Korea’s** second-largest ethylene maker, announced plans to raise \$350 million from a sale of floating-rate notes. Also **South Korea’s** factory output rose for the 14th straight month, signaling economic resilience that may add to the case for higher borrowing costs. Output gained 17.1 % in August from a year earlier, after rising 15.5 % in July.

**South Korea** announced plans to spend 17 billion won (\$15 million) to increase stockpiles of rare earths, a group of 17 metals used in hybrid vehicles and laptop computers, by 2016 after *China* curtailed exports of the minerals to **Japan**. Meanwhile **South Korea’s** consumer prices increased more than projected, rising at the fastest pace in 17 months, bolstering the case for the central bank to raise borrowing costs. The consumer price index climbed 3.6 % in September from a year earlier, accelerating from 2.6 % in the previous month. §

*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 and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential aspirant, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, has said President Goodluck Jonathan’s claim on zoning is “ludicrous”.

Also Former Senate President, Dr Iyorchia Ayu, has accused **President** Goodluck Jonathan of being politically intolerant, saying unlike his predecessor, late Umaru Yar'Adua, President Jonathan is undermining the nation's constitution as well as **Nigeria's** nascent democracy.

The *United States* has said the issue of zoning, which is currently rocking the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), is purely the party’s affair while noting that it has a natural rotation system in its politics to encourage inclusion on all levels.

As **Nigeria** marked its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary a car bombing that rippled through **Nigeria's** capital Abuja last week; according to initial reports the blast killed eight people and wounded 21 others. **Nigerian** police have named two men suspected of organizing car bombings, meanwhile the number of casualties rose to 12.

Henry Okah former leader of the **Nigerian** militant group Mend was arrested in *South Africa*, according to **Nigerian** intelligence agency spokeswoman Marilyn Ogar.

**Niger:** The North African wing of al-Qaeda last week released photographs of seven hostages held in **Niger**, the first since the group was kidnapped earlier this month. A spokesman for the French foreign ministry declined to comment on the photographs.

**Gambia:** According to reports **Gambia's** state-controlled media were 'obliged' to make large headlines from a Statehouse announcing President Yahya Jammeh had "bagged four awards," and even been called "an inspirational leader" in a letter by US President Barack Obama. The White House however denies any such awards or letters.

**Angola** and **Nigeria**, engaged in resolving crisis in **Guinea Bissau** have reaffirmed to work hard in helping find solutions.

**Elections: Ivory Coast:** Ivory Coast's identity and electoral roll cards arrived in the country last week after being printed in Germany, the electoral commission said, nudging the West African nation a step closer to long overdue elections.

Meanwhile **UN** is set to send more troops to **Ivory Coast** before vote however according to reports the election hopes are fueling a mood of optimism in Ivory Coast.

**Nigeria:** In line with its desire for an adjustment in the timetable it earlier prepared for next year's general election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has submitted a fresh proposal for voter registration to be held between January 8 and 22 next year.

**Central Africa:** The Government of **Rwanda** has warned that the "flawed and dangerous" United Nations Mapping Report to be released by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights could threaten regional stability. The report, an output of two-year investigations, chronicles wanton massacres and systematic sexual enslavement of **Congolese** allegedly by UPDF and **Rwanda** Patriotic Front soldiers as well as their brutal local militia allies.

**Congo:** UN has released its most extensive report to date on war massacres and rapes, atrocities committed in the war-torn Democratic Republic of the **Congo** (DRC) from 1993 to 2003. The report has sparked protests from both **Rwanda** and **Uganda**, whose armed forces are implicated in the crimes. The African countries of **Angola** and **Burundi** have also disputed aspects of the report.

**South Africa:** **South Africa:** The ruling African National Congress has faced mob protests over the last two years for failing to provide the poor with homes, hospitals and sanitation some 16 years after the end of apartheid when the party took over control of Africa's largest economy.

**Zimbabwe:** According to reports **U.S.** State Department has expressed that **Zimbabwe** must show greater respect for human rights and political freedoms before the U.S. sanctions on the poor African nation can be removed. Meanwhile the **European Union** (EU) has said it has "noted positive developments" in **Zimbabwe** as the deadline for a decision on targeted restrictions against the troubled *Southern African* country approaches.

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

**West Africa: Nigeria:** Floods caused by heavy rains last week have rendered more than 1,600 persons from about 63 families' homeless in Calabar metropolis, Cross River State. Meanwhile Sokoto State Governor, Aliyu Wamakko, inaugurated a 9 man committee under the chairmanship of Alhaji Sahabi Isa Gada for collection and distribution of relief materials to victims of flood disaster in the state.

Police in **Nigeria** have confirmed that the 15 school children whisked away by kidnappers earlier this week were all **Nigerian** nationals. All 15 children were later rescued by joint security forces.

**Central Africa:** The **Rwandan** government is set to promote cassava growing to boost food security in the country. Agriculture Minister said that Cassava should be a priority, because it's a staple food for most



**Rwandans** and can be produced as different varieties.

**Rwanda** Education Alternative for Children (REACH) has launched a three year US\$4.9m project which saw 21 model farms established in seven districts to rehabilitate victims of child labour.

**South Africa: Mozambique:** In response to food price demonstrations in early September, the Mozambican government has laid on a range of price cuts and subsidies to make life easier for the poor, and has promised to do some belt tightening of its own, but observers say the measures are unaffordable and will not address the deeper issues.

**Zimbabwe:** Increasing violence, carried out by the Patriotic Front of ZANU-PF against the supporters of MDC and other civilians, during community meetings lead to a constitutional referendum and new arrests of civil society activists highlight the lack of progress in ending human rights abuses and implementing urgently needed human rights reforms.

### HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

**West Africa:** The number of pregnant women being tested for **HIV** and accessing treatment in **Sub-Saharan Africa** has shown significant progress – indicating that virtual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of the virus by 2015 is possible.

**In Nigeria:** Communities' resistance hampers lead cleanup, efforts to treat children poisoned by lead and to clean up contaminated sites in northern **Nigeria's** Zamfara State are being hampered by the reticence of communities to divulge cases, for fear of a government ban on lucrative illegal gold mining.

**Nigeria** Minister of Petroleum Resources, Mrs. Deziani Alison-Madueke said last week that the Federal Government has designed a strategy to make **Nigeria** Carbon Neutral by 2025.

There is a 60% global shortfall in funds for malaria control, according to a report by UK and **African** experts.

**Central Africa:** A new report by several UN agencies has ranked **Rwanda** among eight countries worldwide that have registered significant progress in increasing access to anti-HIV/Aids services, including antiretroviral drugs.

**South Africa: Angola:** A polio immunization campaign targeting 5.6 million children was launched in Angola earlier this month (01 October 2010) as the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) warned that the southern African country was quickly becoming the greatest threat to continent-wide eradication efforts.



According to reports communities in **Swaziland** are coming together as never before to tackle the **HIV/AIDS** epidemic that has so deeply affected them. Some NGOs are also holding seminars to offer facts, clear confusions, provide education and counseling regarding HIV.

### POLITICAL ECONOMY

**West Africa: Nigeria:** American energy giant, ExxonMobil has pioneered the use of made in **Nigeria** pipes in the oil and gas industry.

**Ghana:** The government has won the hearts of development partners for the country to continue enjoying Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is normally concessionary lending to the country. Meanwhile IMF has warned **Ghana** on debt build-up and improvement of its fiscal performance to avoid an unsustainable build up of public debt through increased foreign borrowing.

Yet Balance of Payment data from the Bank of Ghana (BOG) indicates that total private money transfers to **Ghana** between January and May this year is \$4.2 billion. At the global level, \$300 billion was transferred in remittances last year, out of which \$40 billion was in Africa alone.

According to reports, Irked by accusations that it is the new colonizer of **Africa**, China is looking to use soft power and historical evidence of its ancient links to the continent to justify its economic embrace of Africa.

Trade between *China* and Portuguese-speaking countries like **Angola** according to reports rose 60.52 % between January and August.

**Central Africa:** Director General of **Tanzania's** Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA), has said only a win-win partnership with *China* can lead to enhanced investment in World Bank-supported and other special economic zones (SEZs) in **Africa**.

**South Africa:** The International Monetary Fund said last week that it would not replace its outgoing **Madagascar** representative due to the constitutional vacuum on the Indian Ocean Island. §

*Events of the week in*

# Euro Americas zone

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

## WESTERN EUROPE

### *Political Issues*

**France** remains under EU's fire over the impasse of Roma expulsion. The EU plans to sue Paris for violating EU's law on freedom of movement. Meanwhile, the European Commission (EC) is set to provide financial aid to **Greece** to reform its asylum system as Athens' asylum infrastructures is believed to be lagging behind rules.

For EU opening the chapters of food safety and veterinary health with Ankara is significant and displays that *Brussels* is committed to *Turkey-EU* integration. **EU** in recent time faces criticism of alienating *Turkey* and pushing Ankara eastward. Similarly some **EU** members are worried about delaying *Ankara-EU* integration, thus supporters of Ankara urges **EU** to be futuristic about **Turkey**.

The logic behind EU renewal of travel ban for **Belarusian** leadership is to see political change in that country, even though President Aleksander Lukashenko said he wants to repair ties with Brussels.

The **Dutch** coalition government will have to prove itself as non anti-immigration and Islam. The coalition government is made up of Wilders's party echoing high rhetoric of closing down on immigration and stopping The **Netherlands** of Islamization; a view the opposition does not share.

### *Economic Issues*

The **EU** is heading for a new strategic partnership with Asian emerging economies; but that partnership could be create hurdles for the issues of **WTO** and **IMF** leadership. Asian economies are said to be wrangling for a change in the **IMF** leadership structure, which has been largely dominated by the **EU** and U.S, a representation of post 2<sup>nd</sup> World war scenario.

The message of **European** protesters across **Europe** to their governments is to redress the austerity measures. The all around **Europe** protests were spearheaded by Unions against banks and aimed at pressuring government to change gear.

In an economy facing deficit crisis, the **British** government is grappling on how to keep welfare package to the public and simultaneously cut public spending.

The **Irish** prime minister once denounces the parallel of his country's and **Greek** economy, but a recent report shows the extent to which the **Irish** financial system is affected. The question is whether or not the EU will be doing same bailing action for **Ireland**.

EU MEPs want the commission to investigate defense deal between **Germany** and two southern Europe countries. The deal is thought to be responsible for the economic crisis of these countries and believed to be hypocritical of the EU asking for austerity measures and at the same time encouraging huge defense transactions.

Amid cries over austerity measures which have produced series of strike actions, the **Greek** government reached an agreement with banks operating in **Greece** to inject 25 billion euros into the economy in the form of loans.

#### **Social/Humanitarian Issue**

The European Commission plans to take the **United Kingdom** to court for not fully implementing data privacy rules for online users and allowing service providers to use "behavioral advertising" based on the websites visited by web surfers.

The European Commission is also making *cyber defense* a central issue and ready to intensify effort on Enisa and Europol to combating the cyber menace and at the same time enact law that will incriminate hackers and zombie computers.

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

The growing price of non-renewable energy is increasingly becoming unaffordable for both governments and the people; therefore the need for alternative renewable energy source has also grown. **Italy** is said to be one of the European countries benefiting from renewable energy plants, making life comfortable even to the ordinary masses.

#### **Geostrategic Issues**

Former **Polish** prime minister and leader of **Poland's** main opposition party, Jaroslaw Kaczynski is warning EU of **Russia's** neo-imperial influence and cautioned that bilateral business interests with **Russia** should not be at the expense of EU's values and standards.

Scott Stewart notes in his article *Terror Threats and Alerts in France*, published in Stratfor, that **France** unlike other big European nations is yet to experience any form of devastating terrorist attack. **French** intelligence though puts the country on a red alert. The bottom-line argument is that the scar of French colonial policies is still irritating and recent policies towards **French** Muslims aggravates the tension, thus makes **France** a potential victim of huge terror attack.

#### **EAST EUROPE**

##### **Political Issues**

**Albania** political stalemate is casting shadow of doubt on the country's political maturity and ability to move ahead in its EU integration and its commitments to fulfill the Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Agreement Programme. The political impasses have become hurdles for legislation processes.

It was a political landslide as famous **Kosovo** President Fatmir Sejdiu resigned following accusations that he had violated the constitution for holding simultaneously two seats as leader of his party and president of the country. Meanwhile, all parties have agreed to have an early election although a date has not been chosen. NATO forces working in **Kosovo** are counting their successes yet wary of underestimating the tasks yet uncompleted.

**Macedonian** Lustration Commission has refuted and reconfirmed that Constitutional Court President Trendafil Ivanovski collaborated with the communist-era secret police and can no longer occupy his post.



In **Serbia**, the government has decided to end mandatory military service, effective January 1st 2011. As of then, military service will be only for those who volunteer to join the army.

**Polish** leaders are still deliberating on Pole-US military cooperation which could include the deployment of U.S forces in **Poland**. It is **Poland's** sovereign right to enter pact with any country but the **Russian** factor is always there.

The **Czech** government is insisting not to discontinue with the plan to launch an e- Government projects despite the dramatic budget cuts. There has been opposition to the project as it will be adding to public spending.

As **Hungary** takes the EU rotational presidency by January 2011, it hopes to accelerate Western Balkan EU integration, push more for economic recovery and job creation and to focus on Roma integration.

**Ukrainian** Constitutional Court finally canceled 2004 constitutional reform and reestablishes the presidential-parliamentary Republic in accordance with the initial version of the Constitution adopted in 1996. The initial version of 1996 Constitution was approved after 5 years of a vibrant nation-wide discussion.

**Latvian** Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis' Vienotiba (Unity) bloc has won 30.34% defeating the opposition Saskaņas Centrs (Harmony Center) party, which represents the Russian-speaking majority.

### **Economic Issues**

The austerity measures across **Europe** are becoming a threat for governments wanting to cut public budgets. **Romanian** government felt the wind of protesters asking the government to retract plans to cut pension and civil services salaries.

The **Polish** government celebrates the nation's economic growth and making serious plans to integrate the economy with the Eurozone. The new pro-business government hopes to accelerate the growth.

The **Czech** koruna is reported to have made remarkable gains in the last quarter, signaling the boost of the economy. Yet the European Commission is referring **Czech** to the European Court of Justice for failing to upgrade its dairy product legislation, believe e not meeting the requirements set out in EU legislation

Meanwhile, in **Slovakia**, ambitious fiscal consolidation plan, which includes hikes in value-added and excise taxes and cuts in government spending, continues to be pursued by the centre-right **Slovak** cabinet.

According to the central bank of **Ukraine**, the increase in government debt has contributed to the nation's total foreign debt from \$102.8 billion on April 1 to \$104.5 billion as of July 1.

**Lithuanians** joined the tens of thousands of workers that marched through the streets of Europe, decrying the loss of jobs and benefits they fear will come with stinging austerity measures seeking to contain government debt.

### **Social/Humanitarian Issue**

The latest protest in **Bulgaria** was an indication of religiosity and religious accommodation of the people as clerics and members of the public together rallied demanding for mandatory study of Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism or Islam.



An independent commission reviewing school textbooks concludes that Serb students in **Kosovo** learn only one side of history, which does not promote peace and tolerance. The commission observes that children of Serbs are misinformed through their various studies package.

The appointment of Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz as the new vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge has been received well by the **Poles**.

### **Geostrategic Issues**

Media reported that **Montenegro** and **Serbia** have agreed on the terms of an agreement to extradite people suspected of a handful of specific crimes.

In an attempt to strengthen its NATO credential, **Slovak** government wants its troop out of **Kosovo** but to be deployed to Afghanistan, even though the war in *Afghanistan* is increasingly becoming unpopular.

### **RUSSIA**

#### **Political Issues**

**Russia** political parties have commenced campaigning for the next general election though according to reports certain political opposition is facing government repression. The recent defeat of a pro-**Russian Latvian** presidential candidate in recent elections has also been a blow.

#### **Economic Issues**

According to the survey of Cushman & Wakefield, nearly 10 % of the 500 European companies surveyed said they expect to bring their operations to Moscow soon, therefore bringing *Moscow* closer to *London*, *Paris* and *Frankfurt* as Europe business hubs. Meanwhile, foreign investors will now have to get government permission for a purchase of five or more percent in Russia's financial infrastructure.



#### **Social/Humanitarian Issue**

President Dmitry Medvedev has set **Russia's** security agencies the task of creating a reliable modern system for confidential mobile communications and replacing outdated system with the digital technology.

A 20 years archaeological excavation has proved the existence of unknown settlements but believe to be originally built by Aryan race about 4,000 years ago in **Russia**.

**Russia** has been treading the path of reducing cigarette smoke in the public since 2007 when tobacco ads on outdoor billboards were banned; further ban is expected to take effect by 2012.

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

The ban on **Russian** grains could be lifted if harvest after next year is fine; this was the contention of the **Russian** President Dmitry Medvedev, whose country plays a significant role in global grains production.

Due to its reserve, **Ukraine** will be slashing its gas purchase from **Russia**, while the latter plans to hike the price of gas for **Belarus** and has not been able to reach a conclusive gas with *China*, whose interest in Russia's energy sector has increased.

### **Geostrategic Issues**

**Russia** is showing commitment in maintaining stronger ties with neighbours as well as countries of the BRIC. The recent programme of cooperation for 2011-2016 between **Russia** and **Ukraine** insinuates years of mutual support to come.

The Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) a grouping of **Russia**, **Kazakhstan**, **Uzbekistan**, **Tajikistan** and **Kyrgyzstan** will merge with the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC), a body seeking to establish a single economic zone.

On the occasion of Unity Day celebration commemorating the reunification of East and West *Germany*, **Russian** President Medvedev sent a felicity note to Chancellor Merkel.

The visit of **Russian** president to South Kuril Islands, a disputed island between Moscow and Tokyo might further exacerbate tension between the two countries. Meanwhile, despite Russia supporting another round of UNSC sanctions, *Moscow* still holds that diplomacy is wise in resolving *Iran's* nuclear impasses.

## US/CANADA

### *Political Issues*

As the midterm elections draws closer in the **United States**, the democrat party has launched offensive ads, challenging the past of republicans in the Congress. Meanwhile, republicans' spending has outmatched democrats amid democrats' wealthy supporters cutting support.

As the election days move in, President Obama paid a visit to University of Wisconsin-Madison to rally liberal progressive for his party and demonizing republicans' promise of deficit cut.

**Canada's** minority government remains ahead of all opposition parties according to the latest poll by EKO, the latter has been noticing an oscillation in public rating of the parties.

### *Economic Issues*

Saving the **Canadian** economy is one serious objective **Canadian** Prime-Minister Stephen Harper is trying to achieve as his government works with *French* investigators to nail **Canadian** tax evaders having offshore assets in *Switzerland* and HSBC. In the same vein, **Canadian** government will be limiting the increases in employment insurance premiums to avoid derailing economic recovery.

**Canadian** National Railway managers reached a deal with **Canadian** railway workers, a deal which averted a possible labour showdown at **Canada's** largest rail carrier.

### *Social/Humanitarian Issue*

Drug related crime is expected to command lesser penalty in *California* through the legalization of drug like marijuana. The law is expected to change the racial discrimination of existing law and reduce government spending on prisoners and prisons.

### *Food, Environment and Energy Issue*

The oil exploration is expected to begin in *Cuba's* water but many fear that a repetition of oil spill in *Cuba* will be equally detrimental to the **United States** due to proximity.

**Canadian** Environment Minister Jim Prentice has constituted a panel that will investigate the environmental implications of the Alberta's oil sands projects exploration. The issue has been making headlines and environmentalists are concerned about pollution of Athabasca River

### *Geostrategic Issues*

*Stuxnet*, the cyber virus worries many countries especially *Iran* in recent times, a reminder to the issue of cyber defense system few countries have been calling for. The virus is said to have attacked *Iran's* nuclear computer even though Tehran is not consenting, yet the air is filled with the view that the West will be using everything possible to rollback *Iran's* suspected nuclear programme.

## LATIN AMERICA

### *Political Issues*

Despite allegations of nepotism, **Brazilian** polls are not suggesting any change in the status of Ms Rouseff as the leading presidential candidate.

For **Colombia**, combating the danger of FARC is a strategic matter, the government of President Santos believes in negotiation with FARC if only the latter will renounce its rebellion, although the killing of a FARC leader recently raised public rating of Santos.



President Hugo Chavez employed the internet effectively before the recent election, which was praised as a peaceful election even by the EU. Chavez's party though got majority votes but lacks the third majority needed in the elections of 2012 to run the government. Chavez's United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) faced serious challenge from the oppositions.

### ***Economic Issues***

The heavyweight of the **Brazilian** economy both within and outside the region is beyond exaggeration; hence for **Brazil** cooperating with **Cuba** is expected to strengthen regional economy.

Having won the elections, **Venezuelans** will want Chavez to turn around the economy which has not been doing well in recent times.

### ***Social/Humanitarian Issue***

The menace of **Mexican** drug lords and violence related to this cartel is not threatening ordinary **Mexicans** alone but equally affecting political leaders as many have been killed in recent times.

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

The **Brazilian** government is hopeful in increasing the country's ethanol production from 26 billion liters of ethanol in 2010 to 64 billion ethanol by 2019. **Brazil** and the United States are the top countries producing this alternative energy. Meanwhile the country also intends to stabilize its oil production.

If President Hugo Chavez supports **Iran** for its nuclear programme, then it will be less a surprise to see Chavez announcing that **Venezuela** is also planning similar programme not for weapon but to generate energy for its economy.

### ***Geostrategic Issues***

For few in the region it is believed to be another form of European colonialism and should be resisted at all cost. The **Argentine** government is flexing all muscles to challenge **Britain** over the long disputed Falkland Island and regional leaders are throwing their support for **Argentine** president Cristina Kirchner.

**Chilean** President Pinera rebinds **Chile-California** ties as both signed agreements on education, environment and business cooperation. This part of the *United States* has enjoyed a long and sound relation with **Chile**.

**Colombia-Venezuela** relation is opening a new page, characterized by cooperation in different sectors and cordial neighborhood. **Colombian** President Santos confirmed this during a interview with Washington Post.

## **AUSTRALASIA**

### ***Political Issues***

The fragile coalition government in **Australia** was finally sworn in after a tight struggle from a strong opposition. Meanwhile, Ed Husic sets a landmark as the first Muslim sworn in on the Quran in the newly constituted Australian parliament. His parliament role has given a boost to the 1.7% Muslim community of Australian 22 million populations.

**Australia's** former Prime Minister John Howard decries against Anglosphere acceptance of multiculturalism. Speaking before the Heritage Foundation, Howard urges the English speaking countries to champion deeply their values and achievements and shun diluting their cultural values.

### ***Economic Issues***

Although the effect of the global financial meltdown was not profound as in other rich economies, yet the **Australian** dollar is surging and causing huge cry among tourists visiting the country. The surge explains the expensive state of the economy. §

