

Friday on the facebook

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

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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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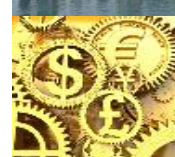
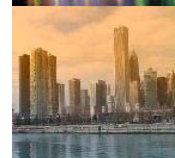
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Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of 21 surveys. 2 of these are multi-country surveys & the rest are national surveys. 7 polling organizations have been represented.



Topic of the week:

Philippines Highly Satisfied With President Noyonoy Aquino

► 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: Net +60 satisfaction rating for President Noyonoy Aquino



Social Weather Stations - Rated for the first time as President, Benigno "Noyonoy" Aquino III had **71%** satisfied and **11%** dissatisfied with his performance, for a *very good* net satisfaction rating of **+60** (% satisfied minus % dissatisfied), according to the Third Quarter 2010 Social Weather Survey, conducted from September 24-27, 2010.

For comparison, the initial net satisfaction ratings obtained by past presidents were: Pres. Cory Aquino, **+53** in March 1986; Pres. Ramos, **+66** in September 1992; Pres. Estrada, **+60** in September 1998; and Pres. Arroyo, **+24** in March 2001, and **+26** in June 2004.

Very good ratings in all areas

Pres. Aquino's net satisfaction rating is *very good* in all areas. It is **+66** in Metro Manila (**76%** satisfied, **10%** dissatisfied), **+65** in Balance Luzon (**73%** satisfied, **8%** dissatisfied), **+54** in the Visayas (**68%** satisfied, **14%** dissatisfied), and **+52** in Mindanao (**67%** satisfied, **15%** dissatisfied).

Net satisfaction with Pres. Aquino is **+62** in urban areas (**72%** satisfied, **10%** dissatisfied) and **+58** in rural areas (**70%** satisfied, **12%** dissatisfied).

Class patterns

By socioeconomic class, Pres. Aquino's net rating is a *very good* **+64** in the poorest class E (**73%** satisfied, **9%** dissatisfied) and a *very good* **+59** in class D or the *masa* (**71%** satisfied, **11%** dissatisfied), compared to a *good* **+49** in class ABC (**65%** satisfied, **16%** dissatisfied).



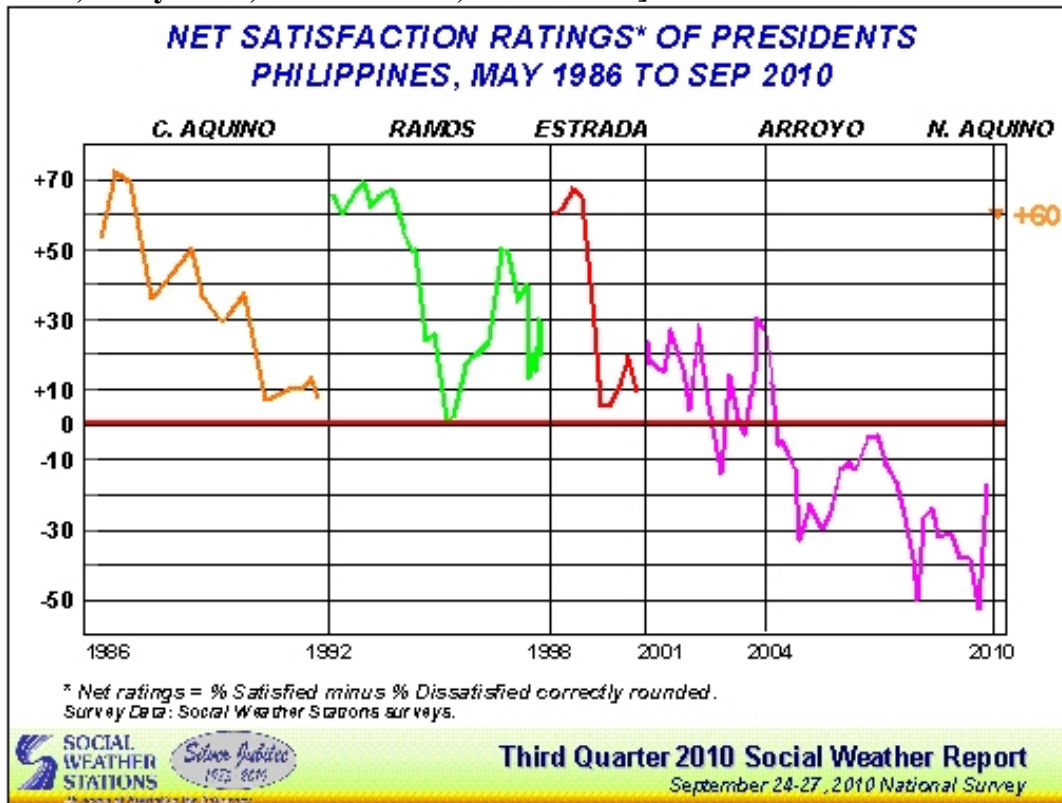
Very good ratings among men and women

Net satisfaction with Pres. Aquino is +62 among women (73% satisfied, 11% dissatisfied) and +58 among men (69% satisfied, 11% dissatisfied).

Survey Background

The September 2010 Social Weather Survey was conducted from September 24-27, 2010 using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults in Metro Manila, the Balance of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao (sampling error margins of $\pm 3\%$ for national percentages, $\pm 6\%$ for area percentages).

[SWS terminology for Net Satisfaction Ratings: +70 and above, "excellent"; +50 to +69, "very good"; +30 to +49, "good"; +10 to +29, "moderate", +9 to -9, "neutral"; -10 to -29, "poor"; -30 to -49, "bad"; -50 to -69, "very bad"; -70 and below, "execrable"]



SOURCE: <http://www.sws.org.ph/pr20101009.htm>

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

- ▶ MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA;
NORTH ASIA; EAST ASIA

▶ SOUTH EAST ASIA

Most Voters in Thailand Are Satisfied with the Country's Democracy (Click for Details)

The PAD's Somsak Kosaisuk is the least popular politician in Thailand, while Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva is the most liked. Most voters in Thailand are content with the way democracy operates in their country, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion poll** has found.

October 05, 2010

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

Philippines Highly Satisfied With President Noynoy Aquino (Click for Details)

In Philippines, rated for the first time as President, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III had 71% satisfied and 11% dissatisfied with his performance, for a very good net satisfaction rating of +60 (% satisfied minus % dissatisfied), according to the Third Quarter 2010 **Social Weather Survey**, conducted from September 24-27, 2010.

October 6, 2010.

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

Multi-Country Poll- Optimism about Financial Wellbeing Rebounds in Asia (Click for Details)

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

Multi-Country Poll- Experts Trust Ratings Organizations Less Than NGOs and Employees as Judges of Sustainability Performance (Click for Details)

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



Africa zone

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

▶ **SUB SAHARAN AFRICA**

Multi-Country Poll- Experts Trust Ratings Organizations Less Than NGOs and Employees as Judges of Sustainability Performance (Click for Details)

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



Euro Americas zone

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

EUROPE



▶ EAST EUROPE

Gay Pride battles in Belgrade reflect opinions on the ground (Click for Details)

Last week, the first Gay Pride march in Belgrade, [Serbia](#) since 2001 took place against a backdrop of violent clashes between police and protesters, said to be chanting “death to homosexuals”. While such clashes could have been predicted, the latest [Gallup Balkan Monitor](#) results can help to put the riots in context. Almost 70 % of Serbians believe homosexuality to be wrong.

October 11, 2010

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

Drug Threat to Russia: Public Opinion (Click for Details)

According to the [Russian Public Opinion Research Center \(VCIOM\)](#), *Drug abuse* is a wide spread issue in [Russia](#) but every tenth Russian considers drug abuse as a private matter for each individual rather than a social problem. As two decades ago, the drug abuse problem is regarded to be serious by most Russians (96%, in 1998 - 93%).

September 29, 2010

[Society](#) » [Social Problems](#)



▶ WEST EUROPE

New Leader Gives Opposition Labour Party First Place in Britain (Click for Details)

Labour boasts impressive support in Scotland and the North following election of Ed Miliband as leader. In the online survey of a representative sample of 2,004 [British](#) adults, **38 %** of decided voters and leaners say they would support Labour in the next General Election. [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#)

October 03, 2010

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

Britons and Catholics Want Church to Do More to Assist Sexual Abuse Victims (Click for Details)

Respondents call for the Catholic Church to grant material support to victims and provide the names of all accused priests to the appropriate authorities so they can be prosecuted. In Pope Benedict XVI's recent visit to [Britain](#) the Pope's apology to sexual abuse victims was deemed sincere by **43 %** of Britons and **69 %** of Catholics. [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#)

October 06, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)



AMERICAS

▶ NORTH AMERICA

Views of GOP's Ability to Govern Similar to 1994, 2006 (Click for Details)

While views regarding several facets of Democrats' ability to govern are down sharply since 2006, views about Republicans remain similar to those from the last midterm elections, when the GOP lost majority control of Congress -- but also similar to 1994, when it won majority control. [Gallup USA](#)

October 7, 2010

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

Supreme Court Starts Term With 51% Approval (Click for Details)

The U.S. Supreme Court begins its 2010-11 term with 51% of [Americans](#) approving of the way it handles its job. This is lower than a year ago, when approval surged to 61%, but is similar to the court's ratings in 2007 and 2008. [Gallup USA](#)

October 6, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings](#)

Obama Approval Averages 45% in September ([Click for Details](#))

[American](#) President Barack Obama's job approval ratings remain below 50%, with an average 45% job approval score for the president in September. That is a slight improvement from his term-low 44% average in August. [Gallup USA](#)

October 4, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings](#)

Four in 10 U.S. Workers Say Their Company Is Understaffed ([Click for Details](#))

Even as millions of [Americans](#) are searching for work, 38% of those who do have a job say their company is understaffed, while 52% say their company has about the right number of employees. Few American workers believe their company has too many employees. [Gallup USA](#)

October 8, 2010

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

Likely Voters Demographically Typical, but Skew Conservative ([Click for Details](#))

[Gallup's](#) recent modeling of the vote for Congress finds 54% of likely voters identifying themselves as politically conservative, while moderates are in conspicuously short supply compared with recent midterms. Also, Republicans make up a larger share of the electorate in Gallup's initial 2010 likely voter pool -- greater than their 1994 share -- than do Democrats, and the gap is even more pronounced once the leanings of independents are taken into account.

October 8, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Elections](#)

Gay Marriage Gains More Acceptance ([Click for Details](#))

Polls this year have found that more [Americans](#) favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally than did so just last year. In two polls conducted over the past few months, based on interviews with more than 6,000 adults, 42% favor same-sex marriage while 48% are opposed. [Pew Research Center](#)

October 6, 2010

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

The Reversal of the College Marriage Gap ([Click for Details](#))

In a reversal of long-standing marital patterns in [America](#), college-educated young adults are more likely than young adults lacking a bachelor's degree to have married by the age of 30. [Pew Research Center](#)

October 7, 2010

[Society » Family](#)

GOP Well Positioned Among Likely Midterm Voters ([Click for Details](#))

[Gallup's](#) generic ballot for Congress among registered voters currently shows Republicans with 46% of the vote and Democrats with 43%, similar to the 46% to 46% tie reported a week ago. However, in Gallup's first estimates among likely voters, based on polling from Sept. 23-Oct. 3, Republicans have a double-digit advantage under two separate turnout scenarios.

October 4, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Elections](#)

Latinos and the 2010 Elections ([Click for Details](#))

In a year when support for Democratic candidates has eroded, the party's standing among one key voting group -- Latinos--appears as strong as ever. Two-thirds (65%) of Latino registered voters say they plan to support the Democratic candidate in their local congressional district, while just 22% support the Republican candidate, according to a nationwide survey of Latinos. [Pew Research Center](#)

October 5, 2010

[Domestic Politics » Elections](#)

Majority of Canadians Support Move to Reinstate Long Form Census ([Click for Details](#))

A majority of [Canadians](#) welcome an opposition proposal to re-instate the abandoned mandatory long form census, a new [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) poll has found. Half of respondents believe the federal government should reverse its decision, and only one-in-four think long form is intrusive.

October 06, 2010

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



▶ **LATIN AMERICA**

Before Protests, Ecuador's President More Popular Than Police [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Clashes between [Ecuador's](#) police and President Rafael Correa Thursday once again raise questions about the stability of the country's leadership and institutions. Prior to the violent uprising and Correa's military rescue from police protesters, Ecuadorians were much more likely to approve of the president's job performance than to express confidence in the local police, the military, or the national government. [Gallup](#)

[USA](#)

October 4, 2010

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



▶ **AUSTRALASIA**

National-led Government Beginning to Lose Popularity in New Zealand [\(Click for Details\)](#)

The latest [New Zealand Roy Morgan Poll](#) shows support for John Key's National-led Government has weakened slightly to 52.5% (down 0.5%), comprising National Party 49.5% (up 1%), Maori Party 2.5% (up 1%), ACT NZ 0.5% (down 1.5%) and United Future 0% (down 1%).

October 12, 2010

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

GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS



Optimism about Financial Wellbeing Rebounds in Asia [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Reflecting Asia's resilience after the global economic crisis, [Gallup](#) surveys in 2010 show people's optimism about their financial wellbeing is rebounding across the region. A median of 53% of residents in 19 countries now say their standard of living is getting better, nearing the pre-crisis median of 57% in 2007.

October 6, 2010

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

Experts Trust Ratings Organizations Less Than NGOs and Employees as Judges of Sustainability Performance [\(Click for Details\)](#)

Ratings and rankings organizations are trusted less than NGOs and a company's employees when it comes to accurately judging that company's sustainability performance. This is according to latest findings from The Sustainability Survey Research Program released by [GlobeScan](#).

October 4, 2010

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

CYBERWORLD



Blogs Take Test of Faith [\(Click for Details\)](#)

A news report that challenges conventional wisdom, especially one about a personal/cultural topic like religion, is often rich fodder for online conversation. This was the case last week as a [Pew Research Center](#) survey showing that atheists and agnostics were more knowledgeable about religion than followers of major faiths drew significant attention.

October 7, 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:**

A Danish prosecutor has asked a court to ban Roj TV, a Copenhagen-based Kurdish TV network, accusing it of supporting the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

Amid renewed debate about the headscarf issue, **Turkish** Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeated his call to the country's opposition parties to work together with his ruling party to solve the problem.

Geo-strategic Front:

NATO chief has sought to persuade **Turkey** to lift its veto on *Greek* Cyprus' possible role in European Union-NATO cooperation. **Turkey** has initiated a reconciliatory conference in the *Kyrgyzstan* to bring different ethnic groups together. Chinese Premier held the talks with **Turkey's** top leaders in efforts shared by both nations to greatly boost their relationship in several areas. *Japan* has proposed to construct a nuclear power plant in **Turkey**. **Turkish** Foreign Minister has urged Foreign Ministry officials and diplomats to donate to a campaign aimed at addressing the persisting problems of Pakistani flood victims during a fundraising dinner in which more than TL 600,000 was donated.

Economic Front:

According to IMF **Turkey's** economy may expand 7.8 % this year, more than double the pace of Europe's other emerging markets. The **Turkish** Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation (RF CCI) have signed a deal to pursue partnership opportunities to boost trade volume between the two nations in accordance with the target of reaching \$100 billion in five years that was set at a high-level meeting between **Turkish** Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his *Russian* counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in January.

Foreign direct investments (FDI) in **Turkey** have decreased by 35 % from \$3.833 to \$2.49 billion in the first seven months of 2010. **Turkey's** auto exports rose by 12.4 % to \$11.4 billion from \$10.2 billion year-on-year in the first nine months of 2010. Private companies in **Turkey** have been allowed to make their own decision regarding establishment of economic ties with *Iranian* firms.

Social Front:

Some male members of the **Turkey** Party, or TP, wore headscarves at a press meeting in the central Anatolian province to protest government and opposition parties' policies regarding the religious garment.

A renovated Armenian church in *Istanbul* has been opened to worshippers.

Turkey's indoor smoking ban that took full effect as of July 2009 has resulted in cigarette sales in the country dropping by 16.2 % this year over the same period last year.

GCC**Political Front:**

Members of the Islamist Reform and Development Bloc called on **Kuwaiti** Prime Minister to carry out an expanded Cabinet reshuffle that would get rid of ministers who are a burden on him and the country, specifically targeting the interior and education ministers.

Islamic Action and Al Menbar Democratic Progressive societies in **Bahrain** had their newsletters banned for allegedly breaking the rules and regulations on publications.

Geo-strategic Front:

The **Saudi** Shura (Consultative) Council has announced to support calls from Middle East countries to include regional issues and the flood relief project in **Pakistan**. **Saudi Arabia** has sent more relief supplies to **Pakistan** for the victims of the recent devastating floods that displaced around 20 million people.

A **Saudi** official has denied **Iraqi** press reports that **Saudi Arabia** was satisfied with the nomination of outgoing **Iraqi** Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki for a new term in office.

The **UAE** has submitted a request for the inclusion of 'the international response' to the flood hit victims in **Pakistan** in the 123rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Meanwhile according to reports **Dubai's** police chief has received death threats from **Israel's** spy agency Mossad linked to his role in uncovering details of the assassination of a senior Hamas leader.

Economic Front:

Top auditors in the member states of the **Gulf Cooperation Council** (GCC) adopted a proposal at a conference seeking consent of the top **GCC** leaders to bless more independence for the audit authorities in the council states.

The **UAE's** non-oil trade has expanded by 8 % year-on-year in the first seven months of the year. The total volume of non-oil foreign trade increased Dh411.951 billion in the first seven months of the year against Dh381.5 billion in the same period a year ago.

Social Front:

Al-Qaeda militants have threatened to launch fresh attacks on **Saudi** royal family members in a video message posted on the Internet on commemorating a 2009 bombing targeting the interior minister.

The **Shoura Council** has instructed its social and family welfare committee to carry out a detailed study on a draft law for the protection of children's rights. The Human Rights Commission (HRC) has called upon individuals, civil groups and the media to stand against the marriage of minors, describing the marriage of young girls to older males as a "violation of children's rights found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child of which the Kingdom is a signatory".

As many as 200 workers, including **Saudis**, have refused to work on a vital project under way in central Jeddah due to non-payment of their dues for the last four months.

The International Anti-Human Trafficking Conference has commended the **UAE** experience in combating human trafficking crimes and provision of good care to victims.

FERTILE CRESCENT**Political Front:**

A top **Iraqi** Kurdish politician has announced to join forces with whichever national political bloc proves "most responsive" to their demands. He further added that out of 19 demands presented by the Kurds to the



**Lt Gen Dahi Khalfan
Tamim, Dubai Police chief**

major factions, the SoL has already agreed to 17, and the remaining two are being negotiated. The *US* has expressed satisfaction with the efforts of **Iraqi** political parties to form a coalition government.

Geo-strategic Front:

Foreign ministers have wrapped up two-day meeting in **Libya** without consensus on reforms to the Arab League and ties with *Iran*. Significant upward revision has placed **Iraq's** proven oil reserves at 143.1 billion, pushing it into third place worldwide.

Egypt's largest opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood, has announced to contest upcoming parliamentary elections despite calls for a boycott. In the meantime Muslim Brotherhood has warned that if November parliamentary elections are rigged by the government, the legitimacy of **Egypt's** next president--who must be sworn in before the national assembly--could be called into question. **Egyptian** Foreign Minister Ahmed has signaled that President Hosni Mubarak would be a presidential candidate in the 2011 elections. Meanwhile **Egypt** and *Iran* have agreed to restart direct flights, halted for 30 years, in what could signal a thaw in broader relations.

Iranian government officials and businessmen arrived in **Egypt** in a show of possible rapprochement between the two countries.

Syria has disagreed to accept any agreement with *Israel* that did not involve the end to the occupation of parts of the Golan Heights claimed by Damascus. **Israeli** Foreign Minister Lieberman told the UN General Assembly that an **Israeli-Palestinian** peace agreement would take "decades", and dismissed current talks between the two sides as unrealistic. Meanwhile **Israeli** PM distanced him from the speech of Foreign Minister by saying that he had not been coordinated. Foreign ministers in **Libya** have supported **Palestinian** president's stance to end talks unless **Israel** stops settlement building. In the meantime influential **Palestinian** leaders urged President Abbas to quit direct talks with **Israel**, owing to settlement construction.



Economic Front:

Egypt's strategic wheat reserves have reached a total of three million tons--enough to cover domestic demand until next March. He also noted that the government had recently purchased 60,000 tons of *Canadian* wheat at US\$275.50 per ton, and a further 180,000 tons of *French* wheat at US\$285 per ton.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front:

The *European Court of Human Rights* (ECHR) has ruled that the **Azerbaijani** government is guilty of having violated citizens' right to a free and fair election during parliamentary elections five years ago. The **Azerbaijani** Central Election Commission (CEC) has approved the text, form, number and rules to prepare ballots. Over 1,322 candidates, ready to compete for MP mandate in the upcoming parliamentary elections in **Azerbaijan**, have appealed to the district election commissions. Head of OSCE observation mission has discussed pre-election situation in **Azerbaijan** with the chairman of the opposition **Azerbaijan** National Independence Party (ANIP).

Kazakhstan's long-serving leader has announced his intention to stay at the helm of Central Asia's largest economy for a third decade, erasing concerns about the possibility of a destabilizing succession struggle.

Offices of **Kyrgyz** political parties have been damaged in violent attacks by protestors. The death toll from the June clashes between ethnic **Uzbeks** and **Kyrgyz** in **Kyrgyzstan's** southern regions of Osh and

Jalal-Abad has risen to 429. Meanwhile representatives of political parties fear that the parliamentary elections will lead toward third revolution in **Kyrgyzstan**.

Tajikistan's National Guards have denied multiple media reports that 28 people were killed in a helicopter crash in the east of the country where a military operation against Islamist militants is under way. 34 **Tajik** troops were killed in two separate incidents in the east of the country, in an area where a military operation against Islamist insurgents is under way. **Tajik** Defense Minister has accused independent newspapers of sympathizing with the Islamic militants who ambushed an army convoy in late August. Government forces have set up over a dozen checkpoints along the road connecting Dushanbe and the administrative center of the Rasht district, and are searching passing vehicles and their passengers.

Turkmen President has called on the National Security Ministry to fight against those who "disseminate slanderous information about **Turkmenistan's** democratic, law-based secular state".

Geo-strategic Front:

Azerbaijan has handed over a note of protest to the U.S. charged' affairs in Baku.

Armenian Foreign Minister has publicly accused the **Azerbaijani** authorities of killing an **Armenian** man found hanged in **Azerbaijani** custody on October 5. **Azerbaijan** however refuted these allegations. Meanwhile **Azerbaijan's** ambassador to the United Nations has complained that on September 27 **Armenia** raised the flag of the unrecognized *Nagorno-Karabakh* republic on the premises of the UN mission in New York.



Slain Kyrgyz journalist Gennady Pavlyuk

Kazakh investigators have arrested two people in connection with the murder of **Kyrgyz** journalist Gennady. Meanwhile Ministry of Defense of **Kazakhstan** and *South Korea* has signed a memorandum of understanding on military cooperation. Authorities in **Kyrgyzstan** have sent a request to *Ukraine* for the extradition of Kadyrjon Batyrov, who is accused by Bishkek of fomenting interethnic hatred.

Tajik-Afghan bilateral cooperation in various fields was the focus of a meeting of **Tajik** Foreign Minister with his Afghan counterpart.

The House of Representatives of the National Assembly of *Belarus* ratified the agreement between the governments of *Belarus* and **Turkmenistan** on military and

military-technical cooperation on October 4.

Economic Front:

Azerbaijan has announced to allocate 2 630 169 341 AZN to financing of Armed Forces, other military units considered in legislation and militarized organizations. Energy Minister has discussed the projects of electric power export from **Kyrgyzstan** to Southern Asia with the colleagues from *Afghanistan*, *Pakistan* and **Tajikistan**.

Social Front:

Kazakh authorities have deported some 130 **Kyrgyz** labor migrants.

AFGHANISTAN

Political Front:

Hundreds of parliamentary poll candidates, who allegedly spent more money on electioneering than allowed under the relevant law, have been referred to the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC). Many Afghans,

irked by civilian casualties, have accused the Western states of supporting the insurgents to justify their continued presence in war-devastated **Afghanistan**.

President Hamid Karzai has inaugurated the newly-created *High Peace Council*, reiterating his call for the Taliban insurgents to come to the negotiating table. Meanwhile the announcement of preliminary results from last month's parliamentary election has been postponed for a week. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) said votes cast in 141 polling centers during last month's parliamentary election had been invalidated. Also the Governors and other high-ranking government servants have been accused of fraud and interference in last month's parliamentary elections in northern **Afghanistan**.

Geo-strategic Front:

Extending its full support for the Karzai government's negotiations with the Taliban insurgents in a bid to end the war, the Obama administration has cautioned Kabul not to cross the red line. President Hamid Karzai and his *American* counterpart Barack Obama have agreed to conclude an **Afghan-US** strategic partnership deal by year end.

The *Estonian* government has offered cooperation with *Afghanistan* in improving its e-governance project. Meanwhile a top *Japanese* diplomat assured his country's continued support for **Afghanistan**.

According to reports officials from **Afghanistan** and *Pakistan* have started conducting "secret talks" reportedly mediated by the *United Arab Emirates*.

Economic Front:

Afghan traders have been facing numerous problems in *Pakistan* after devastating floods hit the neighboring country two months back. Meanwhile the floods in *Pakistan*, which is **Afghanistan's** main source of food products, have caused a considerable increase in the price of foodstuff in **Afghanistan**.

Social Front:

The **Afghan** Ministry of Education has organized the first-ever National Conference on Inclusive and Child-Friendly Education.

Gunmen shot dead a religious scholar - the 50th this year - in a mosque during Friday prayers in the capital of southern Kandahar province, the spiritual home of the Taliban.

INDIA

Political Front:

The Bharatiya Janata Party perceives the Ayodhya verdict as a sort of closure of the Ram temple movement it launched in 1989. Party leaders were of the view that the process of legitimately constructing a Ram temple had begun and would help the BJP recover from the embarrassment of being seen to have abandoned the issue. Meanwhile the All-**India** Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawerat, umbrella body of Indian Muslim organizations, has described the Allahabad High Court verdict in the Ayodhya title suits as confusing, extra-legal and based on myths and legends. The Muslim community expressed dissatisfaction and shock over the judgment and claimed to exercise its right of appeal to the Supreme Court with a view to reversing the judicial stand from the mythological to the legal. In response RSS claimed that it would prefer an out of



Former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabani (L) ,President Hamid Karzai (C) and former Mujahadin leader Pir Sayed Ahmad Gilani, pray during the inauguration ceremony for the High Peace Council, appointed to broker peace with the insurgents in Afghanistan, at the presidential palace in Kabul

October 7, 2010.Credit: Reuters/Ahmad Masood

court settlement in the Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute in the light of the recent Allahabad high court judgment.

Congress General Secretary Rahul Gandhi called upon the youth in Madhya Pradesh to enter politics and expressed hope that a day would come when young leadership would be at the forefront in the state. In the meantime Rahul Gandhi claimed that there was little difference between the banned outfit Students Islamic Movement of India (Simi) and RSS as both were “fanatical” and held “fundamentalist” views.

South India:

Revolutionary balladeer Gaddar has been trying to wrest the leadership of the movement from K. Chandrasekhara Rao of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) in Andhra Pradesh. The 28-month-old Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government in Karnataka has reached at the verge of collapse following over 20 MLAs, including six ministers, reportedly deciding to withdraw their support to the government. Hence Karnataka Governor has asked chief minister to prove majority on the floor of the State Assembly by 12 October. For the Kerala Local body election which will be held on 23-25 local bodies’ polls in the state; more than one lakh candidates are in the fray for 21,612 seats in 1,208 local bodies. More than 77,000 nominations have been filed. Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) President K V Thangabalu has claimed that the TNCC conference to be held in Tiruchirapalli on October 9 would be a turning point in Tamil Nadu politics. To strengthen the party at the grass roots level ahead of the ensuing Assembly polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Tamil Nadu would undertake a Yatra covering across all districts of the State, highlighting various issues concerning the people.

Geo-strategic Front:

Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh have been shown as "independent entities" by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization which said this was its approach towards "disputed" areas.

Russia and **India** have firmed up plans to jointly design, develop and manufacture the fifth-generation fighter aircraft (FGFA) and multi-role transport aircraft (MTA).

South India:

AP seems keen to develop closer ties with the **Australian** cities of Brisbane and Ipswich in the areas of agriculture, education, information technology, biotechnology and tourism.

Economic Front:

British banking group HSBC in its recent report indicated that trade confidence in India is soaring and is the highest among the 17 countries surveyed by the bank during July and September this year. **India's** trade confidence index for the coming six months stood at 140, up from 133 in the first half of 2010. The index is higher than that of *China* which was 111. The International Monetary Fund has projected the **Indian** economy will grow by 9.7 % in 2010 and 8.4 % in the next fiscal, driven by robust industrial production and macro-economic performance.

South India:

Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has posted a nearly 20 % growth in resource mobilization in the first five months of current fiscal as there had been improvement in the collection of taxes and the other major sources of revenue.

Social Front:

Writer-activist Arundhati Roy has described the Allahabad High Court's judgment on the Ayodhya title suits as a “political statement” rather than a verdict based on evidence and sound legal principles. According to her, the court seemed to have been influenced by an anxiety to maintain the public peace over the vexed issue. Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh too has shown disappointment over the Allahabad high court



verdict on Ramjanambhoomi and Babri Masjid issue and said that faith and belief and not law and evidence were given primacy in the judgment. This was not a good sign for the country, for the Constitution and for the judiciary itself.

South India:

Government of AP has initiated the process to withdraw cases against students in district level and others who participated in the agitations for and against separate Telangana state last year, where as Police report's filed 1,171 cases against 5,374 people from November last year to Aug 15 this year. The BC communities including Vaddera, Jangam (whose traditional occupation is begging), alleged that the community people were depressed by socially predominant communities and demanded to provide facility in registering atrocity cases against such upper caste communities.

The Karnataka Government has decided to release gold and silver coins to mark the 400 years of world famous Dasara festivities on the opening day of the event on October 8. The retreating South West monsoon, strengthened by troughs of low pressure on either side of the peninsular **India**, caused havoc in Interior Karnataka claiming six lives during the last three days besides damaging crops over 9100 hectares. Nearly 1000 houses were damaged and the loss was put at Rs. 1.35 crore. Adding panic due to the growing number of swine flu cases, 154 more people were placed under Home Quarantine due to H1N1 in Kerala. Women feel unsafe in Kerala capital and face maximum harassment while using public transport. Heavy rainfall in Kerala brought a heavy loss of Rs 3.39 crore.

CHINA

Political Front:

Taiwan-based groups have called on the Kuomintang party to further cooperation and reconciliation with the mainland. The General Office of the Communist Party of **China** (CPC) Central Committee has issued a circular calling for the publication of Party affairs at grassroots organizations. This move indicates expansion of democracy within the party at grass root level. **China** has announced to reinforce control and supervision over the quality of weapons and military equipment. A senior anti-corruption official of the Communist Party of **China** (CPC) has called for serious investigations and harsh penalties to root out corruption in government-contracted construction projects.

Geo-strategic Front:

A new US lawmakers' bill aimed at exerting pressure on **China's** currency policy has stirred up fresh tension between the two economic superpowers, but commentators believe the effect on the wider conflict will be minimal. **China** and *Greece* have clinched a series of deals and agreed to further deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership during the visit of **Chinese** PM to the *Greece*. The leaders of **China** and **Japan** have promised to rebuild their strained ties at a meeting on the sidelines of the ASEM summit in *Brussels*.

China expects an early resumption of the six-party talks to ease tensions and resolve the nuclear issue on the *Korean* Peninsula.

A senior **Chinese** diplomat has called on the United Nations to give priority to the implementation of a set of anti-poverty goals that the world has agreed to achieve by 2015. meanwhile **China** seems keen to enhance ties with *Italy*, *Turkey* and *EU*.

Economic Front:

The trade between **China** and African countries is expected to rebound from a year ago and exceed 100 billion U.S. dollars again this year.



The **Chinese** premier has asked European Union leaders to tone down their attacks on Beijing in an escalating battle over the value of the world's key currencies.

Meanwhile *tourism* revenue in **China** reached 116.6 billion yuan (17.48 billion U.S. dollars) during the National Day week, an increase of 32.4 % year on year.

Social Front:

The average area of glaciers in western **China** might shrink by about 30 % by 2050 because of global warming, damaging crop production and worsening droughts.

Meanwhile according to reports farmers will become a "major driving force" in the growth of **China's** Internet population, which is already the world's biggest with its number exceeding 420 million. §

Events of the week in

Africa zone

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

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa:

Nigeria: President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday met with top ex-militants, former commanders and foot soldiers of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) numbering 100, who unanimously dissociated themselves from last week's twin bombings in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), an umbrella of major militant groups in the **Niger Delta** has said that former military president, Ibrahim Babangida, contacted it to carry out the bomb attacks. Meanwhile as **Nigerian** President Goodluck Jonathan has ruled out that rebels from his own *Niger Delta* region stood behind the car bombs on Independence Day, government has directed suspicions towards the Muslim north.

A coalition of 60 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community based associations under the aegis of Arewa Youth Forum, has called for the total support of the Goodluck Jonathan and Namadi Sambo ticket in the forthcoming presidential election.

Meanwhile **Nigeria** dropped further in the ranking on governance index. The country ranks a distant 40th out of the 53 countries in the continent and 13th out of 16 countries in *West Africa*.

Ghana: a Political party proclaiming to bail **Ghanaians** out of poverty, the *Trades Congress Party* (TCP) formed by technocrats, would be launched in **Ghana** in October this year. They intend to contest in future elections to be able to direct national development with Socio-Capitalism.

Ghana is ranked 7th out of 53 African Countries in the latest MO Ibrahim assessment of governance on the continent.

Liberia: **Liberia** has registered the biggest improvement in governance on the African continent, jumping from 32 to 44 points in 4 years, according to the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance.

Arab and **African** leaders met in the *Libyan* town of Syrte for an Afro-Arab summit to discuss increasing mutual cooperation in various domains on the heels of an Arab League summit just one day earlier. Also the Afro-Arab Summit hailed AMISOM and affirmed the need to support its efforts reiterating the call for the international community and the UN Security Council to assume its role in war-torn *Somalia*.

African Union sources said the continental organization has chosen former **Ghanaian** president Jerry Rawlings as its new envoy for *Somalia*. The reports said Mr. Rawlings will help promote peace and reconciliation, as well as focus more international attention on the war-ravaged country.

Elections: Ivory Coast: Ivory Coast said it would distribute electoral identity and cards last week in the main commercial city of Abidjan, before its Oct. 31 presidential poll.

Guinea: Guinea will hold the delayed second round of its presidential election on Oct. 24, the presidency of the military-ruled West African minerals producer said last week. Diallo, a former prime minister, won the first round with 43.69 % of the vote. Conde placed second with 18.25%.

East Africa/Horn of Africa:

Sudan: There are some pending key challenges like Voters registration, Fears of fraud, Deployment of observers, North-South tensions, possible delays and demarcation problems Ahead of Voting **Sudan's** landmark referenda in 3 months time. Meanwhile **Sudan's** foreign minister told the U.N. Security Council that his government is "fully committed" to holding a referendum that could result in the south of the country seceding from the north and has warned against interference in the January 9 vote.

Also **Sudan's** president has warned of a return to civil war unless the country's north and south resolve key issues involving water, debt, wealth-sharing, citizenship and the north-south border before the plebiscite ahead of a referendum on southern independence.

A former **south Sudanese** envoy has rejected *Libyan* leader Muammar Gaddafi suggestions over the weekend that south **Sudan's** secession will be a disease that will spread throughout Africa.

Sudanese officials rejected the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers on the border between the northern and southern **Sudan** saying such a request is unacceptable and contrary to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Central Africa:

Congo: The International Criminal Court reversed an order to release alleged **Congolese** warlord Thomas Lubanga; the trial now resumes.

Meanwhile **Congolese** forces have moved into the southern Pool region, which witnessed several civil wars between 1998 and 2003, in a move aimed at helping to restore state control ahead of plans to rehabilitate basic infrastructure, say officials.

South Africa:

A group of respected **South Africans** from across the spectrum have formed a group aimed at making the constitution more relevant for the country's citizens; they claim the Constitution is not helping the poor.

Zimbabwe: Residents of the **Zimbabwean** capital of Harare are expressing anger at the postponement of constitutional revision outreach meetings canceled last month and continued confusion as to when they will be rescheduled.

Meanwhile **Zimbabwean** Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai said his MDC party refused to recognize a string of senior appointments made by President Robert Mugabe, in a fresh row set to strain their fragile coalition.



Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga

Botswana President Ian Khama, one of Africa's most outspoken leaders critical of **Zimbabwe** President Robert Mugabe, has called for a lifting of sanctions to help prod the country to greater openness.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa:

Mali: Drought is recurrent in northern **Mali** and many pastoralists will inevitably find themselves in crisis mode in the future, say aid agencies.

Central Africa:

The **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC) has made significant progress in education and child survival in recent years, but much more needs to be done to achieve the anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), according to a new United Nations-backed study.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa:

Nigeria: Gombe State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Mohammed Isa Umar, has declared that no fewer than 122 people have been killed by cholera out of the over 1,700 cases recorded since the outbreak of the disease few months ago.

Meanwhile two international aid groups say that as many as 400 children have died of lead poisoning-related illnesses in **Nigeria** since March, and as many as 30,000 people could be affected by lead contamination.

Central Africa:

Rwanda: A group of 14 medical doctors from the U.S. in the country for a one-week Continuing Medical Education (CME) programme have commended the progress the country has registered in improving the health sector.



POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa:

Nigeria: A former **Nigerian** bank chief has been sentenced to six months in prison for fraud and ordered to hand over \$1.2bn (£786m) in cash and assets.

Senior workers in **Nigeria's oil industry**, under the aegis of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of **Nigeria** (PENGASSAN), have accused the International Oil Companies (IOCs) of deliberately engaging in practices to ambush and sabotage the newly-enacted **Nigerian** Content Act.

Meanwhile **Nigeria** is building a multi-billion dollar free trade zone with Chinese investors on the edge of its commercial capital Lagos to try to develop a local manufacturing base and help reduce its import dependence.

Ghana: vice president of *Russia's* No. 2 oil producer, LUKOIL said last week its offshore oil exploration project in **Ghana** will almost certainly lead to commercial exploitation.

Meanwhile the Services sector has displaced agriculture as the biggest contributor to GDP that's according to the first ever half-year national income estimates released by the **Ghana Statistical Service**.

The Managing Editor of the Insight Newspaper, has warned the ruling NDC that should they impose further taxes on petroleum products in order to generate more revenue to complete their projects and programs by IMF advise, they will have to bring in IMF officials to vote for them in the 2012 elections, since **Ghanaians** will never forgive the NDC.

Liberia: The World Bank has announced additional development funding of US\$39 million for **Liberia** in the coming year and the Ministry of Finance said 30.8 million US Dollars of the amount will go

towards the Monrovia–Ganta road project. The remainder of the amount will be applied to power and other key economic sectors.

According to **Burkina Faso's** premier the country expects its Essakane gold mine, opened last week, to boost its public finances and enable it to seek more borrowing for development projects in the future.

Since the launch of the Forum on **China-Africa** Co-operation in 2000, bilateral trade has grown at an annual average rate of 33.5%, from \$10bn in 2000.

East Africa/Horn of Africa:

Kenya's economy grew at the rate of **5.4 %** in the second quarter of the year powered by improved productivity in the key agriculture, construction and financial services sectors.

Central Africa: The soundness of **Rwanda's** financial sector has significantly improved from the tight credit conditions experienced in 2009, enhancing stability within the sector, the Central Bank has said.

South Africa: Zimbabwe: The World Bank says it is not yet ready to fully re-engage **Zimbabwe** though it may provide nearly US\$3 million to help rehabilitate the Southern African country's failing water and sanitation infrastructure.

Zimbabwean Finance Minister Tendai Biti and Economic Planning Minister Tapiwa Mashakada were set to meet with US and top international financial officials in Washington last week seeking development aid and debt relief. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

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

WESTERN EUROPE

Political Issues

The appointment of officers for the *European External Action Service* (EEAS) has raised dust among **EU** MPs. The committee looking into the matter hopes to defuse the dispute with Catherine Ashton but unwilling to back down on the issue of public hearings for nominees.

The European Commission has been found guilty of 'maladministration' by the **EU** ombudsman for failing to disclose full correspondence between the bloc and **EU** car manufacturers. The allegation evolves around the extent to which the **EU** is committed to reducing greenhouse emission from cars.

As the **British** Labour party elected Ed Miliband over his brother David Miliband, **Britons**, particularly labour members have been engaged in a big debate. Ed is expected to reposition the party and make the Conservative-led government a one term government.

Economic Issues

After long deliberation and resolving reservations of **Italy, Spain** and



Ed Miliband

Portugal, EU commission finally consented to reduce import tariffs for *Pakistani* textiles into the EU. The concession is expected to strengthen *EU-Pakistan* trade ties; the recent natural disaster in the country played a role in the new agreement.

EU commission is on the verge of legislating financial transactions tax (FTT) and a financial activities tax (FAT) on financial institutions geared at stabilizing the bloc's public finance. But European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet said such financial transaction tax could only work if implemented across the globe, marking a setback for others who have argued that Europe could do it alone.

China expects no dictation from any country and same was true when the Chinese prime minister rejected EU request of changing its currency policy. EU believes China's devalued currency is affecting EU traders; meanwhile the EU is contemplating on China's request to be added as part of IMF decision makers.

Economic affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn has said that **Ireland's** record budget deficit suggests the country will not be able to keep its low taxes and will become a "normal tax country" in the European context. This will definitely be bad for the country and its foreign investors.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The EU members have agreed on pre-notification policy on terror alert, by informing each other rather than allowing media to do the job. The agreement followed a terror alert issued by the U.S, warning that certain European countries are on the radar of terrorists for attack. Although, justice and fundamental rights Commissioner Viviane Reding said the alert is nothing new rather the threats have been on the table for several years.

The EU entered an agreement with *Libya* with the aim of controlling illegal migration from the North African country to **Europe** and at the same for improving Libyan treatment of refugees. However human right activists find holes in the deal which failed to address the non recognition of asylum seeker by *Tripoli*.

The French Constitutional Council has finally stamped the law banning veil as not impinging on civil liberties. Meanwhile the expulsion of Roma from **France** has both positive and negative impacts. The saga is now making governments having Roma as ethnic minority to review policy of integrating the Roma.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Cleaning up the Baltic Sea is becoming a concern for the EU, the bloc is concerned that a year into its existence, EU's first 'macro-regional' policy around the Baltic Sea has few results to show, as it uses no fresh money and has no new institutions or legislation in place to implement it.

Seen as a defeat for the Greens, who failed to see their proposed resolution, calling a halt to all new oil drilling until uniform oil-rig safety standards and procedures were introduced accepted by EU commission. The call for the temporary ban explains the fear that follows the oil spill in the Gulf of *Mexico*.

Geostrategic Issues

Developing a NATO cyber-war capability and **French** opposition to joint nuclear planning are emerging as the main bones of contention in the debate on a new NATO "Strategic Concept".

EAST EUROPE

Political Issues

Kosovo remains the only Western Balkan countries excluded from the EU visa liberalization scheme. The resolution of the commission excluded Pristina though recommended **Albania** and **Bosnia** for the scheme. **Kosovo's** exclusion is somewhat linked to lack of singular policy on **Kosovo** within the bloc.



A poll conducted in **Poland** showed support for Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centre-right pro-business party had dropped to 37 % from 42, thus explains the gain for other opposition parties. Meanwhile, the **Polish** leader reiterates the view of certain EU members that *Turkey* should be brought closer to the **EU**.



Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's recent visit to France was a chance for both countries to renew their bilateral friendship and **Ukraine's** commitment to the EU. Yanukovich said in *France* that "One for all, all for one" should not be confined to the EU instead should be a continental value.

Meanwhile the recent 2004 constitutional amendments in **Ukraine** have received attention from the EU and U.S.

In **Slovakia**, the Ruling Centre-Right Coalition government recently agreed on the draft 2011 budget which includes a 1% increase in the standard rate of value-added tax

(VAT), from 19% to 20%

The ruling **Hungarian** FIDESZ party has once again shown its muscle in the just completed municipal elections, overshadowing other political parties as was the case during the April general elections. But the opposition snatches the seat of Budapest mayor, a potential threat for FIDESZ.

Run-up to the **Belarusian** presidential election is on and candidates have been reduced to 15, meanwhile incumbent President Alexander Lukashenka remains at the top, believe to be chanting anti-Russia slogans.

The Unity bloc of **Latvian** Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis, Union of Greens and Farmers has formed the current minority coalition with a nationalist bloc with the hope to see the country develops.

Economic Issues

Poland's government has decided to raise the minimum wage in **Poland** starting from January 2011 to 1,386 zloty (352 euro). The issue has been a bone of contention between the government and trade unions.

In a recent interview given to the US business news channel CNBC, **Czech** president Klaus said the condition of the **Czech** economy is improving and the country's gross domestic product should grow by around 2.5%,

Meanwhile **Ukraine** has proudly announced a successful return to the capital markets after raising \$2bn.

The **Hungarian** government is bent at not exploring possibility of a new agreement with the International Monetary Fund, saving the country from further dependence.

Lithuania-India bilateral trade was reported to have dropped following the recession in 2009 by a decreasing value of \$100 million.

In **Estonia**, inflation is on the rise and prices of consumer goods are rapidly hurting the people, while **Latvia's** prime minister reaffirmed his belief to keep the country on its IMF-led austerity path and eventually euro zone entry.

Geostrategic Issues

The process of **European Union's** expansion and integration is not easy for all countries. **Ukraine** is one country being careful of EU integration as the recent DCFTA [Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement] agreement with the **EU** is believed to be a costly deal to implement

This might be the best way of taming *Russia* and making the old foe responsible on the continent. NATO chief is proposing to have *Russia* as part of the larger controversial missile defense shield initiated by Washington which has become a worrisome issue for Moscow.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Meanwhile, **Ukraine** will be taking steps similar to those in **Russia** by not exporting its grain unless harvests get well after the end of the year.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban rejected financial help to solve the recent environmental problem in the country but welcomes expertise to help contain the deadly toxic mud spill that has devastated villages and is threatening its waterways and the Danube.

Geostrategic Issues

Estonian President Mr. Iives's visit to *Afghanistan* was memorable because it marked the 80th friendship anniversary of the two countries.

Meanwhile amid the renewal of economic relations between **Belarus** and **Armenia**, Minsk nonetheless believes that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict should be resolved peacefully.

RUSSIA**Political Issues**

In **Russia** the ousting of Yuri M. Luzhkov, longtime former mayor of Moscow by **Russian** President Dmitry Medvedev is becoming a reminiscence of the Communist era when authorities in **Russia** cannot be challenged. Meanwhile, Yuri M. Luzhkov has vowed to remain in politics and constitute independent movement to champion the cause of democracy amid **Russia's** preparation for the next general elections. All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) reveals that 66% of **Russians** agreed with Luzhkov's dismissal.

Economic Issues

As **Russia** cracks down on corruption and pushes for good governance, **Russian** Audit Chamber said it has numerous documents showing that the Moscow city government has spent budget funds inefficiently. **Russian's** Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin believes hiking the retirement age would help bring down the increasing budget deficit of **Russia's** Pension Fund.

Russian efforts to attain a GDP growth level of 7-8 % by 2014-2017 are underway; the nation hoped to reduce its budget deficit in order to reach zero deficit by 2015, provided that the price of oil is \$78 per barrel.

^Lukoil, the **Russian** oil giant is mulling listing on Hong Kong or Singapore, London, New York, Frankfurt's stock exchanges in 2011.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Two **Russians** Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov, both of whom work for universities in *Britain*, won the Nobel Prize for Physics.

The **Polish** government is opening the case of alleged CIA torture of a *Saudi* national in **Poland**.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Ukraine got cheap price gas from **Russia** for normalizing ties with Moscow, this could be true for *Belarus* if Minsk will review its policy towards Moscow. **Russia** is an energy hub in the region and can always sway its energy clout. But the *Belarus* government believes **Russia** has violated the CIS Economic agreement obliging members not to charge export fees in their trade.

Meanwhile, *France's* Air Liquide is expected to extend its investment in the Nizhny Novgorod region of **Russia** for the next five years. For **Russia** it is positive news that the country was rated as the 3rd most transparent country in the areas of oil and mining sectors.

Russia-US non-proliferation talks are so far un-finalized, yet **Russia's** commercial reserves of natural uranium have doubled and production has increased 13% since the start of 2010.



Yuri M. Luzhkov, former mayor of Moscow

The scramble over the Arctic and the Antarctic resources is a potential future brawl as many contenders are flexing muscle in these regions thought to be endowed with numerous resources.

Geostrategic Issues

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's visit to *Algeria* saw the signing of bilateral cooperation in energy and transportation sector but the **Russian** leader failed to get the consent of the North African country on communication cooperation.

Abkhazia and *South Ossetia* are issues **Georgia** is ready to use against **Russia**-WTO integration. **Russia** too is becoming wary of its WTO membership as many hurdles waylay it. Meanwhile, *Abkhazia* rejected Clinton's suggestion that **Russian** troop should be withdrawn from the region.

Trying to comply with new UNSC's sanctions on *Iran*, **Russia** might have to refund *Iran's* payment for the aborting the sale of S-300 military hardware. Meanwhile, **Russian** leadership is vulcanizing its military industry for greater productivity and is ready to sell hardware to *India*.

US/CANADA

Political Issues

Americans are looking forward to the midterm elections, but even if polls suggest Democrat vulnerability, the road still remains uncertain for the Republican Party having lesser chances of taking over the Senate, though more likely for the Congress.

Meanwhile, immigration issue is expected to affect the total turnout of the midterm elections particularly among the *Latinos*. Arizona law is said to be affecting the political participation of *Latinos* as depicted by lesser voters' registration, yet political candidates with tough stance on immigration are getting public support.

Economic Issues

Bank of **America**, the largest bank in the U.S is expected to extend its moratoriums nationwide on lenders and thousands of borrowers in default.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Park51 architectural interior outlook has been opened to the public with the intention of telling opponents of the Islamic centre what the centre will eventually look like. Fund raising for the centre is said to have not begun.

Judge Lewis A. Kaplan of **United States** District Court in Manhattan has rejected using a crucial witness in the trial of a former Guantánamo detainee, adding to the fierce debate over whether the government can successfully prosecute terrorist detainees in civilian court.

The *Arizona* government has shown zero tolerance for illegal immigration but opens the door of the state for refugees. The recent Arizona immigration law could have a domino effect as other states like Nebraska are contemplating similar laws.

Geostrategic Issues

Tension between **U.S** and *Pakistan* is making the **U.S** military rethink its policy on energy. The huge dependence on fossil oil and recent blockage of energy supply to *Afghanistan* reiterates the high necessity for renewable resources. The blockage was effective and forced the **U.S** to apologize for the first time following the killing of *Pakistanis*.

LATIN AMERICA

Political Issues

A twist in **Argentina-Chile** relation surfaced last week when a suspected **Chilean** criminal was granted asylum by **Argentina's** Supreme Court. **Argentina** is rejecting extradition on the premise of human



rights. The former leftist guerrilla is charged of assassinating a senator and kidnapping a businessman in **Chile** in 1991.

The first round of votes in **Brazil** has somewhat belied pre-election polls suggesting free hand winning of presidential candidate Dilma Rousseff. The country will be going for a second round as Dilma Rousseff could only secure 46.9%, Jose Serra got 32.6% and Green's Party got 20%.



Galvarino Apablaza Guerra

Sharing similar ordeals with **Colombia**, the **Mexican** president is urging the country's congress to legislate new law in the congress geared at training **Mexican** police forces to combat drug cartels.

Economic Issues

Argentina's economy is expected to see a boost after the US \$326 million loan given by a regional development bank CAF to upgrade its freight rail network useful for the movement of copper, corn, minerals, petroleum products, rice, soybeans and vegetable oil.

Despite being troubled by drug cartels, **Mexican** authority claims the economy is doing well and still remains the second largest economy after **Brazil** in the region.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The ordeal of the 33 trapped **Chilean** miners came to an end last week. A poll published by La Tercera newspaper said 84 % of **Chileans** approved of the handling of the mine crisis by President Sebastian Pinera, a billionaire businessman who took office in March.

Efforts by the **Colombian** government in emasculating the menace of drug cartels appears to be yielding as government officials apprehended and confiscated huge amounts of cash from the cartels.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Natural resources production will further see a rise following **Brazil's** plans to more than double its copper production by 2014. The government envisages making **Brazil** a regular net exporter of the red metal.

Geostrategic Issues

Latin America wants to close its history of military and authoritarian rule and any attempt to undermine democratic process will not be condoned. This was reiterated by **Brazilian** president upon the mutiny against the government of President Rafael Correa in **Ecuador**.

A historic visit by *Lebanese* President Michael Suleiman to *Mexico* City, marked 65 years of similar visit by a *Lebanese* president to **Mexico**. The nation is home to more than half a million **Lebanese** and their descendants.

AUSTRALASIA

Political Issues

The new fragile **Australian** government led by the Labour party has dropped the idea of unpopular "citizens' assembly", letting 150 ordinary people seek ways of slashing gas emissions as alternative to parliament. The plan was dropped after the plan drew fierce criticism during the recent election campaign.

Economic Issues

The controversial merger of mining giant Rio Tinto with BHP Billiton remains elusive as the massive deal appeared on the brink of collapse.

Geostrategic Issues

Having a regional asylum processing centre is one issue the **Australian** government is struggling to iron out with regional governments. According to reports **Australia** is wary of immigrants coming to the Pacific country and disturbed by the unruly behaviour of asylum seekers. §