



## LKN Global Keeping You Informed

April 2010 Issue

April 30

### **Google introduces TV software.** *The Wall Street Journal*

Google Inc. is planning to introduce Android-based television software to developers at an event in May. The technology, designed to open set-top boxes, TVs and other devices to more content from the Internet, is attracting interest from partners that include Sony Corp., Intel Corp. and Logitech International SA. Meanwhile, Google is continuing a very limited test of a television search service with Dish Network Corp. The service, which uses the new Google technology, allows users to access and search across programming from the Internet as well as Dish's conventional programming.

[Full article](#)

### **No change to Brazil's Amnesty law.** *The New York Times*

The Supreme Court has rejected a motion to modify an amnesty law so that officials accused of human-rights abuses under Brazil's military dictatorship would have to stand trial. The Brazilian Bar Association had proposed that people who committed torture should be excluded from the 1979 Amnesty Law, which pardoned civilians and military personnel for crimes committed under the dictatorship.

[Full article](#)

### **EU, Canada talk of free trade agreement.** *Thestar.com*

With the goal to get a deal by next year, negotiators for Canada and the European Union are now into their third round of talks on an agreement that goes far beyond trade to touch issues such as intellectual property right, labor mobility and procurement. "Canada and the European Union are looking to something very, very ambitious, something that is broader and deeper than even the North American Free Trade Agreement," federal Trade Minister Peter Van Loan said.

[Full article](#)

### **Shanghai rolls out World Records Expo.** *CNN.com*

Up to \$58 billion has been pumped into the local economy in preparations for Expo 2010 Shanghai. Much like the 2008 Summer Olympics, the Shanghai expo is viewed as part of China's coming out party as a global player. "Combining this fair with the Olympics of two years ago, I think that China hopes to be regarded more favorably in the rest of the world for its economic and social development, for its hospitality to visitors from overseas, especially, for its efforts to find a congenial place in the community of first-world nations," said John Findling, a historian and co-editor of "Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions."

[Full article](#)

### **EU to lift liquid ban on airplanes in 2013.** *Business Week*

Europe's air passengers will be able to take on board water bottles, sprays and gels from April 2013 on when a general ban on liquids will be replaced by better screening technology, the European Commission said. In the upcoming three years, EU airports will be required to install new technology capable of detecting liquid explosives, so as to allow for the current ban to be lifted.

[Full article](#)

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### **Best Buy opens stores in UK.** *Business Week*

The world's largest electricals retailer, Best Buy, will open its first UK store in Essex to a fanfare tomorrow, but consumers will have to wait until the autumn to buy anything online. Given that Best Buy will only have five stores in the UK by the autumn, the delay in launching e-commerce will not make a significant difference to its revenues over the coming year.

[Full article](#)

### **Repsol may sell Brazil assets in IPO.** *Business Week*

Repsol YPF SA, Spain's biggest oil company, is considering the sale of about 40% of its Brazil assets in an initial public offering as early as this year, company executives said today on a conference call. The IPO is among options being considered as the Madrid-based company seeks to raise cash for investments in Brazil, Chief Executive Officer Antonio Brufau said today.

[Full article](#)

### **HP buys Palm.** *The London Times*

The computer giant Hewlett-Packard has agreed to buy the struggling smartphone company Palm for \$1.2 billion, ending the independence of the pioneer of the personal digital device. The move will give the world's largest PC maker immediate entry to the rapidly growing market for smartphones, which is currently dominated by Research in Motion's BlackBerry, Apple's iPhone and Nokia.

[Full article](#)

### **Microsoft HTC agreement may be first of many.** *eWeek.com*

Microsoft is negotiating intellectual property (IP) agreements with unnamed manufacturers that produce smartphones running the Google Android operating system, on the heels of the April 27 announcement that HTC has agreed to pay

royalties to Microsoft in exchange for the use of "patented technology" in its Android-powered phones. Since the launch of its IP licensing program in 2003, Microsoft has entered more than 600 licensing agreements with companies ranging from Apple and Hewlett-Packard to LG Electronics and Nikon. Those types of licensing deals allow companies to both create partnerships and avoid patent-infringement lawsuits, such as the ones leveled against both HTC and Nokia by Apple in recent months.

[Full article](#)

**BP to pay for oil spills costs.** *Business Week*

BP Plc will bear the costs associated with an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that the Obama administration has declared an event of "national significance." "While BP is ultimately responsible for funding the cost of response and cleanup operations, my administration will continue to use every single available resource at our disposal," President Barack Obama said in remarks at the White House.

[Full article](#)

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**Angola and Cuba form a cooperation agreement.** *AllAfrica.com*

The Speaker of the Angolan Parliament, Paulo Kassoma, received information that the Cuban minister presented ideas to re-launch cultural cooperation with Angola highlighting the agreement to be signed soon. The agreement will be based in areas like music, cultural heritage, research, literature, museums and others.

[Full article](#)

**Ford profits in Europe.** *The London Times*

Ford, the only big American carmaker that did not need a government bailout last year, finished the first quarter with profits of \$2.1 billion (£1.37 billion), exceeding Wall Street expectations. Ford Europe reported a pre-tax operating profit of \$107 million, compared with a loss of \$585 million a year ago. Lewis Booth, its chief financial officer, said the improvement was explained primarily by higher volume, lower costs and higher parts profits.

[Full article](#)

**EU president calls for closer ties with Japan.** *AFP*

EU president Herman Van Rompuy on Wednesday called for closer ties with Japan in fields from climate change to aid for Afghanistan but said differences remain over trade. "To share the burden and to lead the way, we need to team up with each other. I believe the EU and Japan, with their combined economic and political strengths, can help make a difference in an increasingly globalised world," Van Rompuy said.

[Full article](#)

**My cellphone is my wallet?** *The New York Times*

Several companies have developed small credit card scanners that plug into a cellphone and for a small fee enable any individual or small business to turn a phone into a credit card processing terminal. There is evidence that paper money is

being used less often, according to the Federal Reserve. Though cash payments are difficult to track, the number of noncash transactions in the United States grew from fewer than 250 a person in 1995 to more than 300 in 2006.

[Full article](#)

**Canada could gain as U.S. delays Colombia trade agreement.** *Business Week*  
Colombian Trade Minister Luis Guillermo Plata said Canadian exporters may gain as U.S. lawmakers delay approval of a free-trade agreement with the Latin American country. "Many of the things that we buy from the U.S. we could buy from Canada and we could buy tariff-free," Plata, 42, said, pointing to purchases of wheat, barley, corn, machinery and mining equipment.

[Full article](#)

**Latino business feel affect of Arizona immigration law.** *CNN.com*

Not even a week has passed since Gov. Jan Brewer signed into law tough measures targeting illegal immigrants, but Manrique and others who own businesses that cater primarily to Phoenix's large Hispanic community say they are already feeling the effects. The governor's signing of the bill has ignited a firestorm of debate in Arizona, with activists on both sides of the issue clamoring to keep the issue alive. If the new law withstands the numerous legal challenges being threatened, it could take effect as soon as August.

[Full article](#)

**Norway, Russia ends Arctic dispute.** *Business Week*

The two sides announced they had reached an accord as the leaders of Norway and the Russian Federation signed a joint declaration bringing an end to the struggle over the extent of their Arctic territory. In 2007, a Russian submarine famously planted a flag on the Arctic sea floor underneath the North Pole, while the Norwegian coast guard has regularly detained Russian fishing boats. "This is an historic day. We have reached a breakthrough in the most important outstanding issue between Norway and the Russian Federation," said Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg.

[Full article](#)

April 27

**Neiman Marcus CEO to retire.** *The Wall Street Journal*

Neiman Marcus Group Inc. said Chief Executive Burton Tansky will retire in October, stepping down just as the luxury-goods department-store chain begins to recover from the brutal effects of the financial crisis. Though Neiman's results have shown signs of improvement over the past several months, the privately held Dallas-based chain struggled through 18 months of declining comparable-store sales.

[Full article](#)

**Thai PM seeks political resolution.** *CNN.com*

Thailand's prime minister says the government is working to achieve normalcy in the country amid massive opposition protests, but warned it will take "time, patience and cooperation" from all parties involved. Thousands of anti-government

protesters have brought Thailand's capital to a standstill this month as they seek to unseat Abhisit's government, which they say is illegitimate and undemocratic accusations that Abhisit called "unfounded."

[Full article](#)

**Apple buys Intrinsity.** *The New York Times*

Apple has acquired a small Austin, Tex., company called Intrinsity, known for making zippy versions of a computer chip often found in mobile devices. Apple wants the fastest chip for its mobile devices and has bought another chip maker to gain an edge over its competitors. It is the second time in two years that Apple has purchased a small chip company to gain critical technology for making a faster processor that uses less energy.

[Full article](#)

**UK music industry makes a comeback.** *Business Week*

The UK music industry yesterday cheered a return to growth in 2009, as the rise of digital sales offset a decline in CDs. Top-selling albums included the year's best seller I Dreamed a Dream by Susan Boyle, new releases from Robbie Williams and Michael Bublé, and remastered versions of The Beatles albums.

[Full article](#)

**Brazil rates set to surge 2.25 points in trading.** *Business Week*

Brazilian policy makers are poised to raise borrowing costs at the fastest pace since President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office in 2003 after central bank chief Henrique Meirelles pledged "vigorous action" on inflation, the futures market shows. The biggest two-day surge in six months on yields of the overnight interest rate futures contract due in July reflects expectations that Meirelles will raise the benchmark Selic rate 2.25 percentage points to 11% by the June policy meeting.

[Full article](#)

**Apple and Adobe: incompatible.** *The Wall Street Journal*

Apple Inc. Chief Executive Steve Jobs escalated his fight with Adobe Systems Inc. over the software known as Flash, a battle that could shape the evolution of video and gaming on mobile devices. After months of criticism from Adobe and software developers for his company's decision to ban Flash from iPhones, iPods and iPads, Jobs posted an essay on Apple's Web site criticizing Adobe's software as a flawed throwback to a time before smartphones caught the fancy of consumers.

[Full article](#)

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**Greece's effect on world markets.** *Forbes.com*

Global stock markets pushed higher after Greece requested a bailout to resolve the country's worsening debt crisis. Global markets have been rattled by Greece's debt troubles in recent months. However despite the increasing likelihood of a bailout, some analysts don't expect the crisis, or the resulting market volatility, to end anytime soon.

[Full article](#)

**Hungary cuts key rate.** *Business Week*

Hungary's central bank cut the benchmark interest rate for the 10th consecutive month today and said it doesn't rule out market intervention if the forint continues to strengthen. Policy makers have lowered the key rate by 4.25% points since July as a 6.3% economic contraction last year blunted price pressures. The outlook for growth and inflation justify further reductions.

[Full article](#)

**enVista and Microsoft join forces.** *Business Wire*

enVista, a leading enterprise and supply chain consulting services firm and Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, announced today at Convergence, the premier Microsoft Dynamics event, that it has entered into a Software as a Service (SaaS) Software Provider Licensing Agreement with Microsoft. Accordingly, enVista is one of a very few select Microsoft Dynamics AX partners to offer Microsoft Dynamics AX as a Software as a Service (SaaS) offering.

[Full article](#)

**Irish startups shine in U.K. & Ireland Tech Tour.** *Business Week*

Venture capitalists are descending on the U.K. and Ireland this week to meet the cream of technology upstarts. They'll be introduced to companies such as Belfast's Lagan Technologies, a supplier of software for improving delivery of public services that has become a world leader in its market niche, beating rivals like Oracle for contracts with American cities from San Francisco to Boston. This week's tour of the U.K. and Ireland is the 42nd such outing put on by the Geneva-based European Tech Tour Association, an independent non-profit organization that has been discovering and promoting early- and later-stage tech startups for more than a decade.

[Full article](#)

**Russia, Austria gas pipe project.** *Prime-tass.com*

Russia and Austria have signed an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation and the operation of the South Stream natural gas pipeline on Austria's territory. South Stream is a joint project of Gazprom and Italy's Eni S.p.A., which envisages the transportation of Russian and Central Asian gas to Europe. It is expected to run under the Black Sea from the Russian coast to the Bulgarian city of Varna, where it would branch out into two parts. One of the parts is expected to run to Italy and the other to Austria. The agreement with Austria was the last agreement that it was necessary to conclude prior to the start of the project.

[Full article](#)

**Hertz buys Dollar Thrifty.** *Forbes.com*

Hertz Global Holdings Inc., the world's largest car rental company will buy rival Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group for about \$1.17 billion in cash and stock. Hertz says the deal will give it an additional 1,550 additional locations, boosting its total to 9,800. It says it will boost its leisure rental business in Europe and elsewhere.

[Full article](#)

### **Sudan President wins election.** *CNN.com*

udan's President Omar al-Bashir won the country's controversial but historic presidential election with roughly two-thirds of the vote. "The fact that it has come this far can be seen as a step forward. It is a step forward in the peace agreement" signed in 2005, said David Gressley, UN resident coordinator for southern Sudan.

[Full article](#)

April 25

### **Diamonds aren't forever: Supply cut.** *CNN.com*

De Beers believes that the supply of diamonds is running out over the long term, prompting the world's biggest miner of the gems to reduce production in an attempt to extend the life of its mines. Assuming the move moderated production, rough diamond prices could rise by at least 5 per cent per year for the next five years, said Des Kilalea, analyst at RBC Capital Markets.

[Full article](#)

### **Bry Air to acquire Japanese Co.** *Business Line*

Bry Air, a subsidiary of Delhi based Pahwa group of company is in advanced stages of discussions to acquire a Japanese company. "In order to expand our global footprint we are in an advanced stage to acquire a Japanese company at around \$5 million. The deal is expected to be completed within three months," Bry Air (Asia), Managing Director, Mr Deepak Pahwa, said.

[Full article](#)

### **Seoul may cut trade with N. Korea.** *The Korea Herald*

Seoul is weighing its options of how to respond to North Korea's planned seizure of South Korean facilities within the mountain resort just north of the inter-Korean border. The government is reportedly considering limiting the volume of agricultural and marine products from North Korea or tightening regulation of imports in other ways.

[Full article](#)

### **Indonesia aims to double bilateral trade with India.** *Business Line*

Indonesia is aiming to double its bilateral trade with India by 2015 at around \$20 billion, an Indonesian Government official said. Bilateral trade between the two countries is expected to touch \$11 billion by end-2010, he said. "We had aimed for \$10 billion trade by the end of this year (2010) but we have already crossed our target by end 2009," he said.

[Full article](#)

April 24

### **Are "Green" goods really good?** *The Wall Street Journal*

At least four consumer lawsuits since 2007 have accused companies of using misleading advertising about products' environmental impact, and dozens of federal-enforcement and industry self-policing actions have occurred over the past



18 months. Companies stand accused of, among other things, adding self-designed labels that imply their products have won some third-party seal of approval and touting products as "biodegradable" when there is little chance they would actually decompose in a landfill.

[Full article](#)

**Australia tightens foreign property ownership rules.** *Business Week*

"We want to make sure that foreign speculators are not going to force up prices for Australians seeking to buy their own home, buy their first home, and we think this is the right course of action," said Rudd.

Australia will tighten rules on foreign investment in real estate, and introduce penalties to enforce the changes, to ensure pressure isn't placed on housing availability for local residents. "Foreign purchasers can play an important role in supporting the development of new rental properties," Aaron Gadiel, chief executive of Urban Taskforce Australia said. "Given that our national housing undersupply is reaching 200,000 homes, we should welcome any investment by foreign residents or businesses in boosting our supply of newly built homes."

[Full article](#)

**Ecuador appoints new oil minister.** *Oil and Gas Journal*

Ecuador's President Rafael Correa, intent on securing greater control of his country's oil and gas wealth, has appointed Wilson Pastor to replace Germanico Pinto as minister of nonrenewable natural resources. Analyst IHS Global Insight said Correa's new oil minister will be under pressure to speed up the current contract renegotiations as well as to create a more positive climate for investment in order to reverse the decline in overall production seen over the past 3 years.

[Full article](#)

**MTN seeking to acquire more in Africa.** *Newstime*

MTN is looking to acquire assets from Egyptian operator Orascom Telecom Holding SAE to expand. Orascom Telecom Holding S.A.E. was established in 1998 and has grown to become a major player in the global telecommunications market. OTH is considered among the largest and most diversified network operators in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.

[Full article](#)

**South Africa hosts developing countries on climate talk.** *Associated Press*

As the world struggles to break a deadlock in climate change negotiations, South Africa and three other influential developing nations are gathering for a strategy session to ensure poor countries are heard. Brazil, South Africa, India and China began to coalesce as a bloc, known as BASIC, at U.N. climate talks in December in Copenhagen. The size of their economies means India and China can't be ignored, and South Africa and Brazil are good partners because of the standing they enjoy in their respective regions.

[Full article](#)

**Tanzania's new mining law.** *Reuters.com*



Tanzania's parliament has passed a new mining law that increases the rate of royalty paid on minerals like gold from 3- 4% and requires the government to own a stake in future mining projects. Tanzania is Africa's third largest gold producer, but also has reserves of uranium, nickel and coal. The Mining Act 2010 passed late on Friday also requires mining companies to list on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange.

[Full article](#)

### **Armenia to boost trade ties with India in IT, agriculture.**

*BusinessStandard.com*

Armenia is focusing on IT, agriculture, diamond cutting and polishing to boost trade ties with India, the Eurasian nation's ambassador to India, Ara Hakobyan said.

"With both Indians and Armenians good at IT, we will have a joint project to boost these sectors for international trade. Facilities for training, research and development of professionals of both countries will be set up," Hakobyan, who came here to attend a program to commemorate the 95th anniversary of Armenian Genocide, said.

[Full article](#)

April 23

### **Increased air traffic between U.S. and Israel.** *Business News*

More airline flights between the U.S. and Israel, with airlines able to pick routes and destinations based on demand for passenger and cargo services will be available soon. The agreement, which each country must sign before it can take effect, places no limit on the number of flights offered or the number of airlines that can fly between the two countries, according to the Transportation Department.

[Full article](#)

### **Belgium considers burqa ban.** *Business Week*

The latest round in the battle of the burqa kicks off in Belgium, which could become the first country in Europe to ban face coverings worn by observant Muslim women. Lawmakers are considering a ban in all public places on niqabs, veils that cover the face, as well as burqas, which cover the face and everything else from head to toe.

"We think all people in public places must show their face," says Denis Ducarme.

And, he says, "We must defend our values in the question of the freedom and the dignity of the woman."

[Full article](#)

### **G20 host Canada looking beyond Doha on trade.** *Reuters.com*

Canada wants the Group of 20 world leaders to again adopt a strong stance against protectionism when they meet in Toronto in June, Canadian Trade Minister Peter Van Loan said. "We've made it quite clear that resisting protectionist tendencies is an enormous priority for Canada," Van Loan said. Canada has made up for lost time by striking bilateral trade deals with countries like Colombia and currently is negotiating a free trade agreement with the European Union, which Van Loan said would be "deeper and more comprehensive" than the North American Free Trade Agreement.

[Full article](#)

April 22

**Tang comes back into play.** *Business Week*

Kraft Foods saw sales of Tang in developing markets soar 30% last year, to more than \$750 million, powered by Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. "It's a product that's exceptionally well positioned in the current environment," says Kraft Chief Executive Officer Irene Rosenfeld. The resurgence of Tang, once extolled as the beverage of American astronauts, is one payoff from Kraft's strategy of boosting overseas sales by targeting 10 so-called power brands, products the company identified in 2008 as being under-marketed and having the highest potential profit margins.

[Full article](#)

**Iraq economy suddenly changing.** *Business Week*

Seven years after the ouster of Saddam Hussein, Iraq has changed. Oil money from rising production is powering growth, as is pent-up demand for housing and better infrastructure. Now that the government has awarded oil-field contracts worth billions of dollars to BP, ExxonMobil, China National Petroleum, and others, foreign clients are besieging Hogan, HSBC's country manager for help in financing everything from pipelines to power grids to workers' camps. "We think the timing is right," says Hogan. "Iraqis are starting to reconnect to the outside world."

[Full article](#)

**CenturyTel to buy Qwest.** *Forbes.com*

CenturyTel Inc., the country's fifth-largest local-phone company, will buy Qwest Communications International Inc., the third-largest, in a stock swap worth \$10.6 billion to gain the benefits of scale in a shrinking business. The deal would shore up the combined company by helping it reduce expenses and improve its ability to compete with cable. The combined company would have about 18 million phone lines serving customers in 37 states, but would still be dwarfed by AT&T Inc. and Verizon Communications Inc.

[Full article](#)

**France Telekom, TDC Swiss merger rejected.** *Business Week*

France Telecom SA's plan to merge its Swiss operations with those of TDC A/S was rejected by local regulators, dealing a blow to Chief Executive Officer Stephane Richard's plan to consolidate European operations. The combination of the companies' local Orange and Sunrise units would create a "dominant position" in the Swiss market, the country's Competition Commission said. The new company would have been Switzerland's second-largest mobile operator behind Swisscom AG.

[Full article](#)

**Boeing chief urges quick U.S action on trade agreements.** *Reuters.com*

The United States risks losing significant export sales to the European Union, Canada and other countries unless it approves three long-delayed free trade

agreements with South Korea, Panama and Colombia, Boeing Chief Executive James McNerney said. The agreements have been blocked by Democrats' demands that Panama revamp its labor regime and tax haven laws, Colombia do more to reduce violence against trade unionists and South Korea make additional concessions to open its auto and manufactured goods markets to U.S. exports.

[Full article](#)

**Tshuva: Israel's gas king.** *Business Week*

Delek Group gas discoveries have turned Tshuva into Israel's energy king and the country's sixth-richest citizen, with an estimated net worth of \$2 billion, according to TheMarker. The gas finds ultimately could meet half of Israel's energy needs and provide the country with the energy independence that is vital to its security. The discovery is helping Tshuva expand a global empire that includes luxury apartment towers, power plants, gas stations, and New York's Plaza Hotel. It may also help salvage an audacious \$5 billion plan to put a Plaza on the Las Vegas Strip that the financial crisis has stalled.

[Full article](#)

**Avis Budget Group appoints new executive.** *Marketwatch.com*

Avis Budget Group, Inc announced that Michael K. Tucker has joined the Company as executive vice president and general counsel. In his position Mr. Tucker is responsible for the legal affairs of the Company, including management of its franchising and other contracts, litigation, government relations and information security. "With his extensive and varied accomplishments as an attorney, Michael is a terrific addition to Avis Budget Group," said Ronald L. Nelson, chairman and chief executive officer of Avis Budget Group.

[Full article](#)

April 21

**New immigration law in Arizona state.** *The New York Times*

A bill the Arizona Legislature passed this week that would hand the state and local police broad powers to enforce immigration law has split police groups and sown confusion over how the law would be applied. The law would require the police "when practicable" to detain people they reasonably suspected were in the country without authorization. It would also allow the police to charge immigrants with a state crime for not carrying immigration documents. And it allows residents to sue cities if they believe the law is not being enforced.

[Full article](#)

**GM pays back loans.** *Forbes.com*

General Motors Co. has repaid the \$8.1 billion in loans it got from the U.S. and Canadian governments, a move its CEO says is a sign automaker is on the road to recovery. "Nobody was happy that GM needed government loans - not the governments, not the taxpayers and, quite frankly, not the company," GM CEO Whitacre wrote in an op-ed article. "We believe we can best thank the citizens of the U.S. and Canada by making sure that their investments are hard at work every day, building high quality, fuel-efficient vehicles."

[Full article](#)

**Tesco plans expansion of superstores.** *The London Times*

Tesco plans to open the equivalent of 80 superstores in Britain this year, more new shop space than its three biggest rivals combined. Tesco has increased its target for new selling space by 20% as it seeks to reinforce its dominance of the UK market. It has added the equivalent of the entire Waitrose chain to its British portfolio in the past two years.

[Full article](#)

**Billionaire Slim invests in NYC.** *Business Week*

Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim agreed to pay \$140 million for 417 Fifth Ave., a midtown Manhattan office tower, from a partnership that includes Goldman Sachs Group Inc. The seller is a joint venture of Moinian Group Inc., an investment company headed by developer Joseph Moinian, and Goldman Sachs's Whitehall Street Real Estate Funds. The venture paid \$250 million for the building in 2007, city records show.

[Full article](#)

**BayenLB ends relationship with Goldman Sachs.** *Business Week*

Bayerische Landesbank, Germany's second-biggest state-owned lender, ended its relationship with Goldman Sachs Group Inc. after the firm was sued for fraud by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The SEC said that in early 2007, with the U.S. housing market on the verge of collapse, Goldman Sachs created and sold a collateralized debt obligation linked to subprime mortgages without disclosing that hedge fund Paulson & Co. helped pick the underlying securities and bet against the asset's performance.

[Full article](#)

April 20

**Iceland business impacted while New Zealand business improves.** *Business Week*

The Iceland volcano, which has cost the airline industry an estimated \$200 million a day in lost revenues and hobbled the cargo and tourism industries, is bringing a windfall to some businesses in distant New Zealand, the island nation some 11,000 miles from western Europe. As the disruption of travel from the Icelandic volcano illustrates how interdependent world business has become across borders, the uptick in business in New Zealand also shows the resilience of an interconnected, global economy.

[Full article](#)

**IMF urges two new taxes for banks.** *The London Times*

The IMF is proposing a double-tax regime for banks that would fund future bailouts and penalize both the profits and pay of lenders. The IMF wants two separate taxes on banks to address the huge burden of support after the 2008 financial crash. The British Bankers' Association said it had expected a tax or a levy. "It appears it might be both. We must wait to see what is actually being proposed and how it will

be calculated, but at first sight it appears wider than expected," Angela Knight, chief executive, said.

[Full article](#)

**Sudan elections did not meet international standards.** *CNN.com*

Sudan's first multiparty elections in more than two decades fell short of international standards, the United States, United Kingdom and Norway said. The European Union Election Observation Mission last week criticized the election for showing "significant deficiencies against international standards" but said the vote paves the way for democratic progress.

[Full article](#)

**Nearing a Calpine-Pepco deal.** *Business Week*

Calpine Corp., the largest U.S. producer of natural gas-fueled power, is nearing an agreement to buy Pepco Holdings Inc.'s Conectiv Energy unit for more than \$1.5 billion. The purchase would help Calpine Chief Executive Officer Jack Fusco maintain the company's lead as the largest U.S. independent power producer after two rivals, Mirant Corp. and RRI Energy Inc., agreed earlier this month to merge. Calpine shares rose as much as 3.5%.

[Full article](#)

**Target to issue Target Credit Card instead of Visa.** *Business Week*

New qualified applicants will receive the proprietary Target Credit Card, a product that may be used only at Target stores and Target.com, the retailer said. Existing Target Visa cardholders will not be affected. "Guests tend to spend more at Target when issued a Target Credit Card instead of a Target Visa," Target said. Any drag on Visa's profit will be limited as Target credit cards accounted for about 1 percent of payments Visa processed in the U.S. last year.

[Full article](#)

**Deloitte's John Connolly steps down.** *The London Times*

Mr Connolly will stand down in May next year after three terms as chief executive and senior partner. In that time he transformed Deloitte from an also-ran among the City's leading auditors into the most profitable. Deloitte's board will consult among the firm's senior ranks over the next three months before recommending a successor to its 700 partners. A final decision is expected to be made at a board meeting in January.

[Full article](#)

April 19

**Kelly becomes Global Banking Chairman at Citigroup.** *Business Week*

Citigroup Inc. Vice Chairman Edward "Ned" Kelly will become chairman of the firm's global banking division, rejoining the unit he headed until last year. The global banking division includes the mergers and acquisition advisory practice as well as equity and debt underwriting and corporate banking, according to the bank's Web site. Raymond McGuire will remain head of global banking.

[Full article](#)

**Yahoo gets a new Chief Product Officer.** *Forbes.com*

Yahoo! has hired former Microsoft executive Blake Irving to be Chief Product Officer. As Chief Product Officer, Irving will lead the company's products organization, which is responsible for the vision, strategy, design and development of Yahoo!'s global consumer and advertiser product portfolio. Irving was most recently a professor at Pepperdine University's Graziadio School of Business and Management in Malibu, California.

[Full article](#)

**Lenovo unveils smartphone as is pushes in wireless market.** *The Wall Street Journal*

Lenovo Group Ltd. believes 10% to 20% of its revenue will come from mobile Internet services within five years, up from low-single-digit percentages currently, an executive said at the launch of the company's new smart phone. Expanding into mobile Internet services is a goal for the Chinese computer maker. It launched its "LePhone" handset in China on Monday, based on Google Inc.'s Android operating system, hoping to take a chunk of the world's largest market for mobile subscribers. The phone will subsequently be launched in other emerging markets.

[Full article](#)

**Citigroup reports turnaround profit.** *The New York Times*

Citigroup on Monday provided the strongest signs yet that it was beginning to recover after nearly two years of being drenched in red ink, reporting a \$4.4 billion profit in the first quarter. Citigroup's earnings handily beat analysts' expectations and were its best since the financial crisis began in mid-2007. Bank officials attributed the results the resurgence in the bond market and improvements in the economy, particularly overseas.

[Full article](#)

**Vote recount ordered in Baghdad elections.** *Business Week*

Iraq's election commission ordered a manual recount of ballots from the March 7 parliamentary vote in Baghdad after complaints of irregularities and fraud by competing parties. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law bloc said last week that its own probe into the poll shows it was deprived of 750,000 votes, enough to change the outcome of the elections. It demanded a recount in the capital and four other provinces, saying it would settle for a recount in just Baghdad, which accounts for nearly a fifth of the parliament's 325 seats.

[Full article](#)

**Volcano affects shaky European economy.** *CNN.com*

The cloud of ash from an Iceland volcano is casting a shadow over the nascent economic recovery in Europe as the cancellation of flights in key markets entered its fifth day. "The key is how long this eruption and the disruption last," said Frederic Neumann, an HSBC economist in Hong Kong. "If it's just a couple weeks, from a macroeconomic standpoint it's just a blip on the radar ... if it lasts for months and months, then it's a different story."

[Full article](#)

**Deutsche Bahn bids for Arriva.** *The London Times*

A German takeover of one of Britain's biggest rail and bus operators has moved a step closer, with Deutsche Bahn poised to offer about £1.6 billion for Arriva. Arriva, which is based in Sunderland, operates in large cities, as well as running the CrossCountry train network, which was operated by Virgin until 2007. Arriva is the only big British transport group to have ventured into Europe, where it has taken advantage of gradual liberalization.

[Full article](#)

**Lonrho looks East to revive Tiny Rowland's empire.** *The London Times*

Lonrho is considering quitting London and taking its primary stock market listing to Hong Kong. The move would be an historic snub to the London Stock Exchange by the 101-year-old African trading company and would indicate that African-focused stocks were looking for the better coverage and interest that they might get from the Chinese investment community. David Lenigas is setting out to rebuild a pan-African trading conglomerate similar to that overseen by his controversial predecessor Tiny Rowland.

[Full article](#)

April 18

**Uganda king turns 18 and takes full control.** *CNN.com*

One of Uganda's last remaining kings turned 18 in a boisterous four-day ceremony that ended Sunday and allowed him to take full control of his kingdom in the western part of the country. "He needs to use this opportunity to help us help ourselves," said Sarah Namara, 25. "He has a lot of work to do especially in ensuring people our age have businesses opportunities."

[Full article](#)

April 16

**American owners to sell Liverpool.** *CNN.com*

George Gillett Jr and Tom Hicks, the American billionaire owners of English Premier League side Liverpool, have announced their intention to sell the club in a statement on the team's official Web site. The duo, who bought the club for \$338 million in 2007, confirmed that Barclays Capital will advise on the sale process after "numerous expressions of interest from third parties." Hicks and Gillett's statement read: "Owning Liverpool ... over these past three years has been a rewarding and exciting experience for us and our families.

[Full article](#)

**China mineral dominance concerns the U.S.** *CNN.com*

China's dominant position in the production of rare earth minerals has long-reaching implications for the U.S. Department of Defense. China has secured 97% of the production of these minerals, which are used in nearly every electronic device, cell phones, computer hard drives and guided missiles. "The longer we neglect this, the longer we don't take steps to counter this, the more it becomes a



pressing problem," said Dean Chang, Research fellow at the Heritage Foundation's Center for Asian Studies.

[Full article](#)

**Twitter finally has a business strategy.** *CNNMoney.com*

The microblogging firm made nearly a dozen announcements this week, marking a huge shift in Twitter's business strategy, starting with the fact that it now actually *has* a business strategy. "Twitter's been under a lot of pressure to be a more transparent business," said Augie Ray, senior social-networking analyst at Forrester Research. "Now the company has come to a point in its maturity where it's starting to operate much more as a business and less as a startup."

[Full article](#)

**Bank of Ireland forced to sell off assets.** *The London Times*

Bank of Ireland is preparing to sell off at least three flagship businesses, including its insurance and asset management arms, as a condition of receiving state aid. The lender, which is 16% owned by the Irish taxpayer, said today that it was close to securing an agreement with EU regulators over the terms of its bailout. The bank was one of three to be rescued by the Irish Government two years ago when the collapse in the country's property markets plunged the banks into crisis.

[Full article](#)

**Asda expands rapidly to become #1.** *The London Times*

Asda will open 125 stand-alone non-food stores in a campaign to overtake Tesco as Britain's biggest seller of general goods. Asda is thought to have about half as much general merchandise as Tesco and has been only slightly ahead of J Sainsbury, the No 2 supermarket, in its overall market share in the past five years. The 25th Asda Living store opens today in Telford, Shropshire. Mr Bond said, "Over the next five years, we have two clear aspirations to be the market leader in general merchandise and the clear No 2 for food."

[Full article](#)

**Smartphone helps boost Sony Ericsson.** *The London Times*

Sony Ericsson has revealed a surprise €18 million (£15.7 million) pre-tax profit for the first three months of 2010 after the success of its new smartphones and falling restructuring costs. Sony has said it is streamlining its portfolio to focus on higher-priced phones, including the new Android smartphone, which was launched in November. In the first three months of 2010, sales fell by 19% to €1.41 billion, after the company shipped 28% fewer phones than during the same period in 2009.

[Full article](#)

**Success in the Argentine swap?** *Business Week*

Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, locked out of international capital markets since taking office, said an offer to holders of \$20 billion of unpaid debt marks a "turning point" in her country's history and will be a good deal for investors. A successful exchange of the bonds would enable Argentina, South America's second-largest economy, to tap global markets after a record \$95 billion debt default in 2001. This is the last opportunity for bondholders to accept an

exchange and profit from an annual economic growth rate of 6 percent, Fernandez said.

[Full article](#)

**Iceland, volcano, and the economy.** *NPR*

Iceland's latest volcanic eruption and the cloud of ash drifting over Europe are proving to be hugely costly and disruptive but, so far, the effects are mild compared with the havoc caused by the country's economic eruption just a year and a half ago. The collapse of Iceland's major banks in late 2008 helped herald the start of the worldwide financial crisis. It brought the country's government to the brink of bankruptcy and wiped out billions of dollars worth of savings for bank customers in other countries.

[Full article](#)

April 15

**Volcano disrupts air travel.** *CNN.com*

Volcanic ash from Iceland snarled air traffic across Europe for a second straight day Friday, causing the cancellation of thousands of flights, according to the intergovernmental body that manages European air travel. The plumes have closed some of Europe's busiest airports, including Charles de Gaulle in Paris, London's Heathrow and Schiphol in Amsterdam.

[Full article](#)

**Apache Corp buys Mariner Energy.** *Forbes.com*

The independent energy company Apache Corp. says it is buying Mariner Energy for \$2.7 billion to extend its deepwater projects in the Gulf of Mexico. Mariner, also based in Houston, has principal operations in the Permian Basin, the Gulf Coast and the Gulf of Mexico.

[Full article](#)

**China's economy grows 21%.** *CNN.com*

China's economy grew 11.9% during the first quarter of 2010. The growth was fueled by industrial growth of 22% for heavy industry, 14% for light industry, and a nearly 18% expansion in consumer retail sales. The nation also has voracious appetite for real estate with its investments in fixed assets increasing nearly 26% this quarter.

[Full article](#)

**Huawei Technologies open to North America opportunities.** *Business Week*

Huawei Technologies, China's biggest maker of phone equipment, is "open to all the possible opportunities" for North American expansion, said Charlie Chen, a senior vice-president at the company. Chen, who works in marketing and product management for the company's North American division, was responding to a question about whether Huawei may be interested in purchasing Palm, the maker of the Pre smartphone. A purchase of Palm would help a foreign buyer compete with smartphone makers including Apple and Research In Motion.

[Full article](#)

April 14

**Can China cool its economy?** *Business Week*

The Chinese economy helped propel global growth and now runs the risk of overheating. The government was expected to announce on Apr. 15 that the economy expanded at about a 12% rate in the first quarter vs. 8.7%. China's hybrid economy, in which elements of free markets coexist with a one-party state that has a huge say over how credit is allocated, is about to be put to an interesting test. Can Beijing really slow a complex, \$4.9 trillion economy when so much of its political power comes from delivering high-speed growth rates?

[Full article](#)

**Russia's pipeline to Chinese capital.** *Forbes.com*

Before the financial crisis most observers viewed China as a market for boosting revenue and sourcing cheap products. Now, as the world's first major economy to recover, it's increasingly seen as a source of capital for overseas companies, particularly Russian companies. A growing list of firms from China's neighbor is making preparations for initial public offerings in Hong Kong. The Russian investment bank UralSib expects several Russian state-owned firms listed in London to seek secondary listings in Hong Kong.

[Full article](#)

**Apple postpones iPad release internationally.** *The Wall Street Journal*

Apple Inc. on Wednesday postponed the international launch of its iPad tablet computer by a month, saying it has been unable to keep up with stronger-than-expected U.S. demand. The delay underscores how difficult it is for companies to accurately forecast demand for a new product. But some analysts say the situation gives them more reason to be bullish, since foreign customers are more likely to wait for the iPad than to buy alternative products.

[Full article](#)

**Ryanair to charge for toilet use in airplanes.** *Business Week*

Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary says Brussels is unlikely to raise objections to his plans to charge for the use of on-board toilets, but admits he is having a hard time convincing US authorities. "The purpose of charging for the toilets is to change peoples' behaviour," he said. By giving people an incentive to use airport toilets before they depart, the company says it would be able to remove two out of the three toilets on each plane, making space for six additional seats.

[Full article](#)

**Skybridge to buy Citigroup's Fund-of-Hedge Fund unit.** *Business Week*

Skybridge Capital LLC, an investment firm founded by Anthony Scaramucci, agreed to buy the hedge-fund business of Citigroup Inc.'s Citi Alternative Investments LLC, adding \$4.2 billion in assets. The transaction will increase SkyBridge's assets under management and advisory to \$5.6 billion. Citigroup, 27% owned by the U.S. government following a bailout in 2008, is selling almost a third of its holdings of \$1.86 trillion under regulatory pressure to shrink.

[Full article](#)

**Prudential UK chief to head Asia integration.** *The London Times*

Prudential has appointed the head of its UK and European operations to push through its \$35.5 billion (£23 billion) acquisition of AIA in Asia but has failed to resolve the future role of its present Asian chief, Barry Stowe. The UK's second-largest insurer said that Rob Devey would be in charge of integrating Prudential Corporation Asia and AIA Group, assuming that the deal completes this year. Prudential is buying the business from AIG, of the United States.

[Full article](#)

April 13

**BBC may sell Radio Times.** *The London Times*

The BBC is considering selling *Radio Times*, its listings bulletin, as part of a shake-up of the magazines division of BBC Worldwide, the corporation's commercial arm. Worldwide is seeking to enter a partnership with a rival magazine publisher, which the corporation said would "enable our portfolio of profitable market-leading titles to meet its potential, while still protecting the BBC's editorial standards and brands".

[Full article](#)

**Peru may grow with expansion of exports.** *Business Week*

Peru's economy may expand more than 6 percent this year as U.S. and Chinese demand for the country's mineral exports recovers, said Felipe Jaramillo, regional director for the World Bank. Peru is benefitting from higher demand for its copper, zinc, lead, and silver, which account for one-third of export revenue. Prices for all four metals have gained at least 8% in the past two months. The Andean country is the world's largest silver producer, second largest for copper, third largest for zinc, fourth largest for tin and sixth-largest for gold.

[Full article](#)

**Secondary school Argentine students receive computers.** *CNN.com*

Argentina will start handing out computers to students in all the nation's secondary schools later this month. The goal is for every secondary school in the nation to have a computer for each student by 2012, said Education Minister Alberto Sileoni.

[Full article](#)

April 12

**Asda chief steps down.** *The London Times*

Andy Bond is to step down as chief executive of Asda to become its part-time chairman. The supermarket did not name a successor in its surprise announcement, but sources close to Asda suggested that the new chief executive would be appointed within weeks, suggesting an internal candidate was expected. Mr Bond will stay on until a replacement is found.

[Full article](#)

**Google acquires Plink, its first U.K. start-up.** *The London Times*

Google will use the technology in Plink, which it bought for an undisclosed sum, to strengthen its visual search engine tool Google Goggles. The Plink acquisition underlines the importance of mobile technology for Google as it continues to develop its Android operating system in competition with Apple and the BlackBerry maker Research in Motion.

[Full article](#)

**Sinopec pays Conoco for Syncrude stake.** *Business Week*

Sinopec, as the Beijing-based company is known, will buy about 9% of oil-sands producer Syncrude. "What it reflects is China's insatiable appetite for resource accumulation overseas, not to mention the fact that Beijing has a pretty big checkbook," said Pavel Molchanov, an analyst with Raymond James who rates ConocoPhillips at "underperform" and doesn't own any of its shares. Molchanov said he thought the stake would fetch about \$4 billion.

[Full article](#)

April 11

**Mirant, RRI merge.** *Forbes.com*

Energy providers Mirant and RRI Energy are combining in a \$1.61 billion stock-swap deal, renaming the company and creating a utility powerhouse that will become one of the largest independent power producers in the U.S. The combined company will be called GenOn Energy and Mirant's CEO will be its CEO until 2013, when he will retire and the top post will be taken by RRI Energy's CEO.

[Full article](#)

**EU assists Greece with loans.** *NPR*

Trying again to halt a debt crisis that has hammered the euro, fellow eurozone governments tossed struggling Greece a financial lifeline Sunday, saying they would make \$40 billion in loans available this year alone, if Athens asks for the money. Markets viewed the March pledge as too vague and carrying such tough restrictions that Greece could not easily get the money. As a result, investors demanded high rates to loan to the government as it struggles to avoid default, rates the government says it can't go on paying. Greece has some \$73 billion in debt coming due this year, and a huge budget deficit.

[Full article](#)

**NAB plans flotation of UK operations.** *The London Times*

The National Australia Bank (NAB) is working on plans for a £2 billion flotation of its UK operations. The plan would be put into action if NAB fails to acquire a network of 318 branches being sold by Royal Bank of Scotland. Banking sources describe it as a "double or quits" strategy that has been put forward by Lynne Peacock, chief executive of NAB in the UK.

[Full article](#)

April 10

**China reports first trade deficit in 6 years.** *CNN.com*

China recorded a \$7.24 billion trade deficit in March, the General Administration of Customs announced Saturday. It was the country's first monthly trade deficit since April 2004. China exported \$112.11 billion worth of goods and services in the month of March, an increase of 24.3 percent year on year, and imports rose 66 percent year on year to \$119.35 billion, Xinhua reported.

[Full article](#)

**Polish president dies.** *Business Week*

Polish President Lech Kaczynski and central bank Governor Slawomir Skrzypek were killed yesterday along with several key members of the country's political elite when their plane crashed in western Russia, where they were to mark the 70th anniversary of a massacre of Polish officers. Under Poland's constitution the duties of the president, which are largely ceremonial, will be assumed by the speaker of the lower house of parliament, Bronislaw Komorowski.

[Full article](#)

April 9

**Coca-Cola buys more of Innocent.** *The London Times*

Innocent, Britain's leading smoothie maker, has sold further shares to Coca-Cola, taking the American giant's stake in the company to 58%. Innocent, which is known for its idealistic corporate stance, insisted the company's commitment to natural products and environmentally friendly packaging and ingredients would not be changed by the deal. Mr Reed said: "It's been a good 12 months for Innocent — our sales are up, we've grown our business in Europe and Coke have been the hands-off investor they promised to be. They've helped whenever we've asked, haven't interfered and have been great people to work with."

[Full article](#)

**Aviva re-enters Asia market.** *The London Times*

Aviva, which had largely turned its back on Asia in 2005, is returning to the region. Aviva, which has a significant life insurance business in Asia, sold almost all its non-life insurance operations five years ago. It is using Singapore as a launch pad for the expansion, starting with direct online car insurance. It hopes eventually to include home and travel insurance across the region. "Our entry into Singapore marks the first step in our plan to penetrate the rapidly expanding general insurance market in Asia," Chief Executive Machell said.

[Full article](#)

**Xstrata Plc says China copper use to grow.** *Business Week*

Xstrata Plc, which is spending \$7 billion to boost copper production, expects China's demand will grow as much as 10% this year. China's demand for the metal used in power cables and electrical wire will drive worldwide copper market growth, which is set to expand between 2 to 3% this year, Xstrata's Charlie Sartain said in an interview yesterday in Santiago. He forecasts the Asian nation's usage will rise between 6% and 10% in 2010.

[Full article](#)

April 8

**Russia and U.S. sign arms-control treaty.** *The Wall Street Journal*

U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed the most significant arms-control treaty in nearly two decades, declaring a new chapter of cooperation between the nations on nuclear issues and beyond. The treaty has been dubbed New Start, a reference both to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty it replaces and what both sides say is a reset relationship between the world's two nuclear superpowers. It caps the number of deployed nuclear warheads at 1,550 a side, a 30% reduction from the 2,200 limit agreed to in the Moscow Treaty of 2002.

[Full article](#)

**FCC to push ahead on broadband agenda.** *The Wall Street Journal*

Federal Communications Commission officials said they will push ahead to implement their recently released National Broadband Plan despite an appeals-court decision earlier this week that struck down some of the agency's authority over Internet regulation. FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said the court's decision "does not change our broadband policy goals, or the ultimate authority of the FCC to act to achieve those goals."

[Full article](#)

**Nokia challenges China music piracy problem.** *The London Times*

Nokia launched a digital music service in China yesterday in a high-risk move to break into the world's largest mobile phone market that has seen music sales crippled by internet piracy. Users will be able to buy devices where they can download as much music as they want for a 12-month period and keep the tracks for ever. At launch, hundreds of thousands of tracks will be available to Chinese customers. The songs will be "DRM free", meaning that the tracks will come without anti-piracy software.

[Full article](#)

**British Airways and Iberia merger.** *Business Week*

British Airways Plc and Spain's Iberia Lineas Aereas de Espana SA moved closer to a \$7.5 billion merger after signing a definitive agreement on the terms of the combination. The merger would consolidate British Airways' rank as Europe's third-biggest carrier, expanding routes to Latin America and allowing growth beyond its London Heathrow base.

[Full article](#)

**Presidential candidate pledges Colombia-Venezuela relations improvement.** *Business Week*

Colombian presidential candidate Juan Manuel Santos pledged to prioritize stronger commercial and diplomatic relations with Venezuela if he wins the election to succeed Alvaro Uribe this year. Investors want to see an improvement in the relationship between the neighboring countries, Santos said at the World Economic Forum on Latin American in Cartagena. Santos said he wants a relationship of



"respect" with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who has vowed to end imports from Colombia because of a dispute over U.S. access to military bases in the country.

[Full article](#)

April 7

**Beijing lays ground for a currency shift.** *CNN.com*

China has begun to prepare the ground publicly for a shift in exchange rate policy, days after the US Treasury said it would postpone a decision on whether to name China a "currency manipulator". A senior government economist told reporters in Beijing on Tuesday China could widen the daily trading band for the renminbi and allow it to resume the gradual appreciation it halted in July 2008 in response to the global credit crisis.

[Full article](#)

**UAL and US Airways: a possible merger.** *Business Week*

United Airlines parent UAL Corp. and US Airways Group Inc. rose in late trading after the New York Times reported that the two carriers were in talks on a merger. Combining United, the third-largest U.S. carrier, with No. 6 US Airways would create one of the world's largest airlines. Chicago-based United and US Airways held merger talks in 2008 before abandoning the effort, less than two months after Delta Air Lines Inc. agreed to acquire Northwest Airlines Corp.

[Full article](#)

**The new EU bank tax.** *Business Week*

The European Commission has published a study which suggests a new tax on banks could generate as much as €50 billion a year for EU governments, whose public finances have been left in tatters following the recent financial crisis. As well as helping governments improve their balance sheets, the fresh revenue could be used to fund future bank bail-outs, climate change and development goals.

[Full article](#)

April 6

**Australia raises interest rates again.** *The London Times*

The Reserve Bank of Australia has raised interest rates by 25 basis points, the fifth increase since October, taking borrowing costs to 4.25%. "With the risk of serious economic contraction in Australia having passed some time ago, the [RBA] board has been lessening the degree of monetary stimulus that was put in place when the outlook appeared to be much weaker," he said. The move has concerned economists who believe that the increase could prove damaging to the recovery.

[Full article](#)

**Singapore, Costa Rica sign a FTA.** *Channelnewsasia.com*

Singapore and Costa Rica have signed a free trade agreement (FTA) aimed at enhancing bilateral relations and removing barriers to trade. Under the agreement, Costa Rica will eliminate customs duties for 90% of its tariff lines, while Singapore

will grant immediate duty free access to all imports from Costa Rica. Costa Rica is Singapore's eighth biggest trading partner in Latin America, while Singapore is Costa Rica's second largest trading partner in Southeast Asia.

[Full article](#)

**Virgin Money sell 21% stake to Wilbur Ross to get RBS deal.** *The London Times*

Virgin Money is bringing in American funding to bolster its bid to buy up to 318 branches from Royal Bank of Scotland. The deal will see Mr. Ross commit to further investments, understood to be up to £500 million, if Virgin Money can land the RBS deal. Mr. Ross's lieutenant James Lockhart will join the Virgin Money board, which recently lost the services of the late Sir Brian Pitman, the former Lloyds Bank veteran. If Virgin, which has no retail banking experience or presence on the high street, misses out on the RBS deal, it is believed it will seek opportunities from the expected sale of other branches, including from Northern Rock.

[Full article](#)

**Canadian dollar trades at parity.** *Business Week*

Canada's dollar was worth more than the U.S. currency for the first time since July 2008 on the back of the rising price of crude oil and the prospect of higher interest rates. Canada, the largest trading partner of the U.S., has benefited from rising demand for copper, gold, wheat and oil from the U.S. and emerging economies such as India and China. The country is the world's largest producer of uranium, the second-biggest exporter of natural gas, and sits on the largest pool of oil reserves outside the Middle East. Canada is also the world's second-largest exporter of wheat.

[Full article](#)

April 5

**Desire for Poland's gas could end dependence on Russia.** *The London Times*

American technology to produce shale gas is unleashing a scramble for drilling rights in Poland, where experts believe vast reserves of unconventional gas exist that could help to weaken Russia's grip on Europe's energy supplies. Poland consumes about 14 billion cubic metres of gas per year and has been heavily dependent on Russian imports. Mr Fanning said that the shale gas in Poland was of high quality and relatively shallow. It is similar to gas found in the Montney shale deposits in British Columbia and Alberta, Canada.

[Full article](#)

**EU may push Germany to boost demand.** *Business Week*

The European Commission has appeared to back suggestions from some member states, notably France, that Germany is too dependent on trade surpluses and needs to boost domestic demand to correct imbalances in the eurozone. An executive said, "Parts of the observed divergence of current accounts and competitiveness are a source of potential concern to the extent that they reflect underlying macroeconomic imbalances, which increased the vulnerability of Member States to the shocks of the crisis."

[Full article](#)

**Los Angeles, CA to run out of cash in May.** *Business Week*

Los Angeles will run out of cash on May 5, city Controller Wendy Greuel said today in a release in which she requested a \$90 million transfer of reserve funds to pay bills.

[Full article](#)

**More acquisitions to sustain IBM growth.** *Business Week*

International Business Machines Corp.'s Sam Palmisano, who increased net income almost fourfold in eight years at the helm, may need a multibillion-dollar acquisition soon to keep up the pace, some investors say. While IBM has boosted earnings per share through buybacks, expense controls and other measures, rivals Oracle Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Co. have eclipsed its stock-price performance, lifted by big acquisitions that helped revenue soar.

[Full article](#)

**U.S. Government seeking money over Toyota recall.** *Forbes.com*

The Transportation Department says it's seeking the maximum penalty, more than \$16 million, against Toyota for failing to promptly notify the government about defective gas pedals among its vehicles. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood says evidence shows that Toyota knew of the problem with sticking gas pedals in late September but did not issue a recall until late January.

[Full article](#)

April 4

**SandRidge Energy to acquire Arena Resources.** *Business Week*

SandRidge Energy Inc. will acquire Arena Resources Inc. for \$1.55 billion in cash and stock as it turns its focus to oil rather than natural gas production. The purchase is SandBridge's second in West Texas since November, when it bought properties from Forest Oil Corp. for about \$800 million. By buying Arena Resources, SandRidge becomes one of the largest producers of West Texas conventional oil and gas.

[Full article](#)

**South Africa leader Terre'Blanche killed.** *Business Week*

South African right-wing leader Eugene Terre'Blanche, who fought to uphold minority apartheid rule, was found beaten to death at his farm near the town of Ventersdorp, police said. The death of Terre'Blanche, who led the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging movement, or AWB, will "polarize and inflame passions," Helen Zille, leader of the Democratic Alliance, South Africa's biggest opposition party, said.

[Full article](#)

**Japan Ex-Finance Chief to form party as LDP crumbles.** *Business Week*

Former Japanese Finance Minister Kaoru Yosano said he'll form a new political group, a blow to the opposition Liberal Democratic Party as it struggles to hold

together ahead of upper house elections in July. Yosano's break from the LDP marks the biggest defection since that defeat, which ended 50 years of almost unbroken rule. Since then, the ruling Democratic Party of Japan has moved to boost spending on social programs, which opposition lawmakers say is irresponsible as Japan struggles to contain the world's largest public debt.

[Full article](#)

**Persian Gulf stocks rally, developers and bank benefit.** *Business Week*  
Persian Gulf stocks rose, led by developers and financial firms, on speculation oil at the highest level since 2008 will spur governments to boost spending on construction projects. "Regional governments always benefit from a rise in oil prices because their budgets rely heavily on oil revenues," Kifah Maharmeh, general manager of Al Dar Shares & Bonds in Abu Dhabi. "Increased revenue means governments have bigger budgets for new real estate developments, which undoubtedly improves sentiment toward property and financial companies on stock exchanges."

[Full article](#)

April 3

**What is so special about the iPad?** *The London Times*

When the iPad launches in the UK this month, in both wi-fi-only and 3G versions, many will echo that familiar refrain heard each time Apple introduces a new product: should I buy the first generation, or wait for round two or three? Since acquiring an iPad for review purposes about a week ago, the device has seldom left my hands. And that tactile, hands-on experience is what sets the iPad apart from other devices, even smartphones with touch-sensitive screens. The device really does open up a new kind of user experience greater than the sum of its parts suggests.

[Full article](#)

**Geithner reports to U.S. Congress on exchange rate policies.** *Business Week*  
Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner delayed a report to Congress on exchange rate policies, saying planned meetings including one scheduled next month with Chinese officials will be "critical" to creating a stronger global economy. Geithner said that countries with "inflexible" exchange rates should "contribute to high and sustained global growth and rebalancing by combining policy efforts to strengthen domestic demand with greater exchange rate flexibility."

[Full article](#)

April 2

**London hotel concierges equipped with iPad.** *The London Times*

The hotel's concierges will use the iPads to show guests maps and directions to local points of interest, videos highlighting things to do near the hotel and book tickets at restaurants, theatres and other attractions. Simon Scoot, vice president, global brand management at the chain, said: "Our concierges are already engaging with our guests with useful information such as pre-stay e-mails, destination

specific concierge websites, interactive maps and concierge videos. We are also preparing to pilot state-of-the-art Google Maps technology as well as other enhancements, and the Apple iPad will be a revolutionary way of showcasing some of these features."

[Full article](#)

### **Investing in emerging market debt.** *Forbes.com*

Equity isn't the only game in town when it comes to emerging markets. The breadth and depth of the fixed income category has grown over time and emerging markets debt has become a viable class asset of its own. In this article we look at the colorful history of emerging markets debt and discuss what potential investors should consider before buying in.

[Full article](#)

### **Social media for elderly in Japan.** *Forbes.com*

In 1997 Shinji Yamasaki was advising European private banks seeking a foothold in Japan when two facts struck him: Older Japanese were wealthy, and nobody knew how to market to them. Within three years he'd quit his job at Bain & Company to create Senior Communication, a consulting group that runs Japan's largest social networking site for seniors. Communication uses these members as a giant focus group, gathering information that it can sell to brands and retailers.

[Full article](#)

April 1

### **U.S. new gas mileage standards.** *NPR*

The Obama administration signed off on the nation's first rules on greenhouse gas emissions Thursday and set new fuel standards that will raise current standards by nearly 10 mpg by the 2016 model year. The so-called CAFE standards, issued by the Transportation Department and the Environmental Protection Agency, cover cars and trucks for model years 2012 to 2016. Automakers will be required to meet a fleet-wide average of 35.5 by 2016.

[Full article](#)

### **Proposed British Airways and Iberia merger.** *The London Times*

The timetable for the proposed merger of British Airways and Iberia, the Spanish flag carrier, has slipped because of "technical issues." The two airlines had hoped to sign terms of agreement for their merger by the end of the first quarter, which ended yesterday. A BA spokeswoman said: "We will not sign the merger agreement with Iberia in the first quarter of 2010. This is due to technical issues that need to be resolved and we anticipate that the agreement will be signed in due course."

[Full article](#)

### **India's new elementary education law.** *CNN.com*

A new law went into effect in India making education a fundamental right for every child. The law obligates the government to provide free elementary education to every child between 6 and 14. It is expected to cost more than \$35 billion (1.5 trillion rupees) over five years.

[Full article](#)

**Ford gains sales in Asia.** *Business Week*

Ford CEO Mulally has invested over \$2.2 billion in Asia since coming to the company. That includes a \$500 million expansion of a plant in Thailand that Ford and joint venture partner Mazda opened last year to make Ford Fiesta and Mazda2 compact cars. (Ford owns 13% of the Japanese company.) Mulally's chief concern is China and India, which by 2015 could account for a quarter of the world's auto sales. The automaker is making up for lost time and doubling down on its core brand.

[Full article](#)

**Improved Bovespa and stronger industrial, manufacturing production.**

*Business Week*

The Bovespa stock index climbed to the highest level in 21 months and the real strengthened after Brazil's industrial production grew more than estimated and manufacturing in China expanded at a faster pace in March. "We're basically seeing industrial activity rising in all countries, and not only rising but intensifying," said Alvaro Bandeira, director of Rio de Janeiro-based Agora Corretora, Brazil's second-biggest brokerage. "We're seeing an acceleration of activity, which increases investors' propensity for risk-taking a little bit more."

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