

Energy – Petrobras, the largest company in Brazil and whose major shareholder is the government, in its fiftieth year faces a dilemma: should the company's policies serve the interests of private sector or public sector? Founded to give a strong support for the country's industrial development, the company had the monopoly on oil exploration and production in Brazil until 1997, when the government started to open up the monopoly to the private company participation, process concluded at the beginning of 2002. Today, with an oil production of 1.65 million barrel a day, Petrobras supplies 85 percent of the country's needs and is among the world's twelve largest oil producers.

Infotech – According to a survey carried out by IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) in 2001, 12 percent of the households have got computers, but only 8.6 percent are connected to Internet. This is why the digital inclusion is aiming to make the information truly democratic and to fight social inequalities. Although the World Trade Organization (WTO) has pointed out Brazil as Latin America's leading nation in this area, there is no doubt the country still has a long way to go.

Brazil – In Fernando de Noronha, an archipelago located 300 kilometers away from the continent, the inhabitants are fighting to keep their share of tourism business, their only source of income. In the last years the home "pousadas" – a kind of private homes run by families –, which traditionally host visitors, have been facing difficulties, since the local administration has given authority to non-residents to invest on building bigger and more luxurious style of hotel establishments on the island.

Mining – In Equador, a town in the State of Rio Grande do Norte, eastern region of Brazil, laborers have in the caulim extraction their only way to get income. In that area, characterized by rich mineral soil and water shortage which prevent laborers from taking up farming, they dig 50 meters deep tunnels and galleries, from where they extract, with no protection at all, up to 10 tons of caulim daily, risking their own lives. It means a very poor income of R\$ 200 per month for them.

Citizenship – In Brazil people with disabilities have major problems, ranging from difficulties to find jobs to the physical limitation to get on the public transport. The country has an extensive legislation on the issue, however, in practice, little is done to guarantee the

rights of these people. That is why some private companies are becoming involved with the fight for disabled people's social inclusion.

Comic books – Celebrating its 192 years the National Library, in Rio de Janeiro, has organized an exhibition of comic books from its collection. During a long time the comics were accused of causing emotional damage to the young. It is reported that some time ago piles of comics were burnt in public. It has happened in Brazil as well, but times have changed and today they are considered object of academic study.

Memory – Ary Barroso (1903-1964) was born to be one of the greatest and most versatile composers the country has had. His composition "Aquarela do Brasil", best known as "Brazil", has gone to become one of the 20 most recorded songs of all time. "Brazil" has also been honored with the title of "Best Brazilian Song of Twentieth Century" by the Brazilian Academy of Literature.

History – The Baron of Rio Branco (1845-1912) took a notable part in the process of establishing a modern concept of foreign affairs business for the country. Thanks to his technical skills and as a result of his intense diplomatic activity abroad – in Americas and Europe – Brazil's territorial boundaries were definitively settled.

Economy – The economist Bernard Appy, executive secretary of the Ministry of Finance, has made a speech on the government's plans in the economic area at the Federacao do Comercio do Estado de Sao Paulo.