

Friday on the facebook

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



Who are we?

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

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

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

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Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of 33 surveys. 2 of these are multi-country surveys, 1 is a cyber survey, & the rest are national surveys. 13 polling organizations have been represented.



Country of the week: AUSTRALIA

Smoking continues to decline, but quitters in regional Australia lag behind

► 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: *Smoking continues to decline, but quitters in regional Australia lag behind*



NOTE: While Australian Elections make the big news this week, we are focusing on a less glamorous but consequential subject of *Health* with particular reference to Smoking in Australia. Are attitudes changing, and is the Incidence of smoking on the decline? A recent poll reveals the declining trend to smoke among Australians.

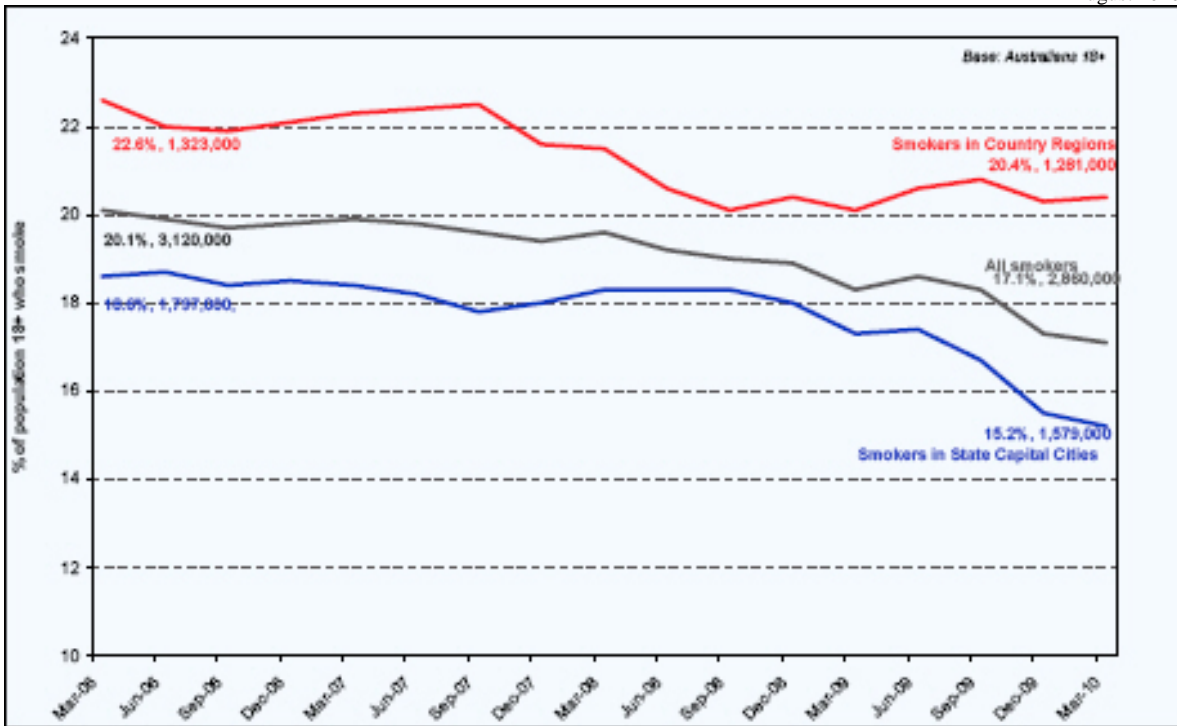
9/08/2010

According to the latest Roy Morgan Research Health Monitor, the four years to March 2010, have shown a 3% point reduction in the incidence of smoking (estimated as 260,000 fewer smokers aged 18 plus) down to a level of 17% of the overall population (an estimated 2,860,000 smokers).

Smokers living in capital cities have led the trend to quit with a 3% drop in incidence over the period. This equates to an estimated 218,000 fewer smokers in city areas, whereas amongst Australian country dwellers, smoking showed a solid decrease until 2008, but that decrease has stopped and smoking appears to be on the increase again in country areas.



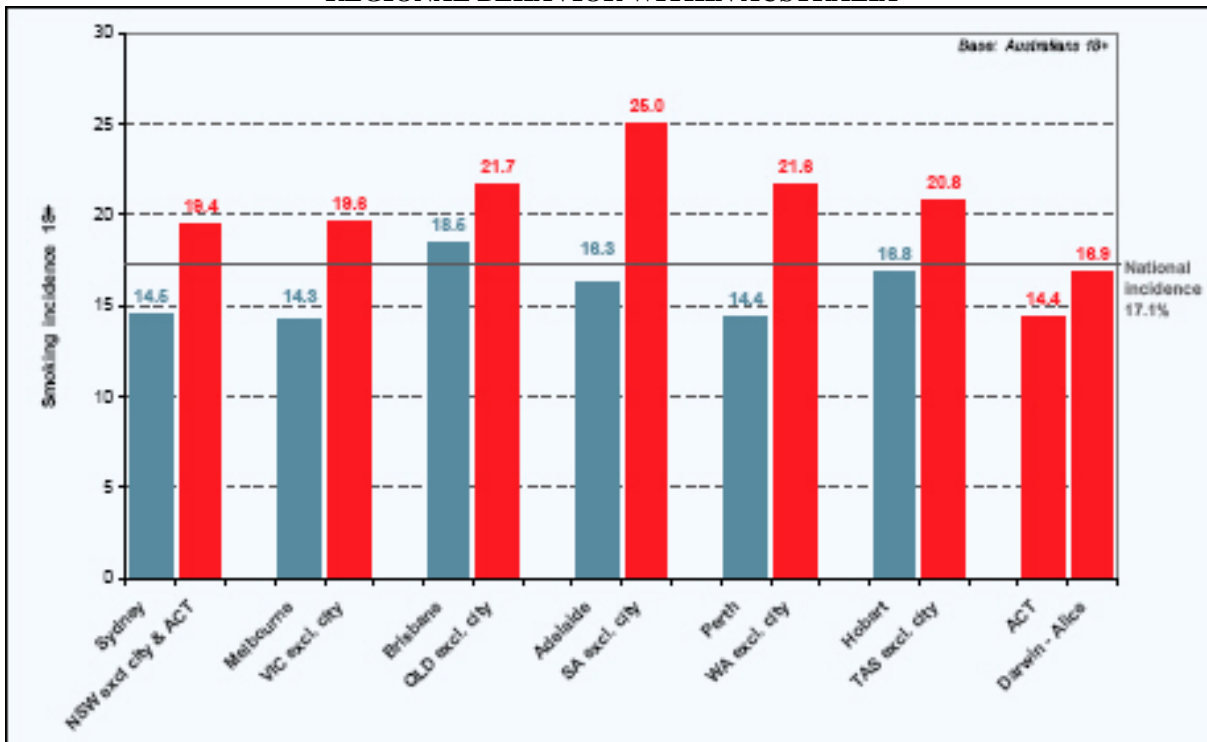
Smoking Trends in Australia (March 2008- March 2010)



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia) April '05 – March '10, 12 month moving averages Australians aged 18+ n= 20,800.

Whilst all state capitals except Brisbane show lower smoking incidence than the national figure of 17%, regional Australia shows a higher than average incidence in every state except for the Northern Territory.

Incidence of Smoking in Capital Cities and Country Regions of Australia
REGIONAL BEHAVIOR WITHIN AUSTRALIA



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia) April 2009 – March 2010, Incidence of smoking in population aged 18+, n =

18,364.

Nick Williams, Healthcare Consumer Consultant, Roy Morgan Research, says:

"Overall incidence of smoking amongst Australians has declined from 20% to 17% over the past 4 years. However, smoking in regional Australia remains higher than for the capital cities and the rate at which regional smokers are quitting is also slower. This indicates scope for stronger targeted regional implementation of the National Quit campaign and represents an opportunity for improved target marketing from the pharmaceutical marketers of medications that treat nicotine dependence."

SOURCE: <http://www.roymorganonlinestore.com/News/1144---Smoking-continues-to-decline,-but-quitters-.aspx>

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

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



► WEST ASIA

Afghans, Pakistanis Critical of Efforts to Fight Terrorism (Click for Details)

After last month's leak of U.S. intelligence documents related to the war in [Afghanistan](#) suggested Pakistani collusion with the Taliban, Afghan President Hamid Karzai criticized the West, as well as Pakistan, for not doing enough to counter cross-border terrorist threats from within Pakistan. [Gallup](#) surveys conducted before the leak found **78%** of Afghans would agree Pakistan's efforts fall short.

August 10, 2010

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

More Than One Third Of All Pakistanis (37%) Claim To Be Affected By The Recent Flood (Click for Details)

According to a Gilani Research Foundation survey carried out by [Gallup Pakistan](#), almost one third of all [Pakistanis](#) (**37%**) claim to be the victims of the flood water, **29%** state the affect on them has been very mild while only **31%** say they were not affected at all. **3%** have given no response. The figures reflect their perceptions and may or may not correspond with the actual flood situation.

August 12, 2010

[Society](#) » [Environment/ Disasters](#)

Turks Evenly Split On Constitutional Changes (Click for Details)

Results of an upcoming referendum on constitutional amendments in [Turkey](#) are hard to call at this point, according to a poll by [Sonar Arastirma](#). **49.1 %** of respondents would vote yes to enact the government-proposed changes, whereas **50.9 %** would vote to reject them.

August 14, 2010

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

Turks Most Concerned with Economic Issues (Click for Details)

The governing Justice and Development Party has dominated [Turkey](#) for the past decade, but [IRI's poll](#) suggests there are opportunities for opposition parties to make up ground in the next general elections, particularly if they focus their efforts on the economy.

July 12, 2010

Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being

► GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

Two in five UAE residents support BlackBerry ban – survey (Click for Details)

Two in five [United Arab Emirates](#) residents support the decision by the country's telecom watchdog to suspend key BlackBerry services from October and two-thirds expect the announced ban to be implemented, a survey showed last week. [YouGov survey](#)

August 11, 2010

Society » Media/ New Media

► CENTRAL ASIA

Multi Country Poll: In the CIS, Desired Migration Destinations Depend on Motive (Click for Details)

Society » Immigration/Refugees



Africa zone

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

► SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Multi Country Poll: Many Africans Say Foreigners Traffic Drugs in Their Countries (Click for Details)

Society » Social Problems



Euro Americas zone

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



EUROPE

► EAST EUROPE



Russians Still Smitten with Putin, Medvedev (Click for Details)

President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin remain highly popular in [Russia](#), according to a poll by the [Yury Levada Analytical Center](#). **72 %** of respondents approve of Medvedev's performance, and **77 %** endorse Putin's.

August 11, 2010

Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings

Poles Stand Behind Governing Civic Platform (Click for Details)

The popularity of [Poland's](#) governing Civic Platform (PO) party is on the rise, according to a poll by [GfK Polonia](#) published in *Rzeczpospolita*. **48 %** of respondents would vote for the PO in the next legislative election, up four points since mid-June.

August 09, 2010

Domestic Politics » Political Parties



WEST EUROPE

Nurses are Most Respected Professionals in Britain (Click for Details)

Most people in [Britain](#) hold nurses in a favourable light, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 94 % of respondents have a great deal or a fair amount of respect for nurses.

August 10, 2010

Economy » Employment Issues

Britons Still Think the Economy is in Shambles (Click for Details)

The mood of people in [Britain](#) regarding the national economy remains sour, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). 82 % of respondents say the economy is in poor or very poor shape, down six points since June.

August 08, 2010

Economy » Perceptions on Performance/ Well-Being

Support For Female And Gay Bishops (Click for Details)

[British](#) adults are supportive of the appointment of female Bishops. To a lesser extent they are also supportive of homosexual Bishops to the Church of England. [YouGov survey](#)

July 14, 2010

Society » Gender Issues

Society » Morality, Values & Customs

Few Italians Want Berlusconi to Finish his Term (Click for Details)

Few people in [Italy](#) want Silvio Berlusconi to finish his current term in office, according to a poll by [Digis](#). Only 28 % of respondents want the prime minister's government to stay in place until the end of the term.

August 08, 2010

Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings

NORTH AMERICA



AMERICAS

The Vote for Congress: GOP Fares Better with Whites, Men, Independents and Seniors (Click for Details)

In the [US](#) the Republican Party's prospects for the midterm elections look much better than they did four years ago at this time, while the Democrats' look much worse. Voter preferences for the upcoming congressional elections remain closely divided (45% support the Democratic candidate or lean Democratic, while 44% favor the Republican or lean Republican). In polling conducted in August-September 2006, the Democrats held an 11-point advantage (50% to 39%). [Pew Research Center](#)

August 10, 2010

Domestic Politics » Elections

On the Issues, Obama Finds Majority Approval Elusive (Click for Details)

[US](#) President Barack Obama's 52% approval rating for handling race relations is the only issue among 13 tested in two recent [Gallup](#) polls for which the president receives majority-level approval. In fact, a majority disapprove of the job the president is doing on eight of these issues, with his worst scores for his handling of immigration and the federal budget deficit.

August 11, 2010

Domestic Politics » Performance Ratings

Low Approval of Congress Not Budging, Now 19% (Click for Details)

Congress' job rating from the [American](#) people in August remains near the historical lows seen in recent months. **19%** of Americans now approve of the overall job Congress is doing, while **75%** disapprove.

[Gallup USA](#)

August 11, 2010

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

GOP Maintains Lead on Generic Ballot for Congress ([Click for Details](#))

In [America](#) Republicans have a **49%** to **43%** lead over Democrats among registered voters in [Gallup's](#) generic ballot for Congress for the week of Aug. **2-8**, the second straight week in which Republicans have held an edge in projected voting. [Gallup USA](#)

August 10, 2010

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

In U.S., Confidence in Newspapers, TV News Remains a Rarity ([Click for Details](#))

[Americans](#) continue to express near-record-low confidence in newspapers and television news -- with no more than **25%** of Americans saying they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in either. These views have hardly budged since falling more than **10 %**age points from **2003-2007**. [Gallup USA](#)

August 13, 2010

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

Economy Remains Top Concern as Nov. Elections Draw Nearer ([Click for Details](#))

[Americans](#) of all political persuasions say the economy and jobs are the most important problems facing the country today. These concerns easily outpace all others, thus providing politicians seeking office in this fall's midterm elections with clear marching orders from their constituents: Fix the economy. [Gallup USA](#)

August 13, 2010

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

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

U.S. Approval of Labor Unions Remains Near Record Low ([Click for Details](#))

A slim majority of **52%** of [Americans](#) say they approve of labor unions, the second lowest approval rating in [Gallup's](#) **70**-year history of this trend, behind only last year's **48%**.

August 12, 2010

[Society](#) » [Civil Society](#)

Student Poll: 34% in Grades 5-12 Hopeful, Engaged, Thriving ([Click for Details](#))

As students nationwide prepare to return to the classroom, a national [Gallup](#) Student Poll classifies one-third of [U.S.](#) students in grades **5-12** as "hopeful," "engaged," and "thriving" -- three metrics that pave the way for future achievement. While **53%** of students are hopeful, **63%** are engaged, and **70%** are thriving, many students fall short in at least one of these dimensions.

August 12, 2010

[Society](#) » [Education](#)

Spending Slumps Even With Back-to-School Underway ([Click for Details](#))

[Americans'](#) self-reported spending in stores, restaurants, gas stations, and online averaged **\$62** per day during the week ending Aug. **8**. Early August consumer spending trends trail **2009** and will need to surge to match last year's anemic back-to-school results. [Gallup USA](#)

August 12, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Consumer Confidence/Protection](#)

Unauthorized Immigrants and Their U.S.-Born Children ([Click for Details](#))

An estimated **340,000** of the **4.3** million babies born in the [United States](#) in **2008** were the offspring of unauthorized immigrants, according to a new analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by the Pew Hispanic Center, a project of the [Pew Research Center](#).

August 11, 2010

[Society](#) » [Immigration/Refugees](#)

Americans' Confidence in the Medical System on the Rebound (Click for Details)

Providing a benchmark as [America's](#) new healthcare reform law begins to take effect, **40%** of Americans express "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the U.S. medical system, the highest percentage since **2005**. Americans' confidence in the medical system hit a low of **31%** in **2007**, at a time when confidence across almost all institutions was down, but has been steadily rebounding in the years since. [Gallup USA](#)

August 9, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

Religion in the 2008 Presidential Election (Click for Details)

The Democratic Party made a concerted effort to court religious voters in the **2008** US presidential election that pitted Democrat Barack Obama against Republican John McCain. Led by Obama himself and aided by progressive religious activists, the Democrats reached out to numerous religious groups in hopes of narrowing the "God gap," a media catchphrase for a striking pattern in American politics: the more often [Americans](#) go to church or other worship services, the more likely they are to vote Republican. [Pew Research Center](#)

August 11, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

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

Americans Want to Scrap Electoral College (Click for Details)

Most people in the [United States](#) would like to eliminate the Electoral College system to elect presidents, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). **64 %** of respondents share this view, and think that whoever gets the most votes should be elected president.

August 09, 2010

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

Americans Back Extending Jobless Benefits (Click for Details)

Most people in the [United States](#) want the government to extend jobless benefits for those who have been unable to find a position, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). **71 %** of respondents share this view.

August 12, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

Half of Canadians Oppose Mission in Afghanistan (Click for Details)

A majority of people in [Canada](#) reject their country's participation in Afghanistan, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). **53 %** of respondents oppose the military operation involving Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

August 11, 2010

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

Canadian Tories Lose Steam, Liberals Gain Ground (Click for Details)

[Canada's](#) governing Conservative Party has lost popularity and is seeing its main opponent get closer, according to a poll by [Angus Reid Public Opinion](#). **33 %** of respondents would support the Tories in the next election to the House of Commons, down three points since early July.

August 13, 2010

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

► **LATIN AMERICA**

President Piñera Stumbles in Chile (Click for Details)



Fewer people in [Chile](#) are expressing support for Sebastián Piñera, according to a poll by [Adimark Gfk](#). **46%** of respondents approve of their president's performance, down six points since June.

August 13, 2010

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

Brazilians Reject Lula's Anti-Spanking Law ([Click for Details](#))

Most people in [Brazil](#) disagree with a proposed law to ban spanking, pinching and other forms of physical punishment for children and teenagers, according to a poll by [Datafolha](#) published in *Folha de Sao Paulo*. **54%** of respondents are against the idea, sponsored by the government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

August 08, 2010

[Society](#) » [Family](#)



▶ AUSTRALASIA

Smoking continues to decline, but quitters in regional Australia lag behind ([Click for Details](#))

According to the latest [Roy Morgan Research](#) Health Monitor, the four years to March 2010, have shown a **3%** point reduction in the incidence of smoking (estimated as **260,000** fewer smokers aged 18 plus) in [Australia](#) down to a level of **17%** of the overall population (an estimated **2,860,000** smokers).

August 09, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS



In the CIS, Desired Migration Destinations Depend on Motive ([Click for Details](#))

35% of adults in **12 former Soviet nations** say they would like to migrate to another country -- either permanently, for temporary work, or for study or work study -- if they had the opportunity. They express the most interest in moving to Russia, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom, but each nation's popularity depends on people's motives for migrating. [Gallup USA](#)

August 12, 2010

[Society](#) » [Immigration/Refugees](#)

Many Africans Say Foreigners Traffic Drugs in Their Countries ([Click for Details](#))

As the United Nations observes the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illegal Trafficking on June 26, [Gallup](#) surveys in eight [sub-Saharan African](#) countries in **2009** and **2010** show that a median of **54%** of respondents say foreigners are using their country as a place to move illegal drugs and **66%** say this increases corruption.

June 25, 2010

[Society](#) » [Social Problems](#)

CYBER WORLD



Broadband 2010: A Big Slowdown ([Click for Details](#))

After several consecutive years of modest but consistent growth, broadband adoption slowed dramatically in **2010**. Two-thirds of [American](#) adults (**66%**) currently use a high-speed internet connection at home, a figure that is not statistically different from what the [Pew Research Center's](#) Internet & American Life Project found at a similar point in **2009**, when **63%** of Americans were broadband adopters.

August 11, 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:

The **Turkish** PM has defended his decision to intervene in the promotion of military officials and said that people who commit mistakes can not be allowed to stay in army. Meanwhile PKK has announced bilateral ceasefire in response to the call of civil society before the beginning of Ramadan. In a recent survey about the government's Kurdish initiative 59% of the university students have supported governments' initiative. The heads of two Republican People's Party (CHP) district branches have resigned to vote yes in a referendum to take place on Sept. 12 on the government's constitutional reform package.

Geo-strategic Front:

Turkey has sent another round of humanitarian aid to flood-hit Pakistan, dispatching a Turkish cargo plane carrying nearly 35 tons of aid materials. Meanwhile **Turkey** has also donated \$5 million to Pakistani flood victims.

Turkey has announced to continue trade ties with Iran despite UN sanctions against the later. **Turkey** has also expressed full support to the UN investigation into the Israeli attack against aid flotilla.

Economic Front:

Turkey has started spending a lot of money on dam building in order to reduce the country's dependence on foreign energy, Natural-gas power plants.

Social Front:

The heat wave that has been hitting **Turkey** for nearly 20 days is expected to last 15 more days.

GCC

Geo-strategic Front:

Saudi government and **Kuwait** sent huge assistance to the flood victims in Pakistan. Rapidly growing ties between **Malaysia** and Sultanate of **Oman** also grabbed attention. **Qatar** and **Sri Lanka** signed an air transport agreement after three days of talks in Doha.

Economic Front:

The **GCC** economies are expected to rebound in 2010 from their relatively flat economic performance in 2009 on the back of strong fiscal spending, according to Gulf Investment



Corporation (GIC), an investment bank based in **Kuwait**. **Kuwait** and **Iraq** are expected to reach an agreement soon setting guidelines for investing in oilfields which cross their desert border.

FERTILE CRESCENT

Political Front:

Egyptian political front has been dominated by the news about political campaigns being launched by different political parties for upcoming Presidential elections that are to be held in 2011. Two strong candidates include Gamal Mubarak and El Beradi. Many pro democracy people have opposed Gamal Mubarak for acquiring this position just because of his father. However leftists groups have launched campaigns in his favor. Pro-El Beradi group seems to be quite active as they have launched various rounds of signatures' campaign and have got quite a positive response.

The Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) stated that state security investigations officers raided and searched the homes of nine Muslim Brotherhood members while gathering signatures for the National Coalition for Change's petition for change. A total of six men were detained because the other three were not at home at the time of the raid.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's State of Law bloc has made a key offer in an attempt to break the five-month deadlock over forming a new government. Hezbollah leader Syed Hassan Nasrallah's "evidence" implicating **Israel** in the murder of **Lebanese** former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has failed to sway his political rivals and left analysts divided over its impact.

Geo-strategic Front:

Egypt has received U.S. assurances that may help in restarting direct peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel. U.S. State Department spokesman has defended U.S. assistance to **Lebanon** and said it contributes to "regional stability as a whole."

Economic Front:

Egypt announced that it would not increase local wheat prices or cut bread subsidies after a *Russian* wheat export ban sent world prices soaring.

Figures issued by the Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation indicate that **Lebanon** ranked third among 12 Arab countries in the value of overall export credit insurance contracts signed in 2009.



Social Front:

Two local television stations have dropped an Iranian-produced series on the life of Jesus Christ, after a storm of complaints that the material was offensive to Christians. General Security denied that it had issued an order to stop the series, entitled "The Christ," which was being broadcast on NBN and Hezbollah's Al-Manar Television. It said the two stations made the decision voluntarily. In the meantime two Shiite Muslim television stations in **Lebanon** canceled a controversial program about Jesus, saying they do not want to stir up sectarian conflict in the country.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front:

Kyrgyz President has announced to hold elections in October 2010. Meanwhile government has lifted the state of emergency in the Southern region. Situation still seems to be instable as dozens of activists launched protest against planned international police deployment in the south of the country. Apart from all this

former Prime Minister has been released from detention with a promise that he won't leave the country. All the while one of the supporters of former President has been sent into jail.

The son of **Tajikistan's** former prosecutor-general has been arrested and charged with accepting bribes.

The Central Commission for Elections and Referenda of **Turkmenistan** held a meeting in Ashgabat on 7 August to discuss preparations for elections of regional, district and city people's councils.

Geo-strategic Front:

Netherlands expressed willingness to have all around cooperation with **Azerbaijan**. The US official met with **Azerbaijani** counterpart and discussed existing cooperation between the two countries and prospects of further boosting of ties. An **Azerbaijani** scientist has arrived in Baku after being released from an **Iranian** jail after serving a two-year sentence for espionage. **Azerbaijan** has announced to give \$ 1 million financial assistance to Pakistan.

Swiss diplomat Markus Mueller has been selected to head a team of 52 police advisers whom the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) plans to send to **Kyrgyzstan**.

Uzbekistan has not yet rescinded restrictions for **Tajik** nationals on proceeding via crossings on the Tursunzoda stretch of the **Tajik-Uzbek** border that was imposed almost three months ago. Growing **Tajik** relations with China also grabbed attention. Meanwhile the **Uzbek** President held a meeting with **Japanese** Foreign Minister and discussed areas of cooperation between the two countries.

Turkmenistan and the U.S. have formally extended the ongoing cooperation on drug control and law enforcement by signing the fourth annex to the existing Intergovernmental Agreement of September 2001.

Economic Front:

Azeri role as gas supplier and transit country to Europe has been growing rapidly. The technical working group on the gas pipeline project **Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI)** fleshed out a number of economic and technical components of the future gas pipeline at a regular meeting that finished in Ashgabat on 6 August. The working group also identified further steps related to construction of the gas pipeline.

Social Front:

Dozens of construction workers building a subway in Almaty, **Kazakhstan's** largest city have vowed to begin a hunger strike to demand three months of unpaid wages. Meanwhile at least two inmates have been killed and more than 80 injured during a prison riot in **Kazakhstan**, close to the Russian border.

Turkmen officials have been attempting to stop university students from returning to **Kyrgyzstan** to continue their studies in the wake of ethnic violence there.

A **Tajik** official claimed that the high rate of suicide among women in southern **Tajikistan** is related in most cases to domestic violence perpetrated by men. Meanwhile according to reports prayer has been banned in the mosque at the headquarters in Dushanbe of the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), in a move that could pave the way for its closure.

IRAN

Geo-strategic Front:

UN resolution imposing sanctions against Iran and different states; reaction to this remained potent at geo-strategic front. **Iran** strongly condemned this move launched by Western Powers. **Iran** further claimed that



it has got legitimate right to enrich uranium for its needs. In this regard Mahatir Mohammad accused Westerners for having double standards. In the meantime *Russia* has offered to provide nuclear help to **Iran** for peaceful purposes.

Besides this; Iran has emphasized greatly on the need to boost ties with *Damascus, Afghanistan* and *Tajikistan*.

Economic Front:

Brazil's state-controlled Caixa Economica Federal has announced to finance up to 1 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) in beef shipments to *Iran* after private banks refused to extend credit to exporters, fearing retaliation from the U.S. and European Union.

Iran expressed its readiness to promote cooperation in agriculture, industry, oil and petrochemical sectors, export technical and engineering services with *Cambodia*. Also **Iran** seems keen to boost economic ties with *Europe* as well as *Armenia*.

Social Front:

The painting, named "Trinidad Fernandez" (1907), was loaned at the request of the museum in Rotterdam, and the return of masterpiece back to the country has been guaranteed by the Dutch Embassy in Tehran.

Popular Iranian footballer Ali Karimi has been fired by his club for not fasting during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Cyber World: One month after a disputed presidential election sparked widespread unrest in **Iran**, the country's government has initiated a cyber-crackdown that is challenging hackers across the globe to find new ways to help keep **Iranian** dissidents connected to the Web.

AFGHANISTAN

Political Front:

Skirmishes between the security forces, NATO and *Taliban* have led to the death of more than 30 people last week while leaving many others injured. As civilians also become victim of such armed confrontations among various groups; the US has accused *Taliban* for civilian casualties. The **Afghan** National Security Council (ANSC) has asked the United Nations for the removal of 47 names of **Afghans** citizens from its sanctions list.

Geo-strategic Front:

Afghan Religious leaders have urged the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to convene a meeting on bringing peace to **Afghanistan**. The Ministry of Finance and the World Bank has signed a grant agreement worth \$40 million to support the Third National Solidarity Programme (NSP III), in **Afghanistan**. Amid the continuing violence in **Afghanistan**, the shape of the NATO alliance is changing. At the beginning of August, *Dutch* troops left the restive province of Uruzgan, and *Canadian* soldiers appear set to depart next year. The *US* however has been trying to sort out ways to work in close collaboration with its NATO allies.

Economic Front:

Pistachio farmers in northern Samangan province of **Afghanistan** have had a bumper crop, harvesting 900 tons of the nuts compared to just eight tones last year.

Social Front:

Large number of people were killed and injured and thousands of acres of crops got destroyed by flash floods in three central and two eastern provinces of **Afghanistan**.



Taliban says its attack forced the US forces to leave their nearby base but Nato denies claim [Al Jazeera]

The US Ambassador has backed women's role in peace drive in **Afghanistan**. Meanwhile government statistics in **Afghanistan** have raised concerns that a growing number of **Afghan** women are attempting suicide. **Afghanistan's** largest gathering of religious people, who met to discuss reconciliation with the Taliban, has called for the revival of strict Islamic law as the country seeks ways to win militants away from a growing insurgency.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front:

The ruling Awami League-led government in **Bangladesh** has strongly defended the whopping \$1 billion loan deal with **India**, dismissing the opposition BNP's charges as a "disgusting attempt to spread falsehood." Meanwhile at least 50 people were injured in **Bangladesh** after protesters, angry over frequent power outage, clashed with police on the outskirts of the capital Dhaka.

Nepalese have been trying hard to build consensus in order to come out of political instability. Unified Maoist Party's Chairman has expressed his frustration for not being able to exhibit majority in the prime ministerial election four times in series. People's confidence and political parties' mistrust has increased because of persistent uncertainty at political front.

Geo-strategic Front:

A European supplier has cancelled deals to ship a total of 80,000 tones of wheat to **Bangladesh**, following a spike in wheat prices due to lower crop and export curbs in the Black Sea region.

Indian finance minister Pranab Mukherjee paid visit to **India** with a billion dollar credit package. Meanwhile **Indian** former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran has visited **Nepal** in order to make efforts to resolve the ongoing political crisis. **Nepal** and **India** also held a meeting on the possibilities of expanding trade and continuing economic relationship between the two countries. **Nepalese** government has decided to grant Rs 10 million to flood-hit Pakistan. Meanwhile **Nepal** and **Indonesia** have agreed to joined hands for the development of tourism sector and trade.

The members of the 'Group of 15' (G-15) high level task force met **Sri Lankan** President and held discussions on strengthening international cooperation. Meanwhile the **Sri Lankan** government rejected a call by U.S. Senators for an independent probe on alleged human rights abuses during the last stages of **Sri Lanka's** conflict with the Tamil Tiger rebels. **China** has pledged its support to **Sri Lanka** against any international pressure for a United Nations-led probe into alleged war crimes.

Economic Front:

The **Bangladesh** government has decided to keep CNG filling stations in and around Dhaka closed for six hours everyday during the month of Ramadan in order to increase power generation.

Non-Resident **Nepali** Association (NRNA) has decided to support the government in the process of economic diplomacy as well as to make the **Nepal** Tourism Year 2011 (NTY-2011) mega campaign a success.

Social Front:

Bangladesh has banned beating in schools after an upsurge of "inhuman" treatment of pupils by teachers.

Sri Lanka's Health Ministry has launched a special program to stamp out the mosquito-borne disease spreading fast in the country with nearly 25,000 cases being reported so far this year.



INDIA**Political Front:**

The Group of Ministers (GoM), headed by Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, has finally given its approval to the enumeration of caste in Census 2011. BJP and Leftist Parties have been questioning the significance of Civil Nuclear Liability Bill. According to BJP, since nuclear power plants could be set up only by the government, the liability part could be worked out even by an internal executive arrangement. Hence Congress led UPA government seems to be in a critical situation.

Maoists blew up a school building 24 hours before calling complete shut down in three states namely Jharkhand, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. All the while Maoists have offered money for handing over weapons allegedly being used by CPI (M) cadres in the Naxal-hit areas, 12 days after the West Bengal government announced a surrender and rehabilitation package for the rebels.

The Hürriyet Conference has refused to accept PM Man Mohan Singh's economic package on the ground that **India** doesn't seem serious in resolving **Kashmir** issue. Meanwhile the Janata Dal (U) has demanded a sub-plan providing for a dedicated fund for the development of Muslim-dominated areas.

Geo-strategic Front:

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister paid a visit to **India** and held talks with **Indian** counterpart. They discussed **Indo-Iranian** initiative to develop a new trading route to the land locked *Afghanistan* and a "regional approach" to bringing peace and stability.

India has cautioned that insurgents had the "potential" to derail its friendly ties with *Bangladesh*, even as it commended Dhaka's efforts to root out terrorism from this country. At the same time **India** has signed an agreement with *Bangladesh* to extend a USD 1 billion credit line for developing 14 infrastructure projects, mostly in the communications sector.

Economic Front:

The Panamanian-registered container ship MSC Chitra that had on Saturday collided with the MV-Khalijia-II, a St. Kitts registered ship, tilts in the Arabian Sea, close to Mumbai.

Increase in inflation has been observed in **India**. The survey of 342 companies across sectors like auto, textiles, metal, chemical, FMCG, has predicted the slow down given the gradual phasing-out of monetary and fiscal stimulus and increase in raw material prices which could depress the demand through inflationary pressure. The manufacturing sector had grown by 15.1 % in the April-June quarter this fiscal.

Social Front:

The oil spill off the Mumbai coast as the slick covered a large area, has reached up to five nautical miles, from the spot where two ships collided.

According to the McAfee Threats Report, **India** features among the countries where malware spam, or anything that comes with a virus or

Trojan attachment urging you to visit an infected website, is the most popular.

EAST ASIA**Political Front:**

The **Indonesian** government has announced its plans to finalize a draft bill that regulates land acquisition for public purposes. The legislation aims to improve infrastructure and ease traffic flow. Leader of Pan **Malaysian** Islamic Party has asked his party members to stay concerned about the well being of *Chinese* and

Indians in order to retain their support. PAS therefore has broken its extremist shell as has got support of non-Muslim communities as well.

Thailand's Prime Minister recently addressed "Yellow Shirt" protesters at a rally held in defiance of emergency rules banning political gatherings. Demonstrators were seeking Thai action to claim an ancient World Heritage-listed temple on the **Thai-Cambodian** border. **Thai** Prime Minister told protesters that he is ready to cancel a memorandum of understanding signed in 2000 on the border and use "diplomatic and military means" to "settle" the issue.

Geo-strategic Front:

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen sent letter to the presidents of the U.N. General Assembly and Security Council to decry a statement that **Thailand** is ready to abrogate rulings on the border between the two countries.



Vietnam accused *China* of violating its sovereignty by conducting seismic exploration near disputed islands in the *South China Sea* and urged Beijing to do more to promote peace, stability and healthy bilateral relations. While condemning the US involvement in South China Sea dispute, **Philippines** said that Southeast Asian nations did not need US help in solving territorial disputes with China.

Economic Front:

Indonesia's refined tin exports in June fell 7.3 % from the same month a year ago to 8,029.92 tones. **Indonesia** has approved an export permit for a new tin smelter, bringing the total number of smelters allowed to export the metal to 32. **Thailand's** \$58 billion mutual funds industry is set for strong medium-term growth as a robust economic recovery boosts the stock market and helps equity funds post their best returns in many years.

Malaysia has offered great opportunities to *Pakistani* businessmen. Trade between **Malaysia** and *Pakistan* has already achieved the mark of US\$2 billion. Out of the US\$2 billion, **Pakistan's** exports amounted to only US\$200 million against imports worth US\$1.7 billion. Globally, the Halal industry contributes \$1 trillion towards the world economy with **Malaysia** as the hub for development of Halal food industry.

In **Vietnam** the VN-Index ended down 3.17 % to close at 448, the lowest level since December 18, 2009. **Singapore's** economy expanded less than previously estimated in the first half of 2010. The Southeast Asian nation's gross domestic product rose 17.9 % in the six months through June from a year earlier.

Social Front:

In a recent move against terrorism **Indonesian** police arrested one of the most re-known radical scholars Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. Many analysts have declared economic neglect by the government and social disparity to be the root cause of terrorism as well as anti-regime movements like Papuans. **Malaysia** have expressed hope that the **Philippines** and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) would expedite the peace process to success for Mindanao to enjoy socio-economic prosperity after years of bloody conflict.

The **Thai** Meteorological Department issued its daily weather forecast last week, warning 11 provinces of heavy rainfalls and flashfloods.

Cyber World: Umno has asked its cyber friends to help uplift the image of the party which has come under increasing attack from various quarters, particularly the opposition. Umno has asked its cyber friends to help uplift the image of the party which has come under increasing attack from various quarters, particularly the opposition. **Vietnamese** authorities announced that Google Maps is fixing errors on its map service which depict parts of **Vietnamese** territory as belonging to China. **Vietnam** also acknowledged Google's effort to meet its request and fix the errors.

ASEAN

ASEAN has started looking for a defined policy regarding South China Sea in order to avoid any chances of conflict. **ASEAN** also seem quite concerned about economic development of all the states of this region.

**CHINA****Political Front:**

The **Chinese** Peasants and Workers Democratic Party (CPWDP) celebrated its 80th anniversary of foundation. Senior Chinese official praised a mainstream stage drama as a "good textbook" in the fight against corruption.

Geo-strategic Front:

China has extended full support to ASEAN's efforts towards integration. **Chinese** Vice PM has pledged to further relations with the United States, stressing the importance of mutual understanding. **China's** Ministry of Commerce has rejected foreign media reports that **Chinese** companies had been sending convicted criminals to work on projects abroad in order to prevent overcrowding in prisons. The United Nations and countries including *Japan*, the *United States*,

Canada, *Germany* and *Mexico* have offered condolences to those affected by deadly floods and mudslides in **China**. Meanwhile **Chinese** growing relations with *Srilanka*, *Republic of Korea*, *Mexico*, *African countries*, *Ecuador* and *Switzerland* grabbed attention.

Economic Front:

Israel's exports to **China** jumped from the 11th to the 5th by the first half of 2010. The Governor of the People's Bank of China (PBC) Yi Gang recently mentioned that **China** had overtaken *Japan* to become the world's second largest economy. The **Chinese** spent more in July as inflationary pressures have eased with a fall in the food prices. The growth of **China's** industrial value-added output was up 13.4 % in July year on year, 0.3 %age points down from June. **China's** fiscal revenue jumped 25.7 % from a year earlier to 5.11 trillion Yuan (about 750 billion U.S. dollars) in the first seven months. The Yuan declined 0.4 % this week, the biggest five- day drop since December 2008, to 6.7957 per dollar as of 5:30 p.m. in Shanghai. **China's** banking, securities and insurance regulatory commissions have launched self-examinations to push forward the financial sector's anti-corruption campaign.

Social Front:

China's Chief Justice has called for innovation in the management of the country's trial process and enhanced supervision to ensure justice and a clean judicial system. The number of Christians in the country has hit a record 23.05 million in 2010, according to a survey released by the institute of world religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. **China's** industry chiefs have warned more than 2,000 companies to close obsolete production facilities within two months or face cuts in credit and a suspension of government approvals.

KOREA**Political Front:**

South Korea has been actively working on the report about their sunken naval warship.

Geo-strategic Front:

South Korea has called on **North Korea** to return a fishing boat and its crew seized by the communist nation amid heightened tensions over military exercises involving the U.S. Navy. Meanwhile **North Korea**

proposed working with the U.S. to probe the sinking of a **South Korean** warship, which the Obama administration blamed on the communist country.

As Seoul faces pressure from the United States to impose stronger sanctions on *Iran*, the Iranian ambassador has been warning that this could lead to possible economic disadvantages.

Economic Front:

South Korea is on course to achieve a \$30 billion trade surplus by year's end as it is expected to have already reached its earlier forecast of \$23 billion by the end of this month. **South Korea's** economy continues to face downside risks including slowing recoveries in major markets but is still improving fast. **South Korea** and the *United Arab Emirates* have agreed to cooperate on energy exploration and stockpiling of crude oil.

South Korea's unemployment rate climbed to a three-month high as the government wound down employment programs begun after the global crisis. The jobless rate increased to 3.7 % in July from 3.5 % the previous month.

Social Front:

The number of senior citizens aged 65 or over has almost hit the 1 million mark in the heavily populated city of Seoul.

JAPAN

Political Front:

According to a Kyodo News poll released last week, the public support rating for the Cabinet of Prime Minister Naoto Kan has risen slightly to 38.7 %, up 2.4 %age points from the previous survey last month. Tokyo police have arrested a 27-year-old man in Osaka on suspicion of using a computer virus to destroy stored data.

Geo-strategic Front:

The government of Guam has opposed expanding the local military zone by building new facilities to accept some 8,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa, as agreed to by **Japan** and the *United States*.

North Korea has criticized Prime Minister Naoto Kan for issuing an apology only to *South Korea* over **Japan's** 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

Economic Front:

China has sharply expanded investments in **Japanese** government bonds in the first months of this year, apparently to increase exposure to stable **Japanese** vehicles against the backdrop of the European debt crisis.

Ales of new imported vehicles, including **Japanese** models made overseas, rose 56.6 % to 21,683 units in July. Meanwhile Toyota Motor Corp. halted auto exports to *Iran* to avoid conflict with U.S. and United Nations sanctions over *Iran's* nuclear program.

Social Front:

Japan's population fell to 127,057,860 in the year to March 31, down for the first time in three years, largely because of an increase in the number of deaths amid the aging of the population. A Kyodo News poll shows that 75.9 % of the public supports the death penalty, far exceeding the 19.5 % who oppose capital punishment. §



Events of the week in

Africa zone

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

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: **Sierra Leoneans** have expressed regret at the spotlight that has been trained on their bloody past by the courtroom appearances of model Naomi Campbell at a war crimes trial last week. Reportedly Mia Farrow and Carole White contradict Naomi Campbell's testimony, and during the week Issa Sesay's cross-examination is scheduled to begin.

In **Nigeria** the dynamics of the 2011 presidential race may be heading for a dramatic shuffling as the opposition puts its act together, with former chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, now in the fray. In a ticket pairing Ribadu with Edo State Governor Adams Oshiomhole on the presidential flag bearer of the newly branded Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN).

Meanwhile President Goodluck Jonathan blamed insecurity problems in the country on long years of under funding of the **Nigeria** Police, thereby debarring them from performing their constitutional roles effectively.

On another front **Nigerian** Senate President David Mark has said with the conclusion of the first amendment to the 1999 Constitution, the National Assembly has fulfilled one of the cardinal promises made to Nigerians at its inauguration in 2007.

At the elections front: **In Ghana:** Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, Presidential Candidate of the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Election 2008 was on Saturday declared winner of the party's historic Special National Delegates Elections by the Electoral Commission (EC) to set for Election 2012 as the main Opposition Party.

Liberia: Barely two weeks following the celebration of the 163 Independence of **Liberia** in Nimba County, more than six administrative districts in the County have issued a strongly worded reaction to the petitioning of President Ellen Johnson that took place in the county to contest **the 2011 presidential election.**



Naomi Campbell

In Guinea a run-off presidential election will hold on Sept. 19 aimed at restoring civilian rule to the West African bauxite producing nation. After a roughly two-month delay to the decisive second round after candidates challenged the results of the initial poll held on June 27.

Central Africa: In **Congo-Kinshasa**, Bosco Ntaganda is a wanted man, under indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes in the northeastern Ituri region where Hague prosecutors allege he played a senior role in the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), a militia group accused of human rights abuses.

In Rwanda President Paul Kagame has said he does not intend to change the country's constitution to extend his last presidential term beyond 2017 and has confirmed that this would be his last Term in Power.

The **Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights** (NCHR) has said that the rights of candidates in the recently concluded presidential elections and their supporters were properly observed. In a press statement released by the commission's president, Sylvie Zainabu Kayitesi, the candidates campaigned with mutual respect and that there was no mudslinging.



Rwandans voted last week in a presidential election that opponents of President Paul Kagame denounced as a sham. President Kagame faces three other candidates believed to have ties to his ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front.

East & the horn of Africa: In **Sudan** leaders from northern and southern **Sudan** are holding negotiations on how to run the country after next year's referendum that will determine south becoming an independent state. Unresolved issues between the two sides -- including demarcating the border, citizenship and the sharing of oil revenues and Nile water resources.

The United Nations humanitarian chief is demanding **Sudanese** authorities allow aid agencies into a camp in **Darfur** that has been closed off to aid workers for nearly two weeks. Meanwhile the **United Nations** says two police advisors working with the joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping mission in **Darfur** have been kidnapped.

According to reports the United Nations and other international organizations will increase their national and international staff presence in **Somalia** within the next two months, according to a senior U.N. official, as the al-Qaida-linked **Somali** insurgent group al-Shabab banned three Christian aid organizations from operating in areas under its control.

African Union chairman Jean Ping recently wrote to the **South African** government, imploring it to contribute troops for the **Somalia** mission. The South African cabinet is due to meet and consider deploying its forces to bolster the African Union troops in Mogadishu.

Kenya: In a referendum held during the first week of August, voters overwhelmingly approved a new constitution, replacing one that was drafted during the country's colonial era.

Southern Africa: **Madagascar's** President Andry Rajoelina has signed an agreement with least 90 minor political parties' settings dates for a constitutional referendum, and parliamentary and presidential elections. But the pact was rejected by the country's main opposition leaders.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: **Ghana** signed a cooperative agreement with International Organization for Migration (IOM), to create a platform for IOM to address migration challenges in the country which would efficiently and effectively prosecute its agenda of offering support to migrants to and from **Ghana** to ensure legal migration conforms to objectives of government to secure and protect the rights of citizens.

In **Nigeria** former military President, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida has appealed to the Federal Government to release former Chief Security Officer to the late Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha, Major Hamza Al-Mustapha who has been in detention for the past 12 years.

Meanwhile full-body scanners have been installed at **Nigeria's** four international airports and are being used selectively," according to the Director-General of Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA).

Government ministers from across **Africa** gathered last week to address what is being called "the scandal of invisibility." Countless millions of Africans are living their lives and dying without leaving a trace.

Central Africa: As **Rwanda's** president Paul Kagame heads for election victory, the government is reviewing its genocide ideology law after being accused of limiting freedom of speech within the country by the Media.

According to the Human Rights Watch the **Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)** has abducted more than 697 adults and children in a largely unreported campaign in the **Central African Republic** and the neighboring **Bas Uele district of northern Democratic Republic of Congo** over the past 18 months.

Southern Africa: **South African Media Group** to Fight Proposed Regulation of Journalists; deputy chairperson of the group said her organization will do everything possible to stop a proposed media tribunal to regulate the work of journalists.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: **Cameroon's** environment minister accused a Dutch ship of dumping toxic waste off the Cameroonian coast. Environmentalists say western firms treat **Africa** as a "dustbin" for their dangerous waste.

In Ghana: President John Evans Atta Mills has noted that the 54 per cent of payments made by the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) on the cost of medicine for clients is unsustainable.

The National AIDS Commission of **Liberia** launched the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework 2010-2014 at the Monrovia City Hall. A framework for efforts aimed at preventing the spread of HIV and mitigating its impact on society.

Ivorian cocoa farmers battle disease at season end due to heavy rain despite their careful husbandry, they still got black pod spread by the rain.

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan announced plans for a \$3.5 billion national electricity grid to be jointly financed with the private sector and development agencies.

Nigeria and other countries bordering **Northern Cameroon** hit by cholera outbreak - are at the risk of the disease, the United Nations warned. The current outbreak in **Cameroon**, which began in May, has



now recorded more than 2,000 confirmed cases, with fatality rate of over 13 per cent, which is considered extremely high.

Also in **Nigeria** Environmental issues, the **Federal Government** signed a Joint Venture Agreement with Messrs Titan Projects Nigeria Limited and the Rivers State government for the provision of Integrated Waste Management Services for the Oil and Gas Industry operations in the **Niger Delta**.

Indian Energy giant, ONGC Mittal Energy Ltd (OMEL) has concluded plans to build a 180, 000 barrel per day capacity refinery in **Nigeria**.

Security agencies have impounded 400 doses of African Horse Sickness **Vaccine** allegedly believed to have been illegally imported into the country from **South Africa** by the **Lagos Polo Club**.

Central Africa: In **Burundi** HIV-Positive people are struggling for treatment of Opportunistic Infections and are failing to obtain drugs to treat opportunistic infections since a system to provide them with free medical care has come to an end.

Southern Africa: According to a report by the “national crop and food security situation” of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP), **Zimbabwe's** production of maize, its staple food, has improved "significantly", but the country is still food insecure and about 1.68 million people will require assistance in the first quarter of 2011.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: In **Ghana** the annual inflation rate dropped marginally by 0.6 per cent to close at 9.46 per cent in July, up from 9.52 per cent in June. The drop was the 13th in the series after it peaked at 20.74 per cent in June 2009 bringing the respective monthly change between June and July 2010 to 0.82 per cent, which was lower than 1.57 per cent recorded between May and June 2010.

Meanwhile the Vice President John Dramani Mahama expressed optimism that **Ghana's** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would rise above seven per cent by the end of this year.

Also Vice President John Dramani Mahama called for a partnership between the governments of **Ghana** and Iran to tap the rich experience of Iran in oil exploration and production.

Cameroon's crude oil production averaged about 66,000 barrels per day during the first half of 2010, marking an 11.5 percent drop from the same period a year ago, according to the state oil company SNH.

Nigeria: Fresh facts have emerged on the financial position of **Nigerian Stock Exchange** (NSE) showing that it recorded a loss of N2.723 billion as at September 30, 2009, according to information gotten from the management accounts. Also the Value of equities at the stock market has plunged by N173 billion or 2.7 per cent in the last three days as efforts by the Interim Administrator appointed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to stabilize the stock market, Mr. Emmanuel Ikhazoboh, are yet to yield the desired results.

The **Nigerian** Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) lamented that the nation was losing over \$5 million daily- that is, N750 million daily, from the non-participation of **Nigerians** in the lifting of crude oil in the nation's oil industry.

The Republic of **South Korea**, has expressed the need to expand trade with **Nigeria**, which was drastically affected by the global economic meltdown, just as it plans to double her Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa by 2012.



Central Africa: **Rwandan** mining companies that comply with internationally accepted standards are to be graded and issued with a certificate of compliance by the end of this year in an effort to improve the performance of the sector. Mining is one of the top sources of government revenue.

South Africa: The South African government has increased its offer to more than one million public service workers who are threatening to strike. The government increased its monthly housing allowance offer to \$95 from about \$87. But the government did not change its pay raise offer of 7 percent.

East & the horn of Africa: Civil aviation authorities in **Djibouti** have denied the **Ethiopian Airlines** permits for operation flights last week, reliable sources disclosed. **Ethiopia's** national flag carrier has subsequently suspended its scheduled passenger flights to **Djibouti** indefinitely, as of August 1, 2010.

Foreign and domestic investments in **Uganda** reached some **Ush6.5trillion (\$3.5b)** in 2009, a number that was higher than the investment growth that was seen in 2008, an investment survey carried out last year has indicated.

Prices of foodstuff in **Zanzibar** have increased sharply with the advent of the Holy month of Ramadan during which the Muslim faithful fast, a move by unscrupulous traders to take advantage of Ramadan and easily scoop big profits.

The **African Union** has commenced a process that would lead to the setting up of a regional space agency. The agency, to be known as the *African Space Agency*, would focus on the development of common space policy for the continent. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

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

WESTERN EUROPE

Political Issues

It appears the **European Socialist Party** is losing grip of popular support as demonstrated by the last EU election. In a bid to reorganize itself, the party is proposing to adopt U.S-style primaries for electing EU commission president.

Economic Issues

The austerity measures unfolding in the **UK** is a clear indication that the British government is not undertaking anything novel from the trend across Europe. The new **British** government has planned cutting

public spending and closing up certain sections of the economic sectors. Like elsewhere in Europe, **Britons** are not that comfortable with the austerity plans.

Solidarity is yet to gain full ground within the European Union, the *Greek* financial crisis gives a testimony to that fact and the recent retraction by the *Slovak* government not to contribute in the whole €10 billion EU-IMF package for weak economies like **Greek** further enunciate the situation. Meanwhile, Brussels is geared at cutting of its bureaucratic finances, a demand by member states, asking Brussels to undertake austerity measures as seen across **Europe**.

Despite enjoying the financial bailout of EU-IMF and keeping austerity measures, the **Greek** economy is reported to be shrinking and faces 12% of unemployment

Meanwhile the **German** economy was reported with a surge, a record high since the reunification of the **Germany**. The growth of the **German** industrial sectors and competitiveness within the Eurozone contribute to soar. Economy growth is also true for **Spain** but punctuated by pessimism due to fluctuation in the economy. European market however recorded a drop in shares.



Social/Humanitarian Issue

Britain's advertising watchdog has banned the anti-terrorism advert asking neighbors to be vigilant and to report people acting inwardly in the neighborhood to police. The ban is intended to curb erroneous reporting and unnecessary harassment of good citizens.

Still in **Britain**, the immunity granted to security officers to treat suspected terrorist wickedly will no more be condoned. The **British** Crown Prosecution Service has ordered the trial of **Scotland** Yard policemen who criminally maltreated Babar Ahmad, suspected for terrorism.

Hamburg authorities finally shut down Masjid Taiba in Hamburg, known previously as Al Quds mosque, purportedly used by 9/11 attackers. Hamburg intelligence suggests it is grooming **Germans** for violence.

Tariq Ramadan could not prove himself right before the court, as an *Amsterdam* court threw out his wrongful dismissal lawsuit. The court observed that Ramadan does not recognize the gravity of his programme aired by an *Iranian* channel on the public.

The trouble of Google, the Internet giant is yet to be over in **Europe** over its Street view programme. **Germans** are opting out from Google's programme on the ground their privacy is not protected by the programme.

The expulsion and destruction of *Roma's* houses from **France** further rings the bell that troubles for Roma are unfinished. The extent to the expulsion plan will favor **French** President Nicolas Sarkozy politically is an unanswered question.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The **Portuguese** government is diverting attention more closely to renewable resources as a way of reducing dependence on fossil fuel and creating a cleaner environment. The oil spill at the *Gulf of Mexico* is making governments to having a rethink over fossil fuel and at the same time facilitating a diversified energy source.

Geostrategic Issues

The **European Union** is on the verge of reconsidering its relations with Pakistan. The bloc is expected to boost economic ties with Pakistan by adding Islamabad into its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme but quality production will determine Pakistan's eligibility to the scheme. Meanwhile the bloc has not closed its eye towards humanitarian aid for flood victims.

An international peace mediation workshop was recently organized by the European Commission (EC) and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) in Jakarta to promote cooperation between ASEAN and the European Union (EU) on conflict mediation and prevention in the region.

The plan by the **British** government to cut military budget cannot be disconnected from the wave of economic situation and budget cut across Europe. The proposal comes amid the announcement of U.S Defense Secretary planning to reduce Pentagon's spending.

As *EU-Russia* relation moves around mutual understanding, it was a surprise for the bloc to know that Russia has stationed S-300 ground-to-air missiles in Georgia's disputed Abkhazia region. Both parties are not in mood of brawl but Russia's action suggest Moscow still want its hegemony recognize in the neighborhood

RUSSIA & ITS NEIGHBORS

Political Issues

Dagestan-Russian back government has planed to initiate militia within the region to combat Mujahideen with the aim of reducing cost of using either Dagestan's police or **Russia** forces. The militias are to be inducted on contract basis among youth wanting better life option.

Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski has been sworn in, in an inaugural punctuated with pledge of promoting sound economy and boosting solidarity among various political parties and the most important institutions of the state such as the government, the parliament.

It is the first step of success for the **Czech Republic's** centre-right government led by Prime Minister Petr Necas, to have won a confidence vote in parliament and a parliamentary approval to cut budget and reform pensions and health care.

With the increasingly **Belarus-Russia** misgiving, Moscow is being tempted to meddle in **Belarus'** forthcoming election by supporting a candidate against incumbent Aleksander Lukashenko. Political meddling could also be true for **Moldova**, where the joint action of **Russia** and **Ukraine** aimed to bring breakaway province of Transdnistria under control along with the rest of **Moldova**.

Economic Issues

According to the Federal Statistics Service in Moscow, **Russian** gross domestic product grew 5.2 percent from a year earlier, compared with 2.9 percent growth in the January-March period.

Russia's battered auto industry could have a cause to thank the government due to the additional funds infused into the sector to supporting traders trading in domestically made cars aged 10 years or older. The cash for clunkers programme is expected to balloon the car industry to 15% growth during this year.

EU and **Ukraine** are expecting to start the next round of negotiations on creating a free trade zone in early October. The two sides will discuss issues related to access of goods, particularly agricultural products, customs tariffs, domestic support of agriculture, sanitary and protection of intellectual property rights.

Despite the need of IMF, the **Ukrainian** Communist party is questioning government further relation with IMF on the ground that existing IMF conditions are affecting the people.

The Robin Hood tax championed by the **Hungarian** government has been set rolling. Huge tax is demanded from the rich industrial sectors, so as to pay the taxes of the poor, a measure for closing the deficit gap of the economy. Prime Minister Viktor Orban, whose party won recent election called on the country to



ride itself from the claws of IMF and has planned not to further cut budget has demanded by the financial institution. Doing this will be following Malaysia and *Turkey's* way when both countries rejected IMF in order to stabilize their economies.

Polish commissioner in charge of the EU budget, Janusz Lewandowski, has said new proposal regarding extending the EU Tax structure by levying new taxes on the financial sector will definitely boost the EU revenue sources about €30 billion to €40 billion a year. *France, UK and Germany* have been opposing the plans for creating an EU tax.

Czech economy got a positive rating from S&P, as an economy having a stable debt with a sixth-highest investment grade. Meanwhile, **Czech Republic** has rejected *North Korea's* mode for debt payment. The Communist state wants Czech to write off lion share of its debt and ready to pay \$10 million in debt in form of ginseng.

The visit of International Monetary Fund (IMF) to Latvia is productive for the latter as IMF announced to provide Latvia with another loan tranche of 105.8 million Euros (135.6 million US dollars).

According to Statistics **Estonia**, gross domestic product (GDP) grew 3.5 per cent from April to June compared to the same period last year, putting Estonia behind only *Sweden* among European Union members in its growth rate.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

There has been an increasingly demand for a change in **Russia** with particular reference to its political and social structure. During the last week **Russian** Human Rights activists were apprehended by security agents for staging anti-government protest. Will the arrest further spell out the view that government does not entertain alternative view?

Russian marks ten years since the Kursk submarine disaster, analyses are pouring in on the eventual cause of the disaster with a more striking account that the accident could not be disconnected from the Cold War arms struggle between US and **Russia**.



Russia is unhappy with the U. S. Department of State's Country Report on Terrorism 2009 covering Georgia, the report was rejected by **Russia** as biased accusing **Russia** of exporting terrorism while fell short to mention Tbilisi's dealing with terrorist groups in the North Caucasus region.

The **Hungarian** oppositions have rejected government's huge influence on country's media, calling for a democratic media institution in a new Globalized world.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

After a protracted construction of the first light water nuclear plant by **Russia** for *Iran*, the former said the plant is completed and ready to be loaded with nuclear fuel. The announcement has garnered another wave of hostility and suspicion from the West.

Russian wildfire accidents have caused the economy \$15 Billion, hugely affected its grain production and made the government prohibits export of the cash crop. The prohibition is causing food prices hysteria across Europe and among **Russia** neighbors. But the authority cautioned that export is possible only if the grain harvest reaches 65 million tons.

The **Russian** government understands the extent to which the wildfire has havocked the economy; therefore promised to grant \$1.15 billion in state support, coupled with that is the \$4.5 million donation from the United States and 100,000 Euros of assistance delivered by **Estonia**.

. **Russia-Belarus** argument is resurfacing yet on Belarus nuclear plant. Minsk wants transparency from **Russia** to build the plant on its soil; otherwise **Belarus** will be considering other investor as China has shown interest.

Geostrategic Issues

Unhappy with its moribund defense hardware and system, **Russian** government is increasing its military spending and that is manifesting in the latest military crafts and hardware ready to be showcase by the **Russian** defense ministry.

Reciprocity is demanded by Belarus before it could recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Lukashenko believes **Russia** is not ready to help out on the eventual consequences of such recognition as relations with U.S, EU and CIS could be strained.

Georgia is yet to consider **Abkhazia** as an independent state, thus **Abkhazia** and its waters are considered as part of **Georgian** territory. Therefore the plan by **Russia** to help Abkhazia build up sea border patrols around the Black Sea will be nothing less than an affront to **Georgia** sovereignty.

US/CANADA

Political Issues

The on-going election primaries in the **U.S** are portrayed as a challenge between the establishment and change vanguard. The two larger political parties have been politicizing everything possible in a bid to woo as many voters, come midterm elections.

As Defence Secretary Robert Gates pushes for a cut in Pentagon spending, he is more likely to meet the irritation of the Congress and the Department bureaucracy. Obama's administration welcomes the proposal as an alternative for funding the two exhausted wars. The cut will affect many sections and functions will be eliminated or reassigned.

George Friedman argues in his article "Arizona, Borderlands and U.S.-Mexican Relations" published in Stratfor that U.S-Mexican relation comes a long way. The **U.S** might have militarily defeated Mexico, but the trend of both legal and illegal immigration across the border from Mexico into **United States** is a cultural reconquest by the Mexican of the American society.



Political fluctuation in **Canada** puts both ruling conservative and liberal opposition at a weak end. Having a majority vote is the benchmark of ruling the parliament solely, which both parties do not have. The conservative is reviewing its plan of converting **Canadian** mandatory census for to voluntary form. The proposed change has been a setback and brought the government under fire. The government believes the change will protect privacy, but rejected by the people.

Economic Issues

The slow pace of economic recovery recorded by the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee could be dangerous for the Obama's administration and democrat party come midterm elections. Americans are not satisfied with their level of joblessness and low level spending.

The interconnectedness of global economy remains undisputed as global market saw a drop due to slow pace of the **American** economy and the cooling of *Chinese* economy. The economic concern accentuates the fear of how long global recovery will take before stabilization.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

As tension mounts across **American** states over intended public visibility of Muslim, the trend appears to be a crossover syndrome from Europe where similar tension particularly on veiled women has increased more recently. Americans are divided on this debate and the question of singling out a particular faith is surfacing.

A **Canadian** judge rejected Taser International Inc's bid to quash the findings of a government inquiry that said stun guns could be lethal and which urged police to restrict their use.

The recent action by the **Canadian** government on immigrant ship destined for **Canada** is said to be hyper as the government failed to ascertain the authenticity and exigent need of the boaters before rejecting them.

Geostrategic Issues

Some members of the **U.S** Congress are against the decision of sending military assistance to the Lebanese army on ground that it might end up with Hezbollah. This heightens *Lebanese's* grievance that Washington is playing an unfair game simply because of *Israeli* involvement.

It was seen as a fulfillment of campaign promise, but the policy of *Iraq* withdrawal is expected to affect the war torn country. *Iraq* is believed not to be ripe enough for withdrawal owing to the numerous issues contending the country and as a former *Iraqi* leader observed, **American** withdrawal will amount to leaving the country to wolves. Similarly, **American** military officers in *Afghanistan* are worried for any troop withdrawal because situation in the country does not warrant such troop reduction.

LATIN AMERICA

Political Issues

Brazilian presidential aspirant, Mr. Serra is taking a strong stance against current policy adopted by Lula's government. Serra from the PSDB party wants **Brazil** to keep off from meddling in **Venezuela-Colombia** imbroglio and in U.S-Iran political standoff. This statement came amid the intention of President Lula to visit Bogota and Caracas in a bid to foster multilateral cooperation, although Lula believes FARC issue is **Colombia's** internal matter and neighbors should not be thrown blames, **Brazil** though said it will help combat FARC if requested.



Newly elected president of **Colombia** Mr. Santos is calling for a peaceful neighborhood and co-existence with **Venezuela** despite their current tension and also ready for negotiation with FARC rebel if the latter will renounce violence. Santos' inauguration was an avenue to resolve many pending issues within the region. It was an occasion graced by regional leaders and *China* was also represented.

Mexican President Calderon plans to intensify effort on money laundering along fighting drug cartel whose sphere of influence is also visible in other illicit businesses. Meanwhile as violence exacerbates and most **Mexicans** get more tensed, sizeable no. of **Mexicans** according to PEW survey support military action against drug cartels. Meanwhile former President Fox insinuated that **Mexico's** drug problem can be solved if the drug is legalized.

Retired **Venezuelan** military generals are to face conspiracy trial soon because they questioned the uncautioned presence of **Cuban** military in **Venezuelan** strategic military institutions, a view rejected by the government as baseless.

President Chavez continues to make headway in his twitter account, garnering followers daily. Chavez believes that with the social network his message can travel wide.

Economic Issues

Brazil's finance ministry is forecasting a growth of the economy around 5.7%, the economy has experience an rapid growth more recently and drew world attention.

Colombian President Santos has alot on his shoulder to accomplished, especially lifting the economy from its current stage. Crisis with **Venezuela** and internal skirmishes are factors hampering **Colombian** economy, all of which Santos must face.

Venezuela claims its economy is slowly walking out from recession as unemployment rate declines and the economy is rebounding.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Chile's copper reserve is over 200 million tons, almost one third of the world's reserve. But the recent accident at one of its mines killing 22 persons made **Chile's** president shorten her **Colombia** visit for inauguration of the **Colombian** presidential.

Opening a new dimension to the tension between both countries, an attorney from *Bogota* is reported to have filed a case on behalf of victims of FARC against President Hugo Chavez at International Court of Justice for abetting FARC, accused of killing many **Colombians**.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Argentine government plans to increase its level of soy production, being the crop largest exporter, **Argentina** will also be increasing its wheat production due to wheat scarcity in global market.

Argentina and **Bolivia** have entered into an energy agreement allowing the latter to supply 27 million cubic natural gas daily to northern Argentina province of Salta.

As the world faces the menace of global warming and climate change, every government hopes to make policy that will reduce the threat. Hence, the **Brazilian** government announces a 49% reduction in deforestation, an achievement tied to better environmental policies.

Mexican government is increasing its effort to combat health problems menacing the country with a support from *China*. At the same time, **Mexico** wants the world to pay serious attention to environment related issue as global warming and climate worries the globe.

Geostrategic Issues

There is an increasingly scope for growth and cooperation between **South America** and *Africa*. Both continents are re-channeling their resource towards the progress of global south and the recent bi-continental summit held in Venezuela heightened that prospect.

Venezuela's bid for MERCOSUR membership is yet unfulfilled due to the rejection by the **Paraguayan** parliament arguing against Chavez's aggressive policy in the region. **Venezuela** wants the U.S ambassador to Caracas be changed due to his interference in domestic issue.

AUSTRALASIA

Political Issues

As the **Australian** nation prepares for knife-edge elections, the ruling labour and liberal opposition parties wrestle over the best domestic and foreign policies for **Australia**. According to polls, the outcome of the election could result to the first hung parliament in 70 years.

The ruling party sees China and Asia-Pacific region as focal point, while the opposition believes Canberra should reduce reliance on Beijing and plans to sell uranium to *India* if elected even though it is against **Australia's** policy to sell its substance to country outside the NPT.

China is calling for a new level of military relations with **Australia** with the aim of fortifying the pacific and Asia in general; although such level of military ties might not go down well with the U.S.

Economic Issues

Australia economy was one of the least affected by the recent past global financial crisis. The economy was fortified and quickly recovered along with other larger Asian economies. Nonetheless, Qantas, **Australia's** largest airliner reported a profit drop, but is still optimistic owing to its financial backup.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Australian Labour government under ex-PM Rudd Kevin made a landmark apology to the aborigine community for ills done against them, despite the apology according to Amnesty International the aborigine communities are still lagging behind. The plight of this community is said to be missing in the election talk as parties woo voters. §

