

NEWS WRAP

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Australia has 500,000 aborigines, who comprise about 2.5% of the population in jobs, schooling and health care. Compared to other Australians, their life expectancy is less by eighteen years. The Australian prime minister, Mr John Howard has proposed in May 07, that all aborigines learn English, to be “absorbed in the mainstream”. Year 2007 marks the 40th anniversary of a constitutional referendum to end discrimination against the aborigines. But the Australian prime minister has not offered any symbolic national apology for past mistakes. He feels that the aborigines could shame the economic boom through market-based reforms, like giving opportunities to the aborigines to buy their own houses, on community-owned land. This may be a step forward, as community settlements in remote “homelands”, like Arnhem Land, segregate their inhabitants from the benefits of the mainstream economy.

A few of the aboriginal communities are prospering as centres of aboriginal art. Before the Europeans arrived in 1788, the aborigines lived for 60,000 years in the jungle bush. Now only a minority of the aborigines live in the homelands. Larger number of aborigines are flourishing in the market economy; and aborigines are producing indigeneous pilots.



Somalia’s president Abdullahi Yusuf and prime minister Mohamed Gedi are disinclined to talk to the moderate Islamists opposition. They are trying to scuttle the powerful Hawiye clan, which is predominant in Mogadishu. During March and April 07, Ethiopian troops backing Somalia’s transitional government razed whole districts, and killed over a thousand Shabab fighters, the Islamic Courts’Zealous armed wing. Human rights groups allege that most of the 1670 dead are civilians. Again, during March and April 07, about 400,000 Somalis fled the capital, Mogadishu, as Somalia continues in a peril fraught state. The Shabab (“youth”) have adopted Iraqi style insurgency tactics, hit-and-run raids, land mines and use of suicide bombers. Imitating the al-Qaeda cell system, the Shabab have become a Terrorist group.

Uganda has 1500 peace keepers in Mogadishu, as part of an African Union Mission, meant to replace the Ethiopians. Other African forces have not yet arrived, and the Somalis consider the Ugandans as ‘invaders’. While Christian-Muslim relations are peaceful in Ethiopia, the al-Qaeda has been inciting a ‘jihad’ against “Christian” Ethiopia, and has been nurturing Terrorist cells on the Swahili coast, specially in Kenya. USA already despatched special forces to Somalia, to hunt for al-Qaeda Terrorists. While Mogadishu remains too dangerous for any public meeting, chances of any National conference of clan elders remain remote.



A recent study by USA’s National Academy of Sciences claims that world-wide emissions of greenhouse gas grew by 3% annually between 2000-2004, compared to an annual increase of 1-1% in the 1990s, Emissions from India and China have virtually doubled since 1990. The joint statements issued after the G-8 and G-5 National meetings in Heiligen-damm, an 18th Century resort on Germany’s Baltic coast, have noted that adaptations to climate change, would be major challenge for all countries. The German

Chancellor wants the rise in the world's temperature arising from global warning, not to exceed 2°C. She wants all countries to reduce their 1990 levels of greenhouse gas emissions by half by 2050. USA feels that concerned governments should promote investments in greener technologies, permitting the economies free growth, while producing lesser emissions. Japan has a plan of reducing global emissions by 50% before 2050. Britain aims to reduce global emission by 60%. The European Union has agreed to reduce emissions by 20% by 2020, and further reductions to 30% if non-European countries make similar commitments. UN's Panel on Climate change has recommended a price of \$20 to \$50 per ton of CO₂, which would start stabilizing CO₂ concentrations to safe levels, by 2020-30.

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