

# Helping fight deluge

**FROM PAGE 16**  
reputation and service," said Runa.  
**THE HOSPITAL**  
RahmatAli was waiting for the doctor's call outside the eye clinic anchored at the Fakirer char in Sundarganj upazila of the district. He came from Ghagua of sadar upazila for the treatment of cataract.  
"I cannot work in the field as I cannot see the grass. I have been jobless for the last one year. I heard about the cheap and good treatment of this hospital. So, I have come here," said Rahmat.  
Friendship goes from char to char with its satellite clinic service every three months, said hospital staff Enam. Around 50 physicians and surgeons come to the hospital every year to volunteer, he told journalists sitting in the river ambulance on Tuesday.  
When a patient is found in a critical condition, the river ambulance—a powerboat—is used to bring the patient to the hospital.  
There are as many as 150 chars in the seven districts the Jamuna river is flowing through—from bordering Kurigram to Sirajganj where thousands of people are living without minimum facilities of healthcare and education.  
**OTHER PROGRAMMES**  
In 2006, Friendship established 10 schools in 10 chars and 960 children are now receiving education at these schools. However, hundreds of kids are still deprived of education due to lack of schools.  
"As many char people move from one char to another every year, we

have satellite school programme. When people move from one char to another, our school also moves with them," said a staff.  
Friendship is presently working in 30 chars. But Runa said, "We are planning to expand our work to some more areas. We have a programme to build 1,300 houses in different chars this season."  
Friendship also took initiative to improve the economic condition of the char people.  
The NGO formed a committee comprising char dwellers and gave them each Tk 5 thousand without any interest. With the money the char dwellers grew crops on khas land and repaid Friendship's money. They have even some savings now, said a char dweller.  
"After the floods in 2004, we had almost nothing for around three days. Now we are better off," said Md Rafiqul Islam, secretary of Friendship Char Develop Committee of Khamar Kamarjani char.  
"We do not do micro-credit and we do not make any profit. What we did is sharing risk with them and the result is really amazing," said Runa.  
This year Friendship distributed relief among the people who did not receive any government or non-government relief.  
Friendship is going to launch a rural social education programme with the help of another NGO, Manusher Jonno, to teach the char people about their rights.

## Ammo haul

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Russell Sangma, an indigenous youth, was arrested in this connection. Russell was produced before a Sherpur court on September 14 and the court placed him on the remand.  
He was sent to jail September 18 after the five-day remand he was placed on expired, police sources said.  
Russell is the son of Bhupen Sangma, an Indian national hailing from Patua in Ratpara district of Assam, police sources added.  
Sources say police are yet to identify the main guilty party, as Russell did not confess his involvement with the ammunition stockpiling or name anyone during interrogation.  
Russell was arrested at the house of late Khokan Marak. When the ammunition was recovered, his widow Khiju Marak was not present at the house as she stays with her son in Dhaka, police sources said. Russell had been living at the house for a year.

# Arms, bombs seized in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Detective branch of police seized a pistol, three cocktails, some bomb-making materials and 11 bottles of phensidyl from Chatra Bazar under Pirganj upazila on Thursday night.  
Acting on a tip-off, the detectives raided the house of Farman Ali at Chatra Bazar at about 9:00 pm and recovered the gun, bomb-making materials and phensidyl.  
They also arrested three people including a union parishad (UP) member. The arrestees are Farman Ali, Harun-or-Rashid and Abdur Rahim, member of Chatra Union Parishad.

# Prothom Alo

**FROM PAGE 1**  
newspaper's office by removing barricades put up there by the law enforcers. The police action left 20 Hizbut Tahrir activists injured, five of whom were treated in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.  
As the dispersed marchers tried to regroup, police charged batons again dispersing them completely in only 15 minutes.  
During the melee vehicular traffic on several nearby roads remained suspended causing sufferings for commuters.  
Activists of the five organisations had started to gather at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque after the Juma prayer yesterday carrying banners and leaflets and chanting slogans.  
The demonstrators also burnt several copies of the Prothom Alo, and effigies of its editor and the publisher.  
After holding a brief rally at the entrance of the mosque, activists of the Islamist organisations marched through the roads of Purana Pallan and Baitul Mukarram Mosque area for some time, after which the activists of four organisations, except Hizbut Tahrir, dispersed.  
Hizbut Tahrir activists however started to march towards the newspaper's office calling pedestrians over the bullhorns to join them.  
The march was trailed by a long traffic jam stretching from Pallan via the Press Club to Shahbagh intersection.  
Since early morning security measures had been heightened surrounding the offices of the Prothom Alo and The Daily Star. Police were deployed at several strategic points circling the offices, and barbed wire police barricades were set up at several points. Additional police were also deployed at the entrances of the offices.  
Rapid Action Battalion members were seen patrolling the roads surrounding the two offices on motorbikes.  
A tense situation had prevailed in the area until the Juma prayer ended and the fasting Muslims returned home in peace.  
Vehicles going towards Bangla Motor from Farmgate used alternative roads as police had blocked the stretch of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue between Karwan Bazar intersection and Bangla Motor intersection during the skirmishes at Shahbagh.  
"We have gathered here to lay a siege to the office of the Prothom Alo as the cartoon hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslims," said Saleh Uddin, who was injured in the police baton charge.  
International Khatme Nabuwat Movement brought out a march in the Tejaon industrial area while Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Mufi

Fazul Haque Amini delivered a long speech during his sermon before the Juma prayer in Boro Katra Mosque of Chakbazar. A protest march was also brought out in the area.  
Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish Chairman Shaikhul Hadith Allama Azizul Haque in a statement said the Saptahik 2000 magazine fuelled the fire already burning in the minds of the Muslims by publishing another 'objectionable piece' in the Eid issue.  
Earlier, Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Khatib Maulana Obaidul Haq on Thursday urged people not to incite tension and not to give rise to any movement in the country centring the cartoon strip.  
The Prothom Alo Editor Matuir Rahman on the same day apologised once again for the inadvertent publication of the cartoon, and urged the Muslims and their clerics to 'forgive the mistake'.  
Meanwhile, UNB reported that in Chittagong yesterday about 2,000 Muslims led by Kazi Fazlul Karim, convener of General Musalli Parishad, tried to bring out a protest march in the port city after holding a condemnation rally on the Andarkilla Mosque premises following the Juma prayer there. But they abandoned the plan at the request of police.  
Security was beefed up around mosques and newsstands in Sylhet. Police arrested three -- Syed Mohidul Islam, Abdullah Al Mahmud, and Mushfiqur Rahman -- students of Shahjalal University of Engineering and Technology, while they were distributing leaflets in front of the shrine of Shajalal (Rh).  
Our correspondent from Barisal reported that Imam Maulana Abdul Kadir of the local Baitul Mukarram Mosque, Maulana Sharfuddin of Saw Road Mosque demanded arrest of the editor of Aalpin and the Prothom Alo.  
However, due to the vigilance of law enforcers in uniform and in plain clothes, no demonstration could take place after the prayer.  
The cartoon was published on Monday, prompting the government to confiscate all copies of Aalpin's 431st issue available on the market containing the cartoon strip titled 'Naam' [name] on page six, while the authorities of the newspaper apologised for the publication of the satire, and dismissed a sub-editor in connection with it.  
Law enforcement agencies arrested Arifur Rahman, the cartoonist, on September 20.

## Both BNP groups

**FROM PAGE 1**  
In another development, Hannan yesterday alleged that Bhuiyan has gone to Singapore to scheme something evil in the name of treatment.  
"How come he has yet to confirm where he is receiving treatment in Singapore?" he questioned.  
Dismissing the allegation as baseless, ZA Khan, a pro-reform leader, yesterday said Bhuiyan's Singapore visit has nothing to do with politics.  
Talking to the reporters at Bhuiyan's Gulshan residence, he said their leader is expected to return home Saturday.  
Hannan Shah also said, "Only a handful of so-called reformist leaders who have failed to gain enough support in favour of their reform proposals have gone to Singapore to plan their next move."  
He claimed that a number of those siding with Bhuiyan have told him that they were in the pro-reform camp only to save their skin. "Many will leave him [Bhuiyan] as soon as the restrictions on politics are lifted completely," he added.  
Hannan also said that as of yesterday none of the pro-reform leaders could say who their chairpersons was and who among the central committee members were on their side.

## 8 die

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Motalab, 65, and his wife Fatema Begum, 55, of Atadi village of Arahazar upazila died while being taken to hospital.  
Family members of victim Suruj Miah of Duptara village said he was suspicious about the fish and should check them first himself. Suruj also died while being taken to hospital.  
Other victims are Serajul Islam, 60, and Nure Alam, 22, Manir, 32, and Shariful, 15, of Baliapara and Bhulta of the same upazila.  
Muslim Ali, 20, of Toltoba village said his mother cooked the fish and he and his three sisters ate them yesterday morning. "My sister Alpana, 10, died immediately after eating the fish," he said.  
Muslim and his two sisters, who were not affected by the poison of the fish, came to DMCH as they were panicked.  
A DMCH doctor said they had collected blood samples of the patients to test the kind of poison.

A Muslim and his two sisters, who were not affected by the poison of the fish, came to DMCH as they were panicked.

## T20 World Cup

**FROM PAGE 1**  
while Yuvraj missed the tie due to tendonitis. Australia have also suffered injury blows in the form of captain Ricky Ponting and all-rounder Shane Watson, both having been ruled out of the tournament with hamstring injuries.  
The first semifinal though will be a battle of will as an unpredictable Pakistan side always springs a surprise or two. One of them has been Misbahul Haq who, at the age of 33, has surprised all by starring in the tournament. A victory for Pakistan would probably hinge on Shahid Afridi's performance in the match as he has shone with bat and ball.  
For New Zealand, it will be skipper Daniel Vettori who will have to lead from the front. Batting would revolve around Craig McMillan and big-hitting all-rounder Jacob Oram, although the latter has a finger injury.  
Meanwhile, Bangladesh will return home from Cape Town tomorrow.

## CA leaves

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The CA will address the UN General Assembly on September 27. In his statement, the CA will call for UN's central role in ensuring development and expansion of the peace-keeping activities.  
He will elaborate the background of his government's takeover, reform activities and the roadmap to the general election.  
This year's assembly will focus on climate change, financing development, implementing the UN's counter-terrorism strategy, and strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).  
During his weeklong visit, The CA will attend a reception to be hosted by US President George Bush in New York and hold an exclusive meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.  
On the sidelines, Fakhruddin will hold bilateral meetings with some heads of government, including the prime minister of Italy, and the presidents of Afghanistan and Czech Republic.  
He will deliver lectures at Asia Society and Columbia University and attend a reception to be hosted by the Bangladeshi community.  
Besides, the CA will give interviews to the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, APTN, CNN and VOA.

## Musharraf

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Taj replaces Ashfaq Kiyani, who is a strong contender for the top army post should Musharraf step down.  
Musharraf says he will be sworn in as a civilian before his current term as president ends on November 15, but officials say privately he is likely to quit the army within days of the vote.  
Analysts say he is keen to appoint a loyalist as his successor to ensure he himself does not fall victim to any military intervention when he becomes a civilian leader.  
Musharraf also faces an escalating threat from the al-Qaeda network, with Osama bin Laden calling on Muslims in Pakistan to wage holy war against his government in a new audio message issued Thursday.  
Bin Laden declared al-Qaeda's intention to retaliate for the blood spilled by "champions of Islam," in the new recording produced by the terror network's media arm As-Sahab and monitored by the US-based SITE Intelligence Group.  
Both Pakistan's military and the United States have dismissed the message.

# Dhaka to push

**FROMPAGE 1**  
1998 Kyoto Protocol and the treaty's expiry in 2012, has rendered the emission targets in the protocol largely redundant.  
Diplomatic sources add, the likelihood of the European Union pushing for new and more binding emission targets at the Bali UN Climate Change Conference in December, also gives Dhaka greater space to hammer out a long-term and focused diplomatic strategy to mitigate global warming.  
As part of this post-Kyoto regime, Bangladesh will broadly focus on financing adaptation strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as greater frequency of floods, water salinity and inundation of large parts of southern Bangladesh due to rising sea level.  
Foreign Adviser Iftekhhar A Chowdhury yesterday told the media that Dhaka will step up its efforts to secure finances for Bangladesh's government and non-government adaptation programmes.  
Currently, international climate change bodies look to finance the affected countries equally, pitting small island states like Nauru, with a population of around 13,000, on the same adaptation finance schemes as Bangladesh.  
As such, Dhaka's diplomatic efforts during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and in December's UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, will focus on a more proportional, per-capita-based, financial mechanism to support adaptation programmes around the world.  
"The demand for per-capita-based financing of adaptation schemes is a legitimate and ethical issue and we have to push for it," said A Atiqur Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced

Studies, a member of the International Panel on Climate Change, and a coordinator of Monday's high-level meeting.  
He added that an ethical stance is essential for Bangladesh, as this gives it the required leverage as a 'poor man's strategy' in international politics.  
Atiqur also said Bangladesh must also value the concerns of low-lying pacific countries, like Nauru, who are set to be annihilated as a result of climate change.  
The expert also said it is imperative that adaptation strategies are "mainstreamed" into development and government policy, given that a decision to immediately stop emitting all greenhouse gases will not prevent climate change wrecking havoc in Bangladesh.  
Atiqur suggested, Bangladesh's adaptation strategies should be three-pronged and the response needs to be synchronised. Structural adaptation to climate change will involve preparing for more frequent floods, raising houses, roads and embankments in coastal areas.  
Agricultural adaptation strategies will require cultivating greater varieties of rice to mitigate future food insecurities, and autonomous adaptation will require eco-friendly urbanisation, such as preventing the blockage of city drainage systems.  
In May, the key UN intergovernmental body on the environment ended a conference among ministers from around the world without coming up with a document after the European Union blocked the final paper because it did not include targets for energy efficiency or global warming.

# AL for common stance

**FROM PAGE 1**  
group of agitating activists before and after the ALCWC meet on September 12.  
Referring to several names published in different newspapers, Zillur asked Mukul to explain the issue, said insiders.  
Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, who heads the one-member body formed to probe the matter, told Mukul that he did not include names of the culprits in the statement he had submitted to her.  
In response, Mukul said he never mentioned any names regarding who might have instigated the manhandling of the leaders. He said if necessary he would clarify his position again to the press.  
At one point, Tofail said some quarters of the press sought to blow the incident out of proportion.  
Later, talking to the reporters, Mukul said, "If I were given a chance to look at, I think I would be able to pick the culprits out of a line-up."  
The meeting decided that the ALCWC would meet once the party receives the invitation for the EC's talks that began on September 12.  
Earlier, Mukul and Motia Chowdhury had a difference of opinion on when should the ALCWC sit. Contrary to Motia's view, the acting general secretary said they should not fix a date so early. He added that someone from the EC had told him that the party would be invited at least 15 days before the scheduled date for the dialogue.  
**ZILLUR'S BRIEFING**  
At a press briefing after the meet, Zillur said the ALCWC would decide whether to join the EC's dialogue only after receipt of the

invitation.  
Who would represent the party in the event of joining the talks and what would be their strategy—all would be decided at the ALCWC meeting, he added.  
About the 14-party coalition, he said the alliance could not meet due to the ban on indoor politics, but it still remains strong, observed Zillur adding that Tofail has been tasked with keeping in contact with the allies.  
He said the party would mark the 61st birth anniversary of Hasina, also a former premier, on September 28.  
"As our leader continues to languish in detention, we will not hold formal or elaborate programmes; instead we will organise a milad mahfil and offer special prayers at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum, seeking her release and wishing a long life," said the veteran AL leader urging the rank and file across the country to observe the day in similar fashion.  
Renewing his call for release of Hasina, he said, "All our leaders and workers are united in their demand for her release."  
Of the 12 presidium members, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury and Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser were present at the meeting while Amir Hossain Amr, Abdur Razzak and Suranjit Sengupta remain abroad. Syeda Johra Tajuddin could not attend due to illness.  
Alongside the party chief and its General Secretary Abdul Jalil, three presidium members—Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Kazi Zafrullah—are behind bars.

# Load shedding

**FROM PAGE 1**  
10 percent additional capacity above the demand as a reserve margin."  
While the official power demand is shown at 4,250MW, unofficially this demand stands at maximum 5,200MW. But this additional demand is underplayed by not accommodating the full power demand of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) that doubled its distribution network during 2001-06 period.  
"These improvements have been possible because the PDB has become active in the last several months," said he.  
In recent years, the PDB became an organisation devoid of leadership and proper decisions.  
This was because the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the power ministry dictated many technical decisions and imposed many business decisions on the PDB.  
As a result, the PDB chiefs took no decision that could "offend" the powerful ones who were only interested to bag various power deals. Some of these powerful ones included Harris Chowdhury, the then political secretary to the PM.  
"The past PDB chairmen used to forward files to the ministry regarding a decision that he alone could take on a single day. There are records that PDB spent more than a month on a decision that could have been taken instantly," a source pointed out.  
Such indecisiveness also affected various gas sector bodies. Consequently, both power generation and gas supplies became acutely problematic. As gas is the main source of power generation, poor gas supply had caused many power plants to produce less power, while a number of

power plants were generating less power because of technical difficulties.  
The power ministry now encourages the PDB to work independently. The power secretary has given a clear directive that technical decisions will be taken by technical people.  
Subsequently, the PDB chief motivates all technical hands to take decisions. Many decisions are even taken during phone conversations with technical hands.  
"He tells them that he would back them always. Now that's the assurance a leader should give to his subordinates. Earlier, this simple practice was a forgotten norm in the PDB," he noted.  
This encourages technicians to take professional decisions, which, in the recent past, came as orders from higher authorities.  
PDB records show that on Tuesday it produced 4,013MW and on Monday 4,130MW of power. Throughout August, PDB's power production hovered around 3,800MW.  
The PDB broke its 4,000MW barrier on September 15 for the first time in Bangladesh's history.  
"In the past decisions like load management were taken, but they were not implemented. This time, load management or staggering holidays in industrial zones were successfully implemented, thanks to the government's political will. After all, result of all good decisions depend on their proper implementation," observed an official.

## Cartoon issue

**FROM PAGE 16**  
arrested and the publication of the magazine was suspended showing respect to the religious sentiments of the Muslims.  
But marches were brought out violating the emergency power rules 'indicating involvement of evil forces behind it', it added.  
The Workers Party of Bangladesh said nobody has the right to hurt the religious sentiments of the people, but it should also not be acceptable if someone tries to reap political benefits out of such an incident.  
Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal expressed its concern at the government's 'inaction' against the 'efforts of the fundamentalist-communist forces to destabilise the country's communal harmony'.  
Bangladesh Students' Union in a news release said bringing out of marches with provocative and communal slogans are telltale signs of efforts to create an unstable situation and fuelling of communalism in the country.  
Shikha Andolon Mancha in its statement said in a democratic society a problem should be resolved through reasoning, conversations, and compromise. Those who are trying otherwise cannot be considered as democratic forces, it said.  
Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon in a news release however said the daily Prothom Alo have been propagating against Islam, its alem's, mosques, and madrasas 'inciting the imperialists to invade the country'.  
International Khatme Nabuwat Movement Bangladesh said one could be forgiven for mistakes, but one must be punished if he or she commits an offence.  
Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh in a statement also condemned the publication of an article titled Sutanoti Samachar by Daud Haider in the Eid 2007 special edition of Saptahik 2000.

International Khatme Nabuwat Movement Bangladesh said one could be forgiven for mistakes, but one must be punished if he or she commits an offence.

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh in a statement also condemned the publication of an article titled Sutanoti Samachar by Daud Haider in the Eid 2007 special edition of Saptahik 2000.

## Jute mills workers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
funds would be made in the near future, he added.  
The BJMC chairman also directed project directors of the mills to find out the reasons for failing to achieve raw jute purchase targets this season. He warned project directors of stern departmental actions if they failed to purchase at least 50 percent of their targets within this month.  
The seven jute mills have a purchase target of 8,24,131 quintals for this year but only 1,46,658 quintals have so far been purchased, which is 18 percent of the target, the BJMC zonal coordinator said.

## 100 trawlers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
turbulent Bal yesterday afternoon said sea waves rising 12-15 feet high prevented other trawlers and fishermen from returning to the shore.  
Quoting fishermen, Mustafa Chowdhury said trawler "FV Jannat" developed a crack at the hull and quickly took shelter at Pakhindhia char. About 14 fishermen were in the trawler.  
He said the engine of "FV Sathbai Champa" with 13 fishermen went out of order and seen floating in Dubajahaj area. No rescue trawler could approach it due to strong waves in the Bay. The fate of the fishermen could not be known as of 7:00pm yesterday.  
Fishermen of other trawlers saw trawler "FV Bhai Bhai" sinking with 10 fishermen in the deep sea.

## Save bio-diversity

**FROM PAGE 16**  
should be taken to save the island, and public awareness has to be created in this regard, he said. "Commercial use of the island should be stopped."  
Dr Khandkar Rashedul Haque, director general of the Department of Environment, said eco-tourism is possible in the island but it must be regulated keeping the nature unharmed by travellers.  
"Political will is the main factor in this regard," he said. Influential people using their links with political high-ups buy land and do things arbitrarily in the island.  
Difference of opinions among various ministries and departments on environmental issues is a hurdle for the appropriate authorities in taking proper steps concerning projects on environment and bio-diversity.  
Former marine official and researcher Saiful Alam Paikar said most of the recommendations of the National Conservation Strategy Implementation Project—Phase -1 taken up by the Ministry of Forest and Environment in 1992 were not implemented.  
A Tk 15-crore project on conservation of bio-diversity ended on June 30 this year without setting up a marine park and a sanctuary, badly needed for marine resources.  
There is still lack of long-term planning and steps for alternative livelihood of the local people, he said, adding that commercial and unplanned tourism has put the island in a risky situation.  
Syeda Rizwana Hassan of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association said there is a realisation that Saint Martin's Island should be conserved but effective steps for this are yet to be taken.

Tourism should be regulated there, she said.  
Speakers included Dhaka University teachers AQM Mahub, Kazi Zaker Hossain and Nurul Islam Nazem, Bapa Vice President Qazi Modina, General Secretary Dr Abdul Matin, former marine official Khorsheed Alam, and Abdus Salam, who hails from the island.

# Bush, Sarkozy demand fresh Iran sanctions

AFF, Washington

The French and US presidents stepped up demands for tough action over the Iran nuclear standoff ahead of a meeting of the major powers in Washington yesterday to discuss the dispute.  
France's Nicolas Sarkozy directly accused Iran of seeking a nuclear bomb and threw his weight behind calls for "stronger" UN sanctions, which are to be discussed at the Washington talks.  
US leader George W. Bush said he hoped the Islamic Republic would bow to mounting global pressure and warned he was "not going to tolerate" a nuclear-armed Iran.  
Iran denies its uranium enrichment and other activities, which are the subject of UN sanctions, hide an attempt to develop a bomb.  
Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States are to meet in Washington on Friday to discuss a third package of tighter UN sanctions against Iran if it does not suspend its uranium enrichment.  
French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice are also to hold talks in Washington on the topic and diplomatic tensions are set to mount again next week when Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visits New York for the UN General Assembly.

Sarkozy charged in a prime time television interview late Thursday that "Iran is trying to obtain an atomic bomb."  
"That is unacceptable and I tell the French people it is unacceptable," Sarkozy distanced himself from comments by Kouchner who warned that a war with Iran was possible and put the emphasis on a diplomatic offensive.  
"How do we convince (Iran) to renounce this project? Just as the international community convinced North Korea and Libya to renounce theirs. Through discussion, through dialogue, through sanctions," Sarkozy said.  
"If existing sanctions are not enough, I want stronger sanctions," Sarkozy said, while repeating that Iran

had a right to civilian nuclear technology.  
The Iranian nuclear question "is an extremely difficult affair, but France does not want a war," Sarkozy said, referring to Kouchner's earlier comments.  
After weeks of escalating US rhetoric on Iran, Bush insisted at a White House press conference Thursday that "the objective, of course, is to solve this peacefully."  
"I am hopeful that we can convince the Iranian regime to give up any ambitions it has in developing a weapons programme, and do so peacefully. That ought to be the objective of any diplomacy," he said.  
"It's imperative that we continue to work in a multilateral fashion to send that message. And one place to do so is at the United Nations," Bush said.  
Bush turned his attack against Ahmadinejad who has been refused permission to visit Ground Zero, site of the September 11, 2001, attacks, while he is in New York.  
"I can understand why they would not want somebody that's running a country who's a state sponsor of terror down there at the site," said Bush.  
The UN Security Council has adopted three resolutions against Iran. Two include sanctions because of Iran's refusal to halt uranium enrichment, which it says is purely for civilian energy purposes.  
France also wants the European Union to take its own sanctions against Iran if the UN Security Council does not pass new measures, which are opposed by Russia and China.  
French presidential spokesman David Martinon said the measures could be "recommendations" to European companies asking them "at the very least not to bid for new markets in Iran, and for financial institutions to scale back their operations, to lower their investments."  
"We would like to obtain that from all EU countries, and we are not alone in wanting to do so," Martinon said.

# Lanka jets bomb Tiger territory

AFF, Colombo

Sri Lankan war planes bombed a Tamil Tiger ammunition store in the north of the island yesterday, causing heavy damage, the defence ministry said, while claiming killing five rebels elsewhere. The ammunition cache was used by Imran-Pandiyan, an elite regiment of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the military said.  
"The air strikes taken were based on accurate air and ground surveillance information," a statement said.  
The military said air force pilots reported explosions following the raid but made no claim of rebel casualties.  
No independent confirmation of the military's version of events was available and there was no immediate comment from the Tamil Tigers.  
The military meanwhile said it shot dead five suspected Tamil Tiger rebels in the northern frontline district of Vavuniya on Thursday. The military placed its own casualties at two soldiers injured.  
The LTTE has been fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils from the majority Sinhalese since 1972.  
The conflict has claimed more than 60,000 lives, including more than 5,400 people killed in fighting in the past 21 months following the breakdown of the 2002 Norwegian-brokered truce.

# Heavy fighting

**FROM PAGE 16**  
women and kids, were killed," he said.  
In a statement, the 37-nation Isaf said that Taliban fighters had attacked its soldiers from a compound and an air strike was called in against them.  
"Isaf was unaware of civilians in the vicinity of the target and unfortunately it appears that a number of non-combatants were caught in the attack and killed."  
The Nato-led coalition said it had opened an investigation into the deaths in Helmand, which is the most violent region in Afghanistan and its main opium-growing area.  
"We take every possible precaution to avoid civilian casualties while conducting our operations and we warn people in advance about operations where possible," Isaf spokesman Wing Commander Antony McCord said.  
In another newly reported battle, more than three dozen Taliban fighters were reported killed Wednesday in Uruzgan province, the coalition said.  
The fighting began when Afghan

and coalition troops spotted a dozen insurgents planting roadside bombs in Uruzgan province, sparking a 14-hour battle that included airstrikes against Taliban fighters taking cover in village homes.  
Isaf troops were operating in that part of Helmand as part of a new operation launched on Wednesday to clear Taliban out of the area.  
More than 50,000 US- and Nato-led troops are battling the resurgent Taliban Islamist militia and are under pressure from rights groups and the government to avoid civilian deaths during their operations.  
More than 700 civilians have been killed this year, around half in Taliban attacks and half in action by Afghan and international military forces.  
The Taliban have waged an insurgency since being ousted from power nearly six years ago in a US-led invasion.