PHOTO: AFP

Rebels of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), loyal to leader Minni Minawi, ride in a pick-up truck in El-Fasher, the administrative capital of north Darfur on Friday. Sudan's Vice President Ali Osman Taha met Friday with Minnawi, a rebel leader turned presidential adviser, following accusations that Sudanese government troops had attacked the Darfur rebels last week, the only group to have signed a 2006 peace deal with the capital Khartoum.

India floods, rain kill 23

AFP, *Bhubaneswar*

Thousands were evacuated and at least seven people swept away in eastern Orissa state after four rivers burst their banks and inundated scores of villages, officials said Saturday.

"Our present focus is on evacuation of people. Thousands have been shifted from the villages to shelters," Disaster Management Minister Manmohan Samel told AFP in state capital Bhubaneswar.

The seven were swept away to their deaths by swirling waters, state officials said, and the army was on high alert to help out.

Almost half of coastal Orissa has been facing flooding since last weekend but a heavy downpour and water overflowing from brimming dams compounded the situation overnight in the three worst-hit districts, officials said.

Northern India, meanwhile, reeled under torrential rains, which killed at least 16 people and toppled trees and houses.

Russia rejects fresh UN measures against Iran

Big powers committed to exploring more sanctions

AFP, *Moscow/ Washington*

Russia said yesterday it had rejected US proposals for new UN Security Council measures against Iran over its suspect nuclear programme amid deteriorating ties between Moscow and Washington.

The United States and five other powers meeting here Friday are "committed to exploring possible further" sanctions against Iran to halt its sensitive nuclear work, the State Department said.

At a meeting Friday with diplomats from the United States, China, Britain, France and Germany, Russia "said it was against the development at this stage of additional measures in the UN Security Council," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

"The Russian side underlined the necessity of continuing efforts to restore constructive dialogue with Tehran with the aim of moving forward the negotiation process," the statement said after the meeting in Washington.

The White House on Monday warned Iran that it faced possible new sanctions over its failure to stop uranium enrichment, which can be a key step towards making nuclear weapons.

But it said poor relations with Russia -- a veto-wielding member of the UN Security Council -- could complicate matters.

Ties between the two have been severely damaged in recent weeks by Washington's sharp criticism of Russia's incursion into neighbouring Georgia, a close US ally.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said the West must choose between support of Georgia and Moscow's cooperation on other international issues.

France has echoed the US call for sanctions, but China said such a move would not resolve the stalemate. On Friday, Germany said it still aimed to reach a negotiated settlement with Tehran.

After Friday's meeting, the US State Department had said all six powers were "committed to exploring possible further" sanctions.

The foreign affairs political directors of the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany met to help prepare for a meeting next week of their respective foreign ministers.

The six powers are attempting to convince Iran to halt sensitive nuclear work with an incentives package in exchange for full suspension of uranium enrichment.

"All participants of the meeting expressed their support for the actions of the IAEA and underlined the need for Iran's full and transparent cooperation with the agency," the Russian statement said.

Brown battling for survival at Labour conference

AFP, *Manchester*

Gordon Brown faces the fight of his life at the Labour Party conference opening Saturday to squash a revolt, which could topple him and prove he can lead Britain through global economic turmoil.

The prime minister will have to turn in a barnstorming performance at the convention in Manchester, northern England, to end questions about how long he can hang on to the job he took over from Tony Blair just 15 months ago.

The discontent came to a head this month as lawmakers returned from their summer break, with four rebels who spoke out against Brown forced out of their government jobs and 12 lawmakers declaring support for a leadership contest.

Brown, Blair's finance minister for 10 years, argues the current economic crisis -- which hit home in Britain when giant mortgage lender HBOS was bought by Lloyds TSB in what was effectively a rescue deal Thursday -- demands stability and experienced leadership.

"This is not the time for faint hearts. This is the time for people who know how to deal with difficult economic circumstances," he told Sky News television in an interview Friday.

"I believe we are in difficult economic times. I believe all the energies of the whole of the government and all of the party should be used getting the country through these difficult times."

Blair's sister-in-law leaves Gaza

AFP, *Gaza City*

Lauren Booth, the sister-in-law of former British prime minister Tony Blair, left the Gaza Strip on Saturday nearly a month after sailing in to protest an Israeli blockade of the territory.

"Lauren Booth was able to leave Gaza today through the Rafah crossing with Egypt," Jamal al-Khodari, the head of the Popular Committee to Break the Siege, told AFP. Other activists close to Booth confirmed she had left.

The crossing -- the only gateway to Gaza not controlled by Israel -- was opened Saturday to allow 1,500 Gazans, mostly Muslim pilgrims on their way to Mecca, to leave the impoverished territory of 1.5 million people.

Obama, McCain point fingers as crisis swirls

AFP, *Miami*

The White House contenders played the blame game Saturday as the US government readied an astronomically expensive rescue package to avert disaster on Wall Street.

Democrat Barack Obama prepared to flay Republican John McCain's support for privatising Social Security retirement benefits, which his campaign said would be at risk of evaporating in the current turmoil afflicting markets worldwide.

Obama, at a Florida rally focussed on issues of particular concern to women, was also set to assail President George W. Bush for an absence of leadership as the market crisis has exploded, according to his campaign.

McCain meanwhile pursued a new line of attack in blaming the financial hurricane on fraud at US mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which are among the tottering companies now taken over by the government.

By extension, according to McCain, Obama is to blame as he was a leading recipient in Congress of campaign donations from the two companies and did nothing to sound the alarm about their "festering problems."

PHOTO: AFP

US Democratic presidential candidate Illinois Senator Barack Obama supporters cheer during a "Women's Rally For The Change We Need" at Bank United Centre in Coral Gables, Florida on Friday.

al-Qaeda threatens more attacks in new video

AP, *Cairo*

al-Qaeda threatened major new attacks in Afghanistan and vowed to keep fighting in Iraq even after Americans leave, in a new video to mark the anniversary of the Sep. 11 attacks.

The video was issued Friday, more than a week after the seventh anniversary of the attacks. The delay in release, apparently due to problems in the militant Web sites where al-Qaeda posts its videos, raised questions among counterterror specialists over whether the terror network's long-powerful propaganda machine was faltering.

In previous years, the group has released a string of videos for the 9-11 anniversary, featuring top leaders trumpeting their victories. Osama bin Laden spoke in one the anniversary videos last year, making his first appearance in nearly three years. He does not appear in the latest video.

al-Qaeda announced in a Sept. 8 Web advertisement that it would release a video that would bring joy to its followers. It promised a surprise speaker, showing him in silhouette with a question mark over his face.

But soon after, the Islamic militant Web forums where al-Qaeda traditionally posts such videos went down and have remained closed. The reason is not known.

The 90-minute video, entitled "The Results of Seven Years of Crusades," was finally released Friday, according to two U.S. groups that monitor militant messages. It featured speeches by bin Laden's top deputy Ayman al-Zawahri and other top figures in the terror network, as well as the final testament of Ahmed al-Ghamdi, one of the hijackers in the 9-11 attacks, who was apparently the "surprise" speaker, SITE Intelligence and IntelCenter said.

PHOTO: AFP

In this image taken from video and released by the SITE Intelligence Group on Friday, shows al-Qaeda number two Ayman al-Zawahiri speaking in a video commemorating the seventh anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

Thai flooding kills 14

AP, *Bangkok*

Floods in Thailand have killed 14 people and sickened more than 53,000 others, including many who contracted waterborne ailments after wading through floodwaters, the government said Saturday.

The 14 people were swept away by flash floods that hit 36 of Thailand's 76 provinces over the past nine days, the Ministry of Public Health said.

It warned residents that floodwaters were full of parasitic leeches, human waste and bacteria that can cause skin infections and fungus.

Gates warns Europe over de-militarisation

AFP, *Woodstock*

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates warned Europe Friday that it had gone too far in de-militarising and should rebuild its defences at a time of uncertainty over Russia's intentions.

Gates delivered the warning in a major policy speech at Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill, in which he called for a mixture of resolve and restraint in dealing with Russia.

But he told an audience of business leaders, analysts and foreign policy thinkers that Nato's core commitment to come to the defence of any member nation under attack "must mean what it says."

"One of the triumphs of the last century was the pacification of Europe after ages of ruinous and bloody wars," he said.

"But I believe we have reached an inflection point, where much of the continent has gone too far in the other direction.

Palestinians despairing of independence effort

AP, *Ramallah*

Prominent Palestinians are lighting a fire under Israel's feet by proposing a peace in which there would be no separate Palestine and Israel, but a single state with equal rights for all.

The recent talk of a binational state of Arabs and Jews may be little more than a Palestinian pressure tactic fed by frustration over the failure of talks on a two-state solution, but it has set Israeli leaders on edge.

Such a merger of Israel with the West Bank and Gaza Strip would quickly result in the Jews being outnumbered by the faster-growing Arab population. For most Israelis it would result in a nightmare choice: Give the Arabs full voting rights and lose Israel's Jewish character, or deny them equality and be branded an apartheid state.

This reality is not lost on Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. He created a stir last November when he told an Israeli newspaper that "the state of Israel is finished" unless each side gets a state of its own. And this week he pressed his case to his Cabinet.

Israel, he said, has no choice but to abandon the lands it captured during the 1967 war.

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১২ সোনারগাঁও রোড ঃ ৯৬৬৭০৯৪। এয়ারপোর্ট রোড ঃ ৯১৪১২৯৩। ক্রিসেন্ট সেন্টার ঃ ৯৫৬৩৪৩৩। উত্তরা ঃ ৮৯১১৯৭১। গুলশান-২ঃ ৮৮১১৫৭৬ রাইফেলস স্কোয়ার ঃ ৮৬২৪৭৯২। চট্টগ্রাম ওয়াসা কর্ণার ঃ ০৩১-২৮৫৩১৫৬।

এই সুযোগ শুধুমাত্র র‍্যাংগস ইলেকট্রনিক্স লিমিটেড কর্তৃক বাজারজাতকৃত সনি সাইবারশট ক্যামেরার জন্য প্রযোজ্য। সম্মানিত গ্রাহকদের ক্রয় রশিদটি আনার জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

নিয়ম ও শর্তাবলীঃ শুধুমাত্র ওয়্যারেন্টির মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ হলেই এই সুযোগ পাওয়া যাবে ☐ মেরামত কাজ যন্ত্রাংশের প্রাপ্যতার উপর নির্ভর করবে ☐ র‍্যাংগস ইলেকট্রনিক্স লিমিটেড কর্তৃপক্ষ ফ্রি সার্ভিস ক্লিনিকের জন্য আনীত যেকোন সামগ্রী মেরামতের জন্য গ্রহন না করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে ☐ বাহিরের টেকনিশিয়ান দ্বারা মেরামতকৃত সামগ্রীর ক্ষেত্রেও একই শর্ত প্রযোজ্য।

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