

Obama warns Iran, N Korea over nukes

Says ME stalemate must end

AFP, Caen

US President Barack Obama said yesterday that North Korea's nuclear weapon test had been "extraordinarily provocative" and that it would be "profoundly dangerous" for Iran to get an nuclear bomb.

Iran's nuclear programme featured strongly in talks between Obama and French President Nicolas Sarkozy who condemned what he called "senseless" new remarks by Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad casting doubt on the Holocaust.

Obama was asked about general nuclear proliferation threats at a brief press conference afterwards.

"North Korea's actions over the last several months have been extraordinarily provocative," he said.

"They have made no bones about the fact that they are testing nuclear weapons."

Obama said the UN Security Council is working toward a new resolution on North Korea and he insisted that the international community would take a "very hard look" at how to deal with the isolated Stalinist state.

Obama added that letting Iran develop a nuclear bomb would be "profoundly dangerous" and would lead other Middle East states to say "we have to go for it as well."

Sarkozy, who met Iran's foreign minister on Wednesday, said, "I told him first of all that they have to take President

Obama's outstretched hand.

"Iran has the right to civilian nuclear power but not a military nuclear capability. And they must understand that."

"If their aims are peaceful they should accept international inspections, but we can't accept the Iranian leader making senseless declarations."

"The United States and France are entirely together on this question. Iran is a great country, a great civilisation. We want peace, we want dialogue, we want to help them develop, but we do not want nuclear proliferation. We are united on this."

Ahmadinejad, who is seeking a second term in office in an election this month, on Wednesday reaffirmed his bitter anti-Israel stance and called the Holocaust "big deception".

He also accused the world's liberal democracies of degrading "human values" with their pro-Israel policies.

Sarkozy told Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki Wednesday that such comments were "unacceptable and profoundly shocking," his office said.

Obama also said Saturday it was vital to break the "stalemate" in the Middle East peace process, saying all sides had to recognise that their fate was inextricably linked.

"We have to move beyond the current stalemate," Obama said at a press conference in France where he was to attend commemorations marking the 65th anniversary of D-Day.

31 children die

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Between 50 and 70 children and a handful of care workers had been taking an afternoon nap when the fire broke out Friday, Larrinagasaid.

Local media said that there were 176 children inside the ABC daycare centre.

The centre, in a working class neighbourhood in the south of Hermosillo, had a staff of around 20 people.

It belonged to Mexico's social security network, the Mexican presidency said in a statement. President Felipe Calderon had felt "most profound pain and expressed his most deeply felt condolences to the families of the children," it said.

The federal government has rushed to the area three additional ambulance crews as well as a dozen medical specialists trained to work with burn victims, the presidency statement added.

State investigators followed firefighters, Red Cross workers and police to the scene, police said in a statement.

Local media suggested the fire had started in a neighbouring tire shop, a claim the shapewoners quickly denied, according to news reports.

But the local prosecutor's office cautioned against premature conclusions saying at the moment "it would be adventurous to pass judgment on what caused the fire."

Meanwhile, dozens of worried families gathered at the centre as well as at hospitals around the city.

Medics transferred five children who had been identified by their parents to Sonora State children's hospital, a medical worker told AFP.

At least 30 children with serious burns were transferred overnight to a specialised hospital across the border to the US state of Arizona, according to El Imparcial daily.

Calderon called on the national social security director, Daniel Karam Toumeh, to personally visit families and injured children at the scene, the statement said.

The federal government had sent three air ambulances and more than a dozen specialized doctors to help out, it added.

State Governor Eduardo Bours was in Arizona when the fire broke out and returned to Hermosillo Friday evening.

MCCI VOWS

FROM PAGE 1

Department of environment has to be more proactive and efficient in their fight against polluters.

The delegation members said eviction of river encroachers should go on and strong monitoring should follow up.

The MCCI team included CK Hyder, adviser to the chamber, M Anis Ud Dowla, former president of the chamber, Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, and Golam Mainuddin.

The MCCI congratulated The Daily Star for its campaign for environment protection and presented a special crest to the newspaper for its contribution.

"This may be a small initiative, but we believe it will leave a far-reaching impact on the nation's future. We have sown just a seed for the groundbreaking change."

Referring to India, he said the country is tapping the opportunities of globalisation because people there know English better than those in many other countries.

"We must learn our mother tongue first, but to be partner of the time, we must learn English," he continued.

The scheme would go through evaluation for effectiveness. Creating a website and skills training on IT may also be included in it.

AKTEL Chief Commercial Officer Bidyut Kumar Basu spoke at the orientation session conducted by Prof Shahnawaz Kabir of Jahangirnagar University.

Brother Leo Pereira, principal of Saint Joseph's Higher Secondary School, told The Daily Star that the initiative is relevant in that the state of English learning is poor in schools in rural areas.

In schools, newspapers could be read in groups and issues discussed for better understanding, he added.

Delwar Hossain Sarker, headmaster of Kalapara High School of Munshiganj, said the special weekly page planned to come with the newspaper would be of tremendous help to the teachers.

Mita Kundu, an assistant teacher of Goalundo Shaheed Smriti Government High School, said students would be more interested if quizzes and competitions are organised regularly, and the winners rewarded.

Acting Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka James Koh Siaw Heong and The Daily Star Managing Editor Syed Fahim Munaim were present.

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Culprits to get

FROM PAGE 1

coordination between the party and the government for implementing its vision for 'digital Bangladesh' and the charter for change.

The decision came after some party leaders drew the prime minister's attention to the lack of coordination between the government and the party.

A few leaders said some ministers' statements on crucial issues like the Tipaimukh dam and the BDR mutiny exposed lack of coordination among the ministers that gave the opposition the chance to criticise the government.

The current political situation, extra-judicial killings by law enforcement agencies, Tipaimukh dam, power crisis, BDR mutiny and prices of essentials figured prominently at the five-hour-long meeting that began at 10:00am.

The meeting decided to form full-fledged committees in 16 districts and hold urgent council of the party's unit committees in 11 districts where council had not been held since 2002.

Ashraf said a committee headed by Deputy Leader of parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury has been formed to celebrate the party's 60th founding anniversary on June 23.

The meeting expressed its satisfaction over the government initiatives to reduce prices of essentials, fertiliser and diesel and also congratulated the premier for handling the BDR mutiny successfully.

Asked about the Tipaimukh Dam issue, the minister said decisions would be made based on opinions from water resources experts and recommendations of the standing committee on the water resources ministry.

"Every decision in this regard will be made keeping in mind the country's interests," he added.

ment's commitment to upholding human rights, he added.

Hasina, also the AL president, asked Ashraf to send a letter to the Election Commission seeking extension of time for holding party council. As per the Representation of the People Order (RPO) it is mandatory to hold party council by July 25.

Ashraf said the party's constitution review committee headed by Hasina would sit soon to bring necessary amendments to it in line with the RPO.

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