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This morning's top stories



**Iran's leader can't enter ground zero**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won't be able to lay a wreath at the World Trade Center site when he comes to New York City next week. The request was denied because of ongoing construction, a police official said Wednesday.

Ahmadinejad, who is arriving Sunday to address the United Nations' General Assembly, had asked for permission to visit the site of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Zalmay Khalilzad, told reporters Wednesday that the United States would not support Iran's attempt to use the site for a "photo op."

**Army to administer brain-function tests**

Before they leave for Iraq, troops with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky., line up at computers to take a test: basic math, matching numbers and symbols, and identifying patterns. They press a button to measure response time.

The fledgling Army program records how soldiers' brains work when healthy, giving doctors baseline data to help diagnose and treat the soldiers if they suffer a traumatic brain injury — the signature injury of the Iraq war. The brain-function tests are expected to spread to other military bases in the next couple of months. **More Iraq news on A3**

► **Longtime CBS anchor Dan Rather** filed a \$70 million suit against his former employer Wednesday. **More on A2**

► **Nasal flu vaccine** maker MedImmune announced Wednesday that the Food and Drug Administration has approved FluMist for children 2 to 5 years old.

► **Israel labels** the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip a "hostile territory." **More on A9**

**News to use**

**Your GPS unit is a tempting target**

Portable satellite systems are helpful for getting around town, but if you aren't careful, they also leave telltale signs for thieves looking to steal the expensive GPS units. Read more in **Business, C12**.

LOCALS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF TEENS

## Outrage grows over Jena 6



Church members Linda Copeland, left, and Linda Poindexter join in a community prayer Wednesday during a support rally for the Jena 6 at the First Baptist Church of Hampton. PHOTO BY DIANE CEBULA/DAILY PRESS

**More than 400 turn out for a Hampton rally backing the high school students.**

BY MATTHEW STURDEVANT  
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**HAMPTON** — The same symbol of racism that ignited racial tensions last year in Jena, La., is closer to home than some might think, the Rev. Richard Willis said Wednesday night.

Willis said his daughter was on a Hampton school bus last year when students were tying nooses and flopping them over the top of seats to taunt black students.

"We're not talking about 1864. We're not talking about 1964. We're talking about 2006," Willis said.

The pastor spoke to an audience of more than 400 people gathered at First Baptist Church of Hampton in support of the six black Louisiana teenagers who have come to be known as the Jena 6.

Church leaders, local politicians, civic leaders and concerned residents were among those at the downtown Hampton church for a rally to raise awareness about the ongoing court cases in Jena, La.

At issue is the sentencing of six black high school students who were initially charged with attempted murder after a white student was beat up on Dec. 4, 2006. The fight was instigated when a black student asked if he could sit under a tree on school property that was traditionally reserved for white students. The principal said the student could sit anywhere he'd like. Three black students

Please see RALLY/A8

**What led to this**

The problems in Jena, La., started a little more than a year ago, when a black student at Jena High School asked administrators if he could sit under a tree where white students usually congregated. The next day, three nooses in school colors were hung from the tree.

The white students responsible for the nooses were not expelled, and racial tensions escalated in the town.

During the fall of 2006, fights between black and white students increased, and someone set fire to the high school's main building.

On Dec. 4, a white student was beaten in the incident that led to the arrest of the Jena 6.



A tree on the campus of Jena (La.) High School where a group of white students hung nooses from one of its branches. PHOTO BY CHRIS GRAYTHEN/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## Man beaten, stabbed and set on fire — by his friends

One person is arrested in the beating and kidnapping of a Newport News resident.

BY DANIELLE ZIELINSKI  
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**YORK** — A 32-year-old Newport News man was beaten, kidnapped from Newport News and driven to the Yorktown battlefields, where he was beaten again, stabbed in the head, torso and arms with various knives, then sprayed with lighter fluid and set on fire.

All by his friends. "His hair caught on fire, but he put it out pretty quick," said York-Poquoson Sheriff's Investigator Dennis Ivey. "He wasn't badly burned."

Sheriff's investigators have arrested one man and are looking for two other people involved in the mob beating of the man early Monday morning.

The victim knew his attackers, and was apparently beaten as retribution for actions taken against another friend, Ivey said.

"It appears to be some retaliation for incidents in the past with other friends," Ivey said. "Almost like a vigilante-type justice thing."

Ivey said the incident began about 11:30 p.m. Sunday, when the victim met up with several friends in Huntington Park in Newport News. The group beat him there, and then kidnapped him and drove up to York County, taking Crawford Road to the Historical Tour Road overpass near the battlefields in the Colonial National Historical Park.

Please see BEATING/A8

## Warner sank troops plan, Webb says

Sen. Jim Webb's measure to boost time at home fails.

BY DAVID LERMAN  
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**WASHINGTON** — Democratic Sen. Jim Webb lost his battle to give soldiers fighting in Iraq more time at home, after Republican Sen. John Warner broke ranks with his fellow Virginians Wednesday and urged the Senate to defeat the measure.

Webb's legislation, which many Democrats saw as their best chance to force a change of course in Iraq, fell four votes short of the 60 required to proceed under Senate rules. The 56-44 margin was nearly identical to a July vote that sank a similar measure.

Since then, some moderate Republicans expressed interest in Webb's proposal. But the effort to win broader bipartisan support suffered a fatal blow after Warner, who supported Webb's effort in July, reversed his position.

Warner, a former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and an influential voice on defense policy, said military lead-

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**INSIDE**  
► More Iraq news **A3**

## Vick still likely to face local charges

"The things that occurred in Surry County have not been prosecuted at the federal level," the Surry prosecutor says.

BY VERONICA GORLEY CHUFO  
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**SURRY** — Whether Michael Vick will face local charges next week is still up in the air.

"I'm not going to move forward until I know everything is in place to successfully prosecute," Surry County Commonwealth's Attorney Gerald G.



**VICK** will be sentenced Dec. 10 on dogfighting charges.

dogfighting operation, out of property Vick owned on Moonlight Road in Surry County.

Poindexter said Wednesday.

Vick, 27, a Newport News native and benched Atlanta Falcons quarterback, pleaded guilty to federal charges related to dogfighting on Aug. 27 and will be sentenced Dec. 10 in U.S. District Court in Richmond. He and three co-defendants admitted to operating Bad Newz Kennels, a

**INSIDE**  
► Slain dog breeder may be linked to Vick ring. **A8**

Poindexter previously said charges might come before September's grand jury, which meets Tuesday. Since then, he said, both evidence and witnesses remain in the hands of the federal prosecutors.

Charges could come Tuesday "if the commonwealth can assure the grand jury at that time that witnesses, which we don't have access to at this time, are going to be available," Poindexter said.

Please see VICK/A8

Online extra **d**

Ever wanted to drive a race car? Saturday night, dailypress.com will give you the chance to experience what it feels like when we broadcast live from inside Paul Lubno's car during a race at Langley Speedway. You'll get to go 90 mph with more than 20 other cars inches away from your fender, all from your living room.

