



PHOTO: AFP

Thirty-two invitro fertilized kids, or test tube babies, gather at the Swedish Medical Center on Friday in Denver, Colorado. The Colorado Centre for Reproductive Medicine at the Centre gathered the children from each of its 16 years of work in the field. Guests included Payton Kline, 4 and a half month-old baby, who is the 5,000th invitro fertilized baby born at the centre.

UN finds fault with Iran on nuke obligations

REUTERS, Vienna

The United Nations nuclear watchdog has accused Iran of failing to comply with safeguards intended to ensure it does not build an atomic bomb, according to a confidential report obtained by Reuters Friday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency found that the Islamic republic was taking steps to put things right. But the United States, fresh from war in neighboring Iraq over alleged banned weapons, called the report on Iran "deeply troubling."

Washington says Tehran wants to develop nuclear arms under the guise of building power reactors with Russian help, despite having signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"Iran has failed to meet its obligations under its safeguards agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear material, the subsequent processing and use of that material and the declaration of facilities where that material was stored and processed," one passage of the eight-page IAEA report read.

The report will be presented by the agency's chief, Mohamed ElBaradei, to the governors in Vienna June 16.

"We have answers for all the points mentioned," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told Reuters.

"We have done nothing which violates our commitments."

Hawks around President Bush have hardened rhetoric against Iran since the Iraq war, raising the spec-

ter of military action. But Bush, who last year included Iran in an "axis of evil" with Iraq and North Korea, denies any plan to attack it.

"I'm not predicting any specific action at this point," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

"We will look at the report together with other members of the board ... and then we'll decide together what might be appropriate at that time when we get together."

The report said Iran imported 1.8 metric tons of natural uranium in 1991 but did not declare the import or facilities for handling it to the IAEA until this year. It said this amount of uranium could yield 4.6 ounces of enriched uranium for nuclear fuel.

27 killed in bus crash in Turkey

AFP, Ankara

Twenty-seven people, including children, were killed and another 20 injured early Saturday in a bus crash in eastern Turkey, Anatolia news agency reported.

The bus, which was travelling from the town of Erzincan to the neighbouring province of Sivas, to the west, hit a wall at the entrance to a tunnel around 30 km from Erzincan, the report said.

First indications were that the bus driver fell asleep at the wheel, the governor of Erzincan, Refik Aslan Ozturk, told the agency.

Road accidents are common in Turkey and the usual causes are drivers falling asleep or speeding.

The number of accidents has however gone down in recent years in response to public awareness campaigns.

Man shot dead by police near Heathrow airport

AFP, London

Police shot dead a motorist near London's main Heathrow airport Friday after he refused to pull over for a routine check, Scotland Yard said.

A police spokesman said there was "nothing to suggest that the incident was terrorist-related".

The man was driving half a mile (less than one kilometer) from the airport perimeter, when a police dog handler who was "routinely observing passing vehicles" signalled him to stop.

A police spokesman said the driver failed to comply and is understood to have pointed a gun at the police officer, who immediately called for armed back-up.

"Shots were fired," the police spokesman said. "It is not known at this stage whether the suspect fired a shot or shots."

The spokesman added: "First aid was rendered at the scene. However, the man was pronounced dead at 5:34 pm (1634 GMT) at the scene."

The man was white, but police gave no further details about his identity.

A spokesman for Heathrow said operations at the airport were continuing as normal.



PHOTO: AFP

An Indian nomadic family undertake their annual migration from Limidi Taluka towards summer grazing in Kutch on Friday in Gujarat state. As India's has been reeling under a heatwave since mid-May which has killed 1,403 people, numbers of nomadic families have started their migration earlier this year due to the lack of food and water.

Japan, S Korea won't tolerate DPRK nukes

REUTERS, Tokyo

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi agreed Saturday that development of nuclear arms by North Korea was a serious threat and would not be tolerated, but urged a peaceful solution.

A statement issued after a meeting between the two leaders in Tokyo, however, side-stepped the touchy issue of how precisely to achieve a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

"The two leaders agreed that the North Korean nuclear issue is a serious threat not only to the Korean peninsula but for the peace and stability of East Asia and the international nuclear non-proliferation system," the statement said.

"The two leaders agreed that North Korea's nuclear weapons and any form of development program will not be tolerated and this problem must be solved in a peaceful, diplomatic manner."

The talks between Roh and Koizumi were the third leg of a diplomatic triangle that included the two Asian leaders' summits with President Bush last month.

US slaps visa ban on junta leaders, sanction to follow

UN envoy meets with military brass to secure Suu Kyi's release, 100 may have been killed during ambush

AFP, Washington

The United States on Friday added more members of Myanmar's military junta to its visa blacklist, and said further sanctions against Yangon may soon be imposed in response to the arrest of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

"We have expanded current visa restrictions to include additional members of the State Peace and Development Council-affiliated Union Solidarity and Development Association," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Members of the council (SPDC), the name of the government, had already been subject to such restrictions as had some members of the affiliated association.

The extension of the sanctions mean that all members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association are now included on the

visa blacklist, State Department officials said.

In addition, they said, the new restrictions will extend to all managers of state-run enterprises and their families.

Boucher could not say how many people had been added to the visa blacklist, but said the action had come as part of a review of US policy toward Myanmar that began after a May 30 attack on Aung San Suu Kyi's convoy.

"We have been actively reviewing our Burma (Myanmar) policy in light of the current situation," Boucher said, repeating accusations made by the department on Thursday that the attack on the convoy appeared to have been "premeditated."

He then intensified Washington's earlier criticism by saying that Yangon's explanations for the attack and its subsequent arrest of Aung

San Suu Kyi were not believable, and a sign that the government was no longer interested in a dialogue with the opposition.

"The explanations that they have made of the violence and subsequent events lack credibility," Boucher said.

"These actions have to be interpreted as suggesting that they have decided to end efforts at national reconciliation," he said. "That, too, would be a very regrettable turn of events."

Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested over the weekend during a political tour of the region and is being held incommunicado at a military camp outside Myanmar's capital, Yangon.

Her arrest came after clashes between her supporters and a military-backed group. The military reported four deaths in the melee, but sources in the country have said that several dozen people may have

died. Meanwhile, UN envoy Razali Ismail met with the Myanmar junta's number-three Saturday to push for a meeting with democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and seek her release after one week in detention, sources said.

Moreover, more than 100 opposition supporters may have been killed in the unrest that led to the Myanmar democracy leader Aun San Suu Kyi's detention, a report said Saturday.

Government-hired thugs wielding sharpened bamboo stakes and wooden clubs "unmercifully pounded" the opposition members in a May 30 ambush in northern Myanmar, BBC radio reported.

The report said that the latest details emerged after an unnamed American investigation team had visited the site of the attack.

Clear cracks in BJP

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may have sought to put a lid on the recent controversy over leadership but the fault line appears more distinct than ever before on Saturday.

The controversy broke out with BJP President M Venkaiah Naidu giving a joint billing to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his Deputy L K Advani to lead the party in next year's parliamentary elections.

What gave gist to the controversy was Naidu's declaration on June 2 that the decision to project Vajpayee and Advani at par as leaders was taken at a meeting senior office bearers of BJP at a recent meeting in the southern city of Hyderabad.

A new dimension was added to the controversy when Vajpayee on June 3 virtually suggested that it would be Advani who would be leading the party to victory in next general elections.

Vajpayee's remark, made at a gathering of party workers at his official residence, was a master stroke in re-asserting his supremacy in BJP, a stroke only the quintessential politician like him can play.

Sources in BJP say Vajpayee's remark that Advani would be leading the party to victory in next general

elections was his characteristic way of giving vent to his displeasure to inject factionalism at the top hierarchy of BJP.

Naidu's announcement in Hyderabad has caused as much flutter as Vajpayee's own statement about Advani leading BJP to win in next elections.

In a single deft stroke, however, the Prime Minister converted a perceived challenge to his leadership into an occasion for demonstrating once again that he is undisputed leader not only of the party but also of a rainbow coalition and the government.

Naidu was clearly rattled by Vajpayee's remark. The BJP President not only went into a retreat mode from his formulation of joint leadership of Vajpayee and Advani but switched into an exercise of propitiating the former.

He hailed Vajpayee as the undisputed number one leader and proclaimed Advani as number two. Besides, the Indian cabinet, all constituents of the alliance BJP is heading and the RSS, the ideological fountainhead of BJP, rallied firmly behind Vajpayee as the unquestioned leader.

The RSS stand was of particular significance in the light of popular perception that Advani is considered closer to RSS.

NEWS ANALYSIS



PHOTO: AFP

A child holds a poster of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi during a protest in front of the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok on Saturday. Some 25 protestors gathered in front of the Myanmar embassy and demanded immediate release of their leader for restoring democracy in the country. According to sources the UN envoy Razali Ismail met with the Myanmar junta's number-three on Saturday to push for a meeting with democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and seek her release after one week in detention.

UN experts set for inspection as debate on WMDs widens

AFP, Baghdad

UN nuclear experts were preparing Saturday to inspect a plundered nuclear plant, as international debate swirled around the use of Iraqi weapons as a justification for war.

Meanwhile, with occupation forces struggling to control unrest in the country, Iraq's top US overseer Paul Bremer opened a round of talks on Iraq's political future that seemed to please several former exile groups involved.

The seven inspectors from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) arrived Friday after chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix publicly questioned the credibility of the coalition experts charged with

searching out Iraq's arsenal.

It was not immediately clear when they would actually head for the site.

US Navy Lieutenant David Gai, a nuclear disposal expert with the new group being deployed to step up the coalition's hunt for banned weapons, said after the IAEA team's arrival "I anticipate that it will be in the next day or so."

IAEA team leader Brian Rens seemed to confirm that.

"We will basically establish that area is safe for us to work in" he said Friday, and go in "possibly tomorrow or the next day."

The IAEA team has a two-week mission of determining if refined uranium ore is missing from Iraq's largest nuclear complex at

Tuwaitha, near Baghdad.

It is so far the only team of inspectors allowed into Iraq since UN inspectors were withdrawn shortly before the war began.

With the debate over Iraq's weapons raging on in London and Washington, it gathered pace in Australia.

Prime Minister John Howard denied his government had doctored intelligence about weapons of mass destruction.

Speaking to the Liberal party national convention in Adelaide, he also said he remained confident banned weapons would be found.

"There was no doctored of intelligence advice by the government I lead," Howard said.

Hamas vows to boycott Abbas

AFP, Gaza City

Islamic firebrand Hamas vowed Saturday to boycott Palestinian prime minister Mahmoud Abbas unless he renounced his pledges to Israel and the United States made this week at the Jordan peace summit.

"We reject any meeting with Abu Mazen (Abbas' nom-de-guerre) until he abandons all commitment to his Aqaba statement," Rantissi told AFP.

He was referring to Abbas' final speech at his talks Wednesday with US President George W. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at the Red Sea resort of Aqaba.

"Dialogue with the Palestinian Authority is useless until Abbas changes the Aqaba commitment which is not acceptable to the Palestinian people," he stressed, without specifying which element of Abbas' speech was unacceptable.

Hillary's Book: Prelude to a presidency?

REUTERS, Washington

With a burst of publicity that any politician would envy, New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton has cast a long shadow over the Democratic Party and solidified her status as an early favorite for a 2008 presidential bid.

The publication on Monday of the former first lady's memoir of her White House years has sparked an explosion of coverage, from early leaks of the book to at least two planned prime-time national television interviews.

Whether the first-term senator, one of the most polarizing figures in US politics, is solely interested in selling books or is setting herself up for bigger things like a presidential run is an open question.

Democrats say no one in the party can rally the faithful the way Clinton can. Republicans already are using her heightened profile as a fund-raising tool.

Pak parliament meets amid fears of showdown

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's parliament meets for the first time in two months Saturday for the presentation of its national budget as opposition parties warned they would block the session if President Pervez Musharraf's powers are not clipped.

Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz is due to present the first budget of Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali's eight-month-old government amid threats from Islamic and secular opposition parties they will block its passage.

Jamali's government was elected in October after Musharraf's three-year military rule. But the election resulted in a hung parliament which has so far failed to conduct serious legislative business because a political tussle between the opposition and Jamali's coalition government has made parliament

unworkable.

Unprecedented pandemonium marred the house in April when opposition members created rowdy scenes by chanting "Go Musharraf go."

Female members joined firebrand Islamic clerics of the six-party Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) in the opposition's denunciation of Musharraf's unilateral constitutional amendments.

Musharraf seized power in a military coup in 1999 and declared himself president two years later. He has since extended his term as president -- as well as army chief -- until 2007 and given himself the power to dissolve parliament.

Amid fears of a showdown, the combined opposition said it would devise its strategy for the budget at a meeting ahead of the afternoon session Saturday.