



South Korean protesters burn a North Korean flag during anti-North Korea nuclear plan protest rally in downtown Seoul on Saturday. North Korea announced on Friday in a letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it would expel inspectors of the UN nuclear watchdog and reactivate a reprocessing plant to produce weapons-grade plutonium.

DPRK to reopen nuke reprocessing lab

AP, Seoul

South Korea said Saturday it will appeal to China and Russia - North Korea's longtime allies - for help trying to persuade the communist state to abandon its revived nuclear program.

The foreign ministry said it would send envoys to Beijing and Moscow after the North vowed to expel UN inspectors from a nuclear complex north of Pyongyang.

North Korea also said Friday that it would restart a laboratory at its nuclear complex in Yongbyon that could be used to extract weapons-grade plutonium.

Further escalating tensions, the US-UN command in South Korea said Friday the North had violated the truce ending the 1950-1953 Korean War six times over the past two weeks by bringing machine guns into the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas.

Under a 1994 agreement, North Korea agreed to halt operations at its nuclear complex in exchange for help from the United States and other nations to build and operate nuclear power plants that would be

incapable of producing material for nuclear weapons.

North Korea said it decided to put the complex back on line to generate electricity after Washington and its allies halted shipments of oil promised under the deal.

Officials in Washington and Seoul say they are seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

South Korea also plans to hold talks on the subject next month with the United States and Japan, both longtime allies.

North Korea has begun removing equipment and disabling cameras put in place by the UN nuclear watchdog to monitor the Yongbyon complex.

South Korean Defence Minister Lee Jun told Parliament on Saturday that the North's nuclear brinkmanship appears to be aimed at pressuring the United States to come to the negotiating table. The North Koreans have repeatedly called for a non-aggression treaty with Washington, which has ruled out talks unless Pyongyang first abandons its nuclear weapons programs.

The International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna said its most immediate fear was that North Korea could begin making weapons at the laboratory. Experts believe North Korea could gather plutonium from spent fuel rods and could have enough for several bombs within months.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan warned that the United States "will not respond to threats or broken commitments." He emphasized, however, that the Bush administration was not contemplating military action, instead focusing on diplomacy with allies in the region.

Recent developments have renewed fears that the Korean Peninsula is spiralling into a nuclear crisis similar to one in 1994 in which the US military drew up plans to bomb the nuclear site at Yongbyon.

A South Korean defence policy paper released Friday estimates that an additional 690,000 US troops would be needed if war breaks out. The paper was not a response to the nuclear crisis, and was outlining old contingency plans.

Car bomb blast in Jerusalem

AFP, Jerusalem

A booby-trapped car exploded early Saturday in the heart of west Jerusalem, injuring the would-be suicide bomber, hours after two Palestinian gunmen killed four Israelis before being shot dead in an attack on a West Bank settlement.

No one was hurt in the Jerusalem attack except the apparent bomber, a resident of east Jerusalem, who police arrested. Large numbers of police cordoned off the sector.

24 killed in Pak road accident

REUTERS, Islamabad

At least 24 people were killed and up to 60 injured on Saturday in a crash involving two buses and a truck in Pakistan's Punjab province, police said.

The accident happened when the two buses, which had been trying to overtake each other, collided with an oncoming truck near Rahim Yar Khan town, about 680 km (425 miles) south of the capital, Islamabad.

4 killed in Delhi factory fire

PTI, New Delhi

At least four persons were charred to death and 12 injured in a major fire in a glass factory in north Delhi on Saturday morning, fire department sources said.

The blaze, which began after a boiler burst around 0805 hours (local time) also damaged the adjoining buildings in the Samaypur Badli industrial area, they said.

Thirteen fire tenders fought the blaze for about 50 minutes before bringing it under control, they said.

Delhi to start talks with Kashmir legislators

Hurriyat ready for talks if Pakistan involved

PTI, Jammu

The Centre would soon start a dialogue with the elected representatives of Jammu and Kashmir in its attempt to resolve the Kashmir problem, Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani said on Friday.

The dialogue would later be extended to other sections who did not participate in the Assembly elections or did not get elected, he told reporters here after attending a meeting of Unified Command, which is responsible for maintenance of security in the state.

He also said infiltration from across the border has increased from the third week of November after a brief lull.

Meanwhile, making it clear that there should be "no general release" of detainees in Jammu and Kashmir, Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani on Saturday said the state government has formed a committee to review such cases.

"This is a good step because we have always been stressing for a review committee. There should be

Iraq vows to fight US troops in every street

Bush steps up post-war planning

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraq said on Saturday it would battle any invading US troops "from street to street" across the country and vowed to teach attackers unforgettable lessons.

Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh said Iraq had taken military and economic measures and was preparing hospitals for the possibility of a US-led war against Baghdad.

"He who ever attacks our country will lose," Saleh told a solidarity conference in Baghdad. "We will fight from village to village, from city to city and from street to street in every city."

"The enemy will be taught an unforgettable lesson if it tries to attack our country."

The US administration is stepping up preparations for an Iraq without President Saddam Hussein, drafting plans for oil revenues, securing cities and reopening schools and hospitals after a possible US-led invasion, US

officials said on Friday.

"The Iraqis will fight under the leadership of the warrior and believer President Saddam Hussein, may God preserve him, to defend Iraq, its land, honour, dignity, freedom, independence and bright future," Saleh said.

"Iraq's oil, nationalised by the president...from the hands of the British and Americans in 1972...will remain in the hands of this people and this leadership," Saleh, clad in military fatigues, said.

Meanwhile, preparing for an Iraq without President Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration is drawing up plans to secure key cities, reopen schools and hospitals and use Iraqi oil revenues for reconstruction after a possible US-led invasion, officials said on Friday.

Policy coordinating committees and internal working-groups are spearheading the effort, which has become an urgent priority as President Bush nears a decision on whether to take military action to topple Saddam and eliminate his alleged weapons of mass destruction.

UN inspectors quiz Iraqi scientist

Baghdad to deliver scientist list

AP, Baghdad

UN arms experts said they interviewed a scientist possibly linked to a clandestine Iraqi nuclear program Friday. Baghdad officials said the inspectors also scoured sites for signs of suspected weapons of mass destruction.

Officials from the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, quizzed Kazem Mojbai, a metallurgist from the state-run Al-Raya company.

Inspections team spokesman Hiro Ueki said Mojbai gave UN officials details about an unidentified Iraqi military program that "has

attracted considerable attention as a possible prelude to a clandestine nuclear program."

"The answers will be of great use in completing the IAEA assessment," Ueki said in a statement, a copy of which was faxed to The Associated Press in Baghdad.

A senior source for Iraq's National Monitoring Directorate, the Iraqi body that deals with inspectors, said UN officials interviewed Mojbai for an hour at Baghdad's state-owned Al-Rashid hotel. An Iraqi official was present during the interview.

"For sure, I have no relationship with the nuclear program," Mojbai

said on state-run television later Friday.

"I became upset during the meeting because they emphasised (providing) names of people," he said. "I'm specialised in minerals and have no relation with the previous (nuclear) program."

In their first session with an Iraqi scientist, UN inspectors quizzed a former member of Baghdad's nuclear program on Tuesday. While weapons inspectors have spoken to engineers and experts at sites they have searched, it was the first request to interview a scientist privately.

Under the toughened UN inspections regime that resumed Nov. 27, inspectors can speak privately with scientists and workers associated with Iraqi weapons - and even take them abroad for interviews. US officials have said they hope the privacy will prompt scientists to reveal hidden weapons programs.

Meanwhile, Iraq will hand over to the United Nations in the next few days a list of hundreds of Iraqi scientists who have worked on nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programs, a senior Iraqi general said Thursday.



Indian Congress president Sonia Gandhi (R) and president of the Seva Dal, Janardhan Dewadi (L), salute during the raising of a Congress Party flag in New Delhi on Saturday on the occasion of 117th founding anniversary of the party. The Congress Party was founded on December 28, 1885 and is the oldest political organisation in the country.

US puts Pakistanis on terrorism watch list

PTI, New Jersey

President George W Bush praised their homeland as a staunch ally in the war on terrorism. So Pakistanis living in the United States can't understand why many of them have been put on the US terrorism watch list.

They will soon have to register with the government under the same programme designed to keep track of visitors from nations suspected of harbouring terrorists.

At a news conference on Friday, a group of Pakistani-Americans denounced the requirement that young Pakistanis who are not permanent residents of the US register with the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service by February 21.

Failure to do so could result in immediate deportation. But Pakistani community leaders said the alternative is not much better, citing the arrests of hundreds of Iranians who went to register earlier this month in Los Angeles.

"We are Americans who have chosen to live here," said Shaikat Sindhu, president of the Chicago-based Pakistani American Association of North America. "Suddenly, we are foreigners in this country. We have done nothing wrong, and now we have to register with the government."



An activist of Shabab-e-Milli, a wing of Pakistan's main religion-based political party Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), shouts anti-US slogans which holding portrait of American President George W Bush during a protest rally against the possible US attack on Iraq, in northwestern city of Peshawar on Friday.

Pakistan is also a threat to other countries: Advani

AFP, New Delhi

Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani warned Saturday that countries other than India could be at risk if they did not recognise the 'terrorism' coming out of Pakistan.

"I want to warn the international community that if they don't realise that the epicentre of terrorism has shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan, then which country will pay the price when, I can't say," Advani told a function of the Central Reserve Police Force.

India accuses Pakistan of fomenting the 13-year Islamic separatist insurgency against Indian rule in Kashmir. Advani said Pakistan's role has not fully dawned on the international community.

"The realisation is not full. It can cost. Not just for India, because we have resolved that we will win this proxy war, but I want to warn the international community," said Advani, who is also home minister.

Advani, who visited Kashmir on Friday for a meeting of top commanders, said there was no indication of change from Pakistan.

"I was given reports (at the meeting) and the one thing that was common in all the reports was about the path our neighbour has been following for the past 15 years, that there is no indication that it is willing to leave that path," he said.

Pakistan quickly allied itself with the United States after the September 11 attacks last year,

dumping its support for Afghanistan's extremist Taliban and providing logistical support to the military operation that toppled the regime.

India, which also joined the US-led coalition against terrorism, has repeatedly accused Washington of being too soft on Pakistan over Kashmir.

India said Pakistan promised a US envoy in June to shut off support for anti-Indian militants, amid a military standoff between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

Pakistan says there is at most minimal movement on the de facto Kashmir border with India and describes the rebels fighting in the divided province as "freedom fighters."

PTI adds: Asserting that Taliban have shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan, Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani on Saturday asked the international community to take note of the development before it proved "dearly to the world."

"The centre of Taliban has shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan and if the international community does not take note of this development, it will cost dearly to the world," he said at the 63rd anniversary of the CRPF Raising Day here.

"Terrorist camps have started functioning again across the border and infiltration has also increased," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Human clone spawns bitter int'l debate

Controversial sect claims cloning

AFP, Washington

The announcement by a controversial sect that it has cloned the world's first baby will no doubt intensify the international debate on whether to ban human cloning.

The claim by the Raelian movement that a cloned baby, initially named Eve, was born Thursday, has been greeted with widespread scepticism and concern. But if Eve is confirmed as a clone, it would force governments to speed up their decision-making as Dolly the sheep, the first cloned animal, did in 1996.

Brigitte Boisselier, president of the Clonaid company, which is funded by the Raelians, has not given independent proof that the baby is an identical copy of its mother, as claimed.

But Boisselier promised that tests would be carried out by an independent journalist and released in about nine days.

Much of the scepticism arises from Clonaid's parentage. It is funded by the Raelian movement which believes mankind was created by extra-terrestrials.

But William Muir, a professor of genetics at Purdue University in Indiana, said that if Clonaid is willing to give real access to the baby and mother "my guess is it is in fact real,



Dr. Brigitte Boisselier

otherwise they'd try to hinder your access."

But he predicted that if Eve is a real clone, "there is going to be tremendous negative reaction from the world scientific community and the public at large to this because reproductive cloning is not saving life, but trying to create life."

He said Clonaid's action could backfire on efforts to pursue therapeutic cloning to find cures to illnesses such as Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinson's Disease.

Stanford University in California this month became the first major institution in the United States to publicly admit it was carrying out stem-cell cloning research in a bid to advance the fight against incurable illnesses.

In November last year, Advanced Cell Technology, a private company, announced it had produced cloned human embryos to obtain stem cells. That set off a major ethical debate on the methods used and the results.

Efforts to decide a global position on human cloning have become deadlocked.

A UN legal committee was unable to reach agreement on a draft international accord banning human cloning this year after the United States forced a delay. A working group is to convene again in September.

France and Germany are proposing a ban on human cloning for reproductive purposes, while the United States and Spain, backed by the Roman Catholic church and predominantly Catholic countries, want a total ban on human cloning.

Like the Vatican, the administration of US President George W. Bush believes that from the moment of conception, an embryo is a human being, who must not be killed.