

### Iran earmarks fund for anti-US campaign

TEHRAN, Jan 24: Parliament Tuesday earmarked a special fund to counter a proposed US congressional plan for covert operations to destabilise the Islamic Republic, reports AP.

Tehran Radio said the 270-seat Majlis endorsed a bill presented by a special parliamentary committee charged with devising a plan to counter alleged American conspiracies.

The official radio gave no figures. But Iranian newspapers reported last week that the committee had proposed a 25 billion rial fund for the campaign. According to the most commonly used rate of exchange, the fund amounts to 8.3 million dollars.

On January 1, Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri, a noted hard-liner, was quoted by the English-language daily Iran News as saying government spending for the fiscal year beginning March 22 will include a special budget for the Information Ministry to enable it to counter US conspiracies against Islamic countries, Iran in particular.

The Information Ministry includes Iran's intelligence apparatus. Iran has stepped up its anti-US rhetoric since the Clinton administration agreed last month to accept a bill backed by republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich for a special covert action fund aimed at Iran.

The fund of some 20 million diris is one of several recent US moves to pressure Iran into halting what Washington says is Tehran's support for terrorism and its quest for nuclear weapons.

Last June, Clinton banned all US companies from investing in Iran or doing business with Iranian firms. Iran has complained to the United Nations about the US move, branding it "the most vivid example of state-sponsored terrorism."

Reuter adds, the Iranian parliament on Tuesday approved a 20 million dollar budget to match dollar-for-dollar a reported anti-Iranian covert action fund planned by the United States.

In a budget debate broadcast live on Tehran radio, deputies approved the fund "to uncover and neutralise US government conspiracies and interference in Iranian affairs, to sue the United States in international legal bodies and to inform world public opinion about US violations of the UN charter...."

## China plans missile attack on Taiwan: NY Times

Beijing denies report

NEW YORK, Jan 24: Chinese leaders have sent warnings to the Clinton administration that they have completed plans for a missile attack on Taiwan and will consider going to war if Taiwan's president does not scale back his push for greater international recognition, the New York Times reported, reports AP.

While no one familiar with the threats thinks China is on the verge of waging war against Taiwan, some experts say the warnings should be taken seriously, The Times reported Wednesday.

The Times said the most pointed of the Chinese warnings was conveyed recently through a former assistant secretary of defence, Chas. W. Freeman Jr, who met this winter with senior Chinese officials.

On January 4, Freeman informed President Clinton's national security adviser, Anthony Lake, that the People's Liberation Army had prepared plans for a series of attacks against Taiwan, consisting of one conventional

missile strike a day for 30 days, the Times said.

The warning and similar statements relayed to administration officials through John W. Lewis, a political scientist at Stanford University who meets frequently with Chinese military officials, do not mean that an attack on Taiwan is certain or imminent.

Rather, China specialists told the Times, China, hopes to intimidate Taiwan and influence US policy toward the island nation of 21 million people, which China regards as a rebel province.

The goal, experts say, is to force Taiwan to abandon the campaign by President Lee Teng-hui for greater international recognition. Lee is expected to become Taiwan's first democratically elected president in March.

Lee's behavior in the weeks after the election would determine whether Chinese officials feel the need to consider military options, Freeman told the Times.

The Times said Freeman discussed the most recent warning during a White House meeting late called with non-governmental China specialists.

Participants at the meeting told the Times that Freeman quoted a Chinese official as asserting that China could attack Taiwan without fear of US intervention because American leaders "care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taiwan."

The Times said Freeman confirmed the gist of his remarks and said that while Beijing clearly prefers negotiation to combat, there is a new urgency in its effort to end Taiwan's quest for "independent international status."

Several China experts warned that congressional reaction to the March election will be critical, The Times said. Chinese military leaders warned in November of an "explosive" reaction should Congress invite the new leader to the United States as a gesture of support.

Another reports from Taipei says, amid roaring firecrackers, lion dances and cheering supporters, President Lee Teng-hui on Wednesday launched his historic campaign for another term in office.

The March 23 election is the first in Taiwan by universal suffrage, in which the whole island will vote on who should be president, instead of having legislators appoint him.

Reuter adds, Beijing today dismissed as "totally groundless" a US newspaper report that China has warned the United States it has completed plans for a limited attack on Taiwan.

"This is totally groundless," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said by telephone. He declined to comment further.

The New York Times said today China had warned the United States it has completed plans for a limited attack on Taiwan that could be launched in the weeks after Taiwan's president wins an election in March.

### Immigrants more likely to be homicide victims in US

LOS ANGELES, Jan 24: Life in California is dangerous for immigrants, according to a new study that found they are more likely to become homicide victims than people born here, reports AP.

From 1970 to 1992, immigrants made up 17 per cent of the state's population, but accounted for 23 per cent of the slayings.

From 1970 to 1989, immigrants in California were 1.4 times as likely to die in homicides than residents born here. From 1990 to 1992, the risk was 1.2 times higher.

According to a variety of indicators, immigrants are in better health than US-born persons. However, the United States is not necessarily a safe haven," concluded the researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Public Health.

The conclusions varied when the results were broken down by ethnicity. White immigrants, most often coming from European countries where guns are far less prevalent, were 2.1 times more likely to die in homicides than US-born whites.

Hispanic immigrants were 1.2 times as likely to die in homicides than Hispanics born here.

But black immigrants had just 60 per cent the risk of homicide faced by blacks born here. And the authors found nearly equal homicide rates between Asians born overseas and born here, although that number might be skewed because Native Americans, a group with high homicide rates, were included with Asians.

"Some are better off and some are worse off than in their home countries," said lead author Susan Sorenson, a public health epidemiologist. For example, in Mexico, the primary native country for Latino immigrants to California, homicide rates are higher than in the United States.

The findings were drawn from death certificates for more than 64,000 California homicides from 1970 to 1992, along with records of birthplace and ethnicity for those 15 to 34 years old. That age group accounts for about three-quarters of all homicides.

Sorenson refused to speculate on why the immigrants were more likely to be killed because the study is based on death certificates that do not include information on the circumstances of the homicide.

### BRIEFLY

**Pranab's Nepal visit begins Friday:** A 45-year-old treaty between Kathmandu and New Delhi are among issues to be addressed in talks between Nepal leaders and Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, political analysts said on Tuesday. Reuter reports from Kathmandu.

Mukherjee begins a three-day visit to the kingdom on Friday. He will be the first foreign leader to visit Nepal after a centre-right coalition replaced the communists in elections last September.

**Farrakhan meets Gaddafi:** Nation of Islam leader Lous Farrakhan had talks in Tripoli Tuesday with Libyan leader Moammer Gaddafi about the situation of Muslims in the United States. Libyan television reported, AFP reports from London.

They discussed "the situation of Muslims in the United States and the means which would unify, mobilise and organise them in their own establishments so as to have a say and effective role in the next US elections," according to the broadcast monitored in London by the BBC late Tuesday.

**Polls in Sudan in March:** Africa's largest nation announced Tuesday that it would hold its first elections since 1989 beginning March 1, with 12 days of balloting for president and Parliament. AP reports from Khartoum.

An announcement by Abdel-Moneim al-Zein al-Nahas, chairman of the Elections Committee, was the first official word on the timing of the vote. The state-run press had said only that it would be in early March. The press reports brought complaints that a March election would not allow enough time for campaigning or organizing the vote in a country with poor communications and road links.

**2 feared dead in storm in Spain:** Two people were feared drowned Tuesday after their four-wheel drive tumbled into a swollen river as heavy rains continued to swamp much of Spain, forcing evacuations and wrecking crops. AP reports from Madrid.

If confirmed, the deaths would bring to five the number of people killed in weather-related accidents in two days. Police in the northeastern city of Lerida said the two people, whose names were not immediately known, were thought to have drowned after their vehicle fell into the nearby River Segre.

**Quake hits eastern part of S Korea:** An earthquake measuring 4.2 on Richter Scale hit eastern parts of South Korea early yesterday but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage the Korea meteorological administration said. Reuter reports from Seoul.

The epicentre of the quake, which struck at 5.10 am (2010 GMT) in the Sea of Japan about 80 km (50 miles) east of the coastal city of Yangyang it said. The quake was felt in the eastern sector of the country but there have been no reports of damage from tidal waves or the quake itself one administration official said.

**Tanzania allows Hutu refugees:** Tanzania has opened its borders to 12,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees who evacuated their camp in Burundi to flee ethnic violence, a senior aid official said yesterday. Reuter reports from Burundi.

"The Tanzanian government has, I understand, allowed the people to come in. This is what has just been confirmed," Abbas Hullet, in charge of relief operations for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) at Ngara in Tanzania, told Reuters by telephone.

**Fire kills 6 in Naples:** At least six people were killed when a fire erupted overnight in a suburb of Naples, authorities said yesterday. AFP reports from Naples.

They said the blaze was caused by a gas leak which was followed by several explosions. There were no further details.

**2 villagers killed in Manipur:** At least two villagers were killed and two others seriously injured when suspected armed Nagas attacked the burning Kuki village in a fresh eruption of ethnic violence this year under Tamenglong district in Manipur west yesterday morning. PTI reports from Imphal, India.

Official sources said about 20 armed Nagas swooped on the burning Kuki village at 0530 hours and attacked the villagers with automatic weapons besides setting ablaze all the houses in the village, about 10 kms west of Tamei police station, in Tamenglong district.

**UN may leave Sahara mission**  
UNITED NATIONS, Jan 24: The United Nations should extend its mission in the disputed Western Sahara but may have to leave before its goal is achieved. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in a report released Tuesday, reports AP.

The world body is trying to help conduct a referendum allowing residents of the territory to choose between Moroccan rule and the autonomy the Polisario Front has been fighting for 20 years.

Both sides agreed to the referendum in 1991, but balloting has been repeatedly delayed by disputes over who can participate. The UN mandate for its Western Sahara mission expires at the end of this month.

### Bahrain accepts ICJ jurisdiction in dispute with Qatar

DOHA, Qatar, Jan 24: Bahrain has accepted the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in a territorial dispute with Qatar over a group of Gulf islands and reefs, Qatar's official news agency said Tuesday, reports AP.

The Bahrain government declined immediate comment on the report, but the Qatar News agency said senior officials of both countries met Monday with the president of the International Court of Justice in the Hague, and that the court will issue a ruling soon.

The dispute also involves the Zubara region of north-western Qatar, where ancestors of Bahrain's ruling family lived 200 years ago.

**Hillary summoned before court**



WASHINGTON, Jan 24: In calling first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton before a grand jury, Whitewater prosecutors are sending a message that the belated discovery of her billing records is a serious matter, reports AP.

Prosecutors will question Hillary Friday at the federal courthouse on whether she or anyone else tried to hide the records after they were subpoenaed by investigators two years ago.

Legal scholars say it is the first time a sitting first lady has been compelled to testify before a grand jury. "It's unprecedented," said Paul Rostein, professor of law at Georgetown University Law Centre.

### Hawala scandal jolts political system: VP Singh

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: Former Prime Minister VP Singh today said the multi-crore Hawala scandal has jolted the country's political system and it was high time to ponder over the vital question of state funding of the elections, reports PTI.

Addressing newsmen here today, Singh commended as "good example" the decision of the Janata Dal leader, Sharad Yadav, to resign his Lok Sabha seat following allegation of his involvement in the Hawala case.

sage to the nation, avoided any direct criticism of the Republican-controlled Congress for supporting big cuts in foreign aid and foreign affairs spending.

But he decried "voices of isolation," saying international threats to America include terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious hatred, aggression by rogue states, and environmental degradation.

"If we fail to address these threats today, we will suffer the consequences of it in all our tomorrows," Clinton said, urging that included nearly all of the country's top leaders and ambassadors from countries around the world.

Clinton in an upbeat message to the nation, avoided any direct criticism of the Republican-controlled Congress for supporting big cuts in foreign aid and foreign affairs spending.

"America is very, very proud of you," he said.



An undated file photo of the Princess of Wales with chauffeur Steve Davis (L), who left her staff on Tuesday joining her private secretary Patrick Jephson and secretary Nicky Cockell, who have both resigned in the last two days. The Princes also faces a defamation lawsuit by her sons' nanny. —AFP/UNB photo

### Former Chief Minister of Orissa Patnaik says Army should take over country's administration

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: A veteran Indian politician said in remarks published today that the army should take over the country's administration because the democratic system had failed, reports AFP.

Biju Patnaik, a leader of the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party), said in the city of Bhubaneswar that when the "democratic process showed fissures, there was always a case for other established orders to take over."

The Hindu newspaper quoted him as saying late Tuesday that a snowballing bribery scandal involving almost the entire political establishment proved that the parliamentary system had broken down.

"If such a situation persists, young officers of the army... might turn and decide that corruption, which has become rampant, should be checked," said Patnaik, a former chief minister of the eastern state of Orissa.

"Politicians are now using power for their personal gain," he said. "The people have lost faith in them. In these circumstances I see no reason why the armed forces should not take over."

Patnaik is the first of India's mainstream politicians to publicly advocate army rule in the world's largest democracy. The one-million-strong Indian army, which owes its birth to the British raj, is strictly a political.

Patnaik's remarks followed continuing revelations in a payoff scandal in which a businessman allegedly paid more than 20 million dollars to a string of politicians and bureaucrats between 1988 and 1991 in exchange for favours.

The scandal has led to the resignations of three cabinet ministers and of two opposition leaders from parliament.

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Women argue with Russian President Boris Yeltsin outside the Federation Council, on Tuesday before the opening session of the new upper chamber of the Russian parliament, where members of the Soldiers' Mother movement staged a protest demanding an end to the war in Chechnya and better conditions for young men serving in the Russian army. —AFP/UNB photo

### India steps up hunt for separatists in Jammu

BRINAGAR, India, Jan 24: India stepped up cordon-and-search operations in the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday to counter threats of separatist attacks during Republic Day Celebrations on Friday, security officials said, reports Reuter.

"Cordon-and-search operations are part of the measures to clear the area from militants who will try to create trouble on Republic Day," Appa Alur, a senior paramilitary force official, told a news conference.

A number of separatist guerrilla groups have asked their members to intensify attacks on security forces on the eve of India's 46th Republic Day and have appealed to people to observe January 26 as a day of mourning.

Three bombs killed eight people and wounded 80 during last year's Republic Day celebrations in Jammu city, the state's winter capital.

"We will intensify attacks on security pickets and patrols on the eve of India's Republic Day," the Hizbul Mujahideen separatist group said in a press statement.

Paramilitary troops over the past week have thrown a cordon around a dozen residential areas of Srinagar, the state's summer capital, and are forcing jailed guerrillas to identify separatist rebels, police sources said.

Paramilitary troops have increased surveillance and stepped up security around Srinagar after a separatist rocket attack marred the ceremony last year.

### 'Palestinian state within 3 yrs'

ABU DHABI, Jan 24: A senior PLO official said Tuesday he expects a Palestinian state to be declared in the West Bank and Gaza Strip within three years, reports AP.

But the official, Mahmoud Abbas, better known by his nom de guerre of Abu Mazen, admitted "mistakes and violations" in Saturday's landmark elections in the Palestinian self-rule areas.

Talking to reporters here, where he participated in a symposium on the Middle East peace process, he did not elaborate on the violations. There have been several allegations by Palestinians of ballot-rigging.

## Clinton calls for help in making world move from hatred to hope

WASHINGTON, Jan 24: President Clinton, in declaring the strength of America, called on Congress Tuesday to join in moving more of the world's people "from hatred to hope," reports AP.

Clinton, in his fourth State of the Union address, devoted only a small portion to international affairs. He listed world leadership as the last of six "great challenges" for Americans.

"We can help more people move from hatred to hope — if Congress gives us the means to remain leaders for peace," he said to an audience that included nearly all of the country's top leaders and ambassadors from countries around the world.

Clinton in an upbeat message to the nation, avoided any direct criticism of the Republican-controlled Congress for supporting big cuts in foreign aid and foreign affairs spending.

But he decried "voices of isolation," saying international threats to America include terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious hatred, aggression by rogue states, and environmental degradation.

"If we fail to address these threats today, we will suffer the consequences of it in all our tomorrows," Clinton said, urging that included nearly all of the country's top leaders and ambassadors from countries around the world, especially in Bosnia, for their efforts.

"America is very, very proud of you," he said.

And he ended with a challenge to each American, saying "the best is yet to come if we all do our part." He described America as a nation whose identity is forged "from every point of view and every point on the planet."

Clinton said American global leadership is strong and must remain so.

"Because of American leadership, more people than ever before live free and at peace and Americans have known 50 years of prosperity and security," he said.

"All over the world, people still look to us, and trust us to help them seek the blessings of peace and freedom," He stressed, however, that

Americans can't be everywhere or do everything.

"But where our interests and our values are at stake — and where we can make a difference — American must lead," he said. "We must not be isolationist. We must not be the world's policeman. But we can and should be the world's very best peace-maker."

He called for a strong military but repeated the challenge of using "diplomacy where we can and force where we must" and said America would continue to work with others to share the risk and cost of peace-making.

Clinton lauded the end of the threat of Russian missiles, the freezing of North

Korea's nuclear programme and the return of democracy to Haiti.

He cited tough trade deals and noted that America is selling more cars than Japan for the first time since the 1970s.

He pointed to progress towards peace in Northern Ireland and the Mideast.

And he painted a picture of war's horrors of war in Bosnia — skeletal prisoners, lines of refugees — saying such scenes have given way to the hope for peace.

challenges remain, including ratification of the START II treaty with Russia to cut nuclear stockpiles by another 15 per cent and approval of the Chemical Weapons Convention and anti-terrorism legislation.

He said all should be approved this year.

He also announced the goal of connecting every American classroom to the information superhighway by 2,000 giving America's schoolchildren access to computer around the world.

Clinton added: "Let me be clear: We are still a nation of immigrants. We should be proud of it. We should honor all those immigrants who are working hard to be good citizens, to become new citizens."