# Pakistan denies defector's claim about planned attack against India

NEW YORK, July 2: If Iftikhar Chaudhary Khan is telling the truth, Pakistan has nuclear weapons aimed at targets in India and has considered a first strike against its neighbour, reports AP.

Khan said Wednesday that he knows this because he is a Pakistani nuclear scientist familiar with his country's policy - and he is willing to tell all to US officials in return for political asylum.

Pakistani officials responded by calling Khan's story a hoax.

"This is a complete con job," said Salman A Abbasy, the spokesman for Pakistan's UN

mission. "It is a fraud." Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub on Thursday also called the allegations "nonsense." He said Pakistan had made "elaborate plans" to retaliate if neighboring India attacked its nuclear facilities. But there was no strategy of firstuse, he said.

Khan, 29, said he was pre-

pared to describe Pakistan's nuclear program to US officials in detail, including assistance that it has received from China

and Iran. US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was too early to assess the significance of Khan's defection or verify his claim to be a former assistant to Dr Altaf Hussain, director of the Khushab Nuclear Research Centre in Pakistan.

State Department spokesman James P Rubin said he had no information on Khan's claims or contacts with government officials.

Khan told The Associated Press in an interview at his lawyer's office in New York that he became alarmed after attending a top-secret meeting in April on Pakistan's nuclear strategy. He said he heard officials and scientists discuss using nuclear weapons first because of fears that India was preparing an attack with Israel's help.

Khan said he wrote a protest letter and was fired in late

He received threats, he said. and left Pakistan in May, before nuclear tests conducted that month by both India and

Pakistan. Government officials in Pakistan said meetings to decide combat strategy would not be open to scientists.

Dr Samar Mubarakmand, who led Pakistan's nuclear test team, told the independent daily newspaper. The News, that the only record of a Iftikhar Chaudhary Khan working at the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission was 19 years ago and that man resigned. He also said there was no po-

sition of assistant research officer in the atomic energy commission, a post Khan reportedly claimed to have held. "Even if we did (have that

position), an assistant research officer would come in at Grade 16, and such junior officers are never invited to top-secret meetings," Mubarakmand was quoted as saying. "They don't even know what happens in those meetings."

Mubarakmand's remarks echoed assertions made Wednesday by Abbasy that Khan was a low-level civil engineer who would not have had access to information about nuclear strategy.

"We expected the Pakistani government to say that he was either not credible or that he did not have the information that he claims to have." Khan's attorney, Michael Wildes said Wednesday. "He has the documentation to corroborate his claim."

Khan arrived in the United States on May 22, and said he believes four other colleagues. who also signed the protest letter, left Pakistan at about the same time for Britain. Khan's wife remained in Pakistan and is being held against her will. Wildes said.

Khan showed reporters a Pakistani passport with a stamp that Wildes said signified high-security clearance, and a photocopy of what he said was Khan's ID card from the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission. Khan said the weapons programme was hidden in a nuclear power plant.

Khan said he would turn over further documents to the US government if granted asy-

But Abbasy said the insignia on the ID card was not that of the commission. The identification lists the commission as part of the Ministry of Science and Technology, he said, but the two are actually separate agen-

India set off five underground nuclear explosions in early May and Pakistan responded with six tests, heightening tensions between the South Asian neighbours who have fought three wars in the last 50 years.

India may soon

buy sophisticated

Russian missile

batteries

soon buy sophisticated Russian

missile batteries to counter

Pakistan's Ghauri ballistic

missile, Itar-Tass news agency

reported, quoting an official of

state arms exporter

Rosvooruzheniyeh, reports

Luzan said Russia was prepared

to supply s-300v/Antei-2500

batteries, which he described as

greatly superior to the US

siles with a range of up to 2,500

kilometres (1,500 miles) and a

speed of 4,500 kilometres (2,700

miles) an hour, with 98 per cent

would only shoot down a

Ghauri 36 per cent of the time,

accidents in the three other

metros combined, the report

accident-prone city in India is

directly related to the increas-

ing number of motor vehicles

here. While in India the annual

rate of increase in vehicles is

eight to ten per cent. Delhi

records a higher ten to 12 per

cent, adding more than 200,000

ues, there will be doubling of

vehicles in next five years."

Central Road Research Institute

of India (CRRI) Director S.M.

Sarin told India Abroad News

prevalence of heterogenous

traffic and lack of awareness

among drivers as well as pedes-

trians are the major reason for

increasing road accidents in

India, Sarin said. Of Delhi, he

said: "In the past two decades

there has been ten-fold increase

in vehicular traffic in Delhi

while the roads have increased

only two times."

Poor road infrastructure,

"If the current trend contin-

vehicles each year.

Delhi being the most road

Even modernised patriots

They could intercept mis-

equivalent, The Patriot.

certainty, he said.

Major General Alexander

MOSCOW, July 2: India may

#### President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, Nigeria's military ruler, Gen Abdulsalam Abubakar, and Liberian President Charles G Taylor, in Abuja, Nigeria, Wednesday. The four met to discuss regional security and cooperation. - AP/UNB photo Jayalalitha yet to decide on staying with Vajpayee govt

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan poses with African leaders, left to right, Sierra Leone

NEW DELHI, July 2: Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee couldn't be sure of support from a key ally Thursday, just as parliament prepares to vote on his first budget. reports AP.

Powerful southern politician Jayayram Jayalalitha told reporters in the southern city of Madras late Wednesday that she had not yet decided whether to stay with the Vajpayee governing coalition. If she leaves, taking 30 members of parliament with her, the government could

Jayalalitha's comment contradicted an earlier statement from Vazhapadi Ramamurthy, whose small party is allied with hers, that the southern group would for the time being remain in Vajpayee's three-month-old government. The clashing pub-lic statements reflect the debate among Jayalalitha's supporters about how far to push Vajpayee. "Whatever Vazhapadi Ra-

mamurthy has said on the question of continued support to the .... government is his own personal opinion." Jayalalitha said in a statement. "As general secretary of the party I will express (a decision) on the issue at the appropriate time."

Lawmakers loyal to Jayalalitha may boycott a parliament session Friday at which politicians were to resume discussion of the 1998-99 budget. A vote on the budget was expected later this month.

Jayalalitha is demanding Vajpayee dismiss the state government led by her rivals in her southern home state of Tamil

Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata party argues it would be difficult to topple Jayalalitha's enemies without being able to show a legally acceptable reason, and because dismissing an elected state government would require approval of the parliament - in which the governing coalition lacks a majority.

No party won the majority of seats needed to govern alone in elections earlier this year. The BJP and its allies control 249 of 545 seats in parliament, the once dominant Congress Party and its partners 191 and the United Front 75. The rest are controlled by independents.

Political parties opposed to Vajpayee's Hindu nationalistled government are coming together and urging the Congress to try to topple the government.

## Environment should not be sacrificed for growth in China: Clinton

GUILIN, July 2: Amid the craggy limestone peaks of Guilin, US President Bill Clinton said Thursday that the environment should not be sacrificed for economic growth in China, one of the most polluted countries on Earth, reports AP.

Clinton came to this fabled land of cloud-shrouded mountains and winding rivers to showcase the environmental revival of a region once polluted but now coming back to its natural beauty. The storybook scene here stands in contrast with China's polluted cities. Meeting with Chinese envi-

ronmentalists on a sweltering day. Clinton said that even in America "there is a big fight" over environmental protection because "there are always people who are afraid if we take any step, it will hurt the econ-

reports from Ankara.

Okan told the agency.

from Phnom Penh.

reports from Dili.

wood by a roadside.

consumption.

KGUM-AM reported.

Stockholm

believed it was carrying illegal timber.

hot weather, Xinhua reports from Athens.

apartment, AP reports from Tamuning.

He said that if Guilin wants tourists to come, "you have to have a clean environment. If you want a strong economy, you have to produce healthy children. So at some point we have to see these things together."

Clinton spoke in Guilin's Seven Star Park. The stage for his speech was built at the bottom of a gray and white limestone peak called Rosy Clouds over Camel -named for its outline suggesting a camel's

The president said the United States is trying to repair many years of environmental mismanagement. "China has a unique oppor-

tunity," he said, "because you

are developing rapidly but later

in time than other countries, to avoid making the same mistakes we have made."

20 die as bus catches fire in Turkey: Up

to 20 people died and another 20 were injured when a bus caught

fire after plunging into a ravine in southeastern Turkey late

Wednesday, the Anatolia news agency said yesterday, AFP

Diyarbakir and the nearby town of Siverek after the bus hit a

cow on the road it said. The fuel tank of the bus caught fire and

the victims burned to death. "Up to 20 people died in the

accident although we don't know the exact figure, as the bodies

were terribly burned, Diyarbakir's Security Director Gaffar

2 Americans, 4 Thais held in Cambodia: Two

Americans and four Thais have been arrested in Cambodia in a

massive drug haul involving more than three tonnes of

marijuana, police and diplomats said yesterday, AFP reports

The six were arrested in Cambodian waters in the Gulf of

Thailand off the coast of the southwestern province of Koh Kong

on Sunday with an estimated 3.3 tonnes of marijuana in their

boat. Police said they initially stopped the boat because they

Indonesian soldier jailed for killing: A

military court sentenced an Indonesian soldier to 10 years in

prison Thursday for killing an East Timorese civilian, AP

Prosecutors accused 2nd Sgt. Slamet, 23, of shooting Herman dos Dores Soares on Tuesday in the town of Manatuto, 60 km

east of Dili, on June 16. They said the victim had been collecting

Heat wave hits Greece: A heat wave

was hitting Greece on Wednesday with temperatures in may

parts of the country soaring to 39 degrees and state services are remain on alert to deal with any problems stemming from the

In the capital of Athens, emergency calls for ambulances on

Wednesday increased 20 per cent compared to Tuesday, and

most of the calls requested assistance for people suffering from

heart and respiratory problems. On Tuesday. Athens with the

mercury hitting 37 degrees, came to a standstill for several

hours from power cuts reportedly caused by high electricity

2 children die in Guam fire: Two

young children were killed and a 3-month-old boy was se-

riously injured when a fire swept through an overcrowded

Cruz and 3-year-old Steven Scott Muna, cowering in a closet.

The children were alive when pulled out of the apartment but

died on the way to Guam Memorial Hospital. Muna lived

elsewhere in the building and had come over to play with Cruz.

Swedish actor Jaerrel dies:

Swedish actor Sting Jaerrel has died at the age of 88 in hospital

in Monaco, television news bulletins reported. AFP says from

named Caligual in the film "Hets" (Excitement), directed by Alf

Sjoeberg and with the screenplay by a debutant Ingmar

Bergman. Jaerrel made 133 films and acted in 133 stage per-

900 radio programmes and published 11 books.

formances in a 51-year career. He also took part in more than

Jaerrel made his name in 1944 as a sadistic Latin teacher

Firefighters found the young children, 4-year-old Relisa

The accident happened between the southeastern centre of

"Our traditional energy use

that causes pollution is about one-third in vehicles transportation, about one-third in buildings, housing and office building, and about one-third in factories," Clinton said.

"In China, it's probably more in factories, but it would come toward these numbers. In the vehicles, you have opportunities" to make progress with fuelinjected engines and engines power by natural gas. Clinton said Wednesday in

Shanghai that a major legacy of his visit will be US-Chinese cooperation on the environment - something that "ten years from now people will look back and say that's one of the biggest things they did."

In a speech to American business leaders, Clinton urged China to clean up corruption, open trade markets and combat the environmental catastrophe

UN to take key

role in talks to

end conflict

in Colombia

Nations has offered to take a

leading role in any negotiations

to end more than three decades

of internal conflict in Colom-

bia authorities said on Wednes-

President-elect Andres Pas-

trana welcomed UN involve-

ment after officials handed him

a document drafted by UN ex-

perts outlining issues they con-

sider key to ending the violence.

leader, elected president on

June 21 after making a pledge to

bring peace to Colombia the

centrepiece of his campaign for

the presidency called the report

which there is a conciliation

among all of the armed groups

and that is a very important el-

ement, Pastrana said after a

two-hour meeting with UN offi-

This is the first document in

Pastrana, an opposition

day, reports Reuters.

"a map for peace."

cials here.

BOGOTA, July 2: The United

hanging over the world's most populous country. He said it was wrong to believe — as many do — "that there is an iron, unbreakable link between economic growth and industrial-age energy practices. ... It is simply

The president was accorded a third opportunity of national media exposure in a taped interview with state television CCTV. He was asked friendly questions and sidestepped whether he or President Jiang Zemin has a tougher job.

With the end of the Cold War Clinton said, "America has this role which is temporary - it won't last forever — as the only superpower in the World."

He said the world "needs a leader but not in the sense of one country telling everyone else what to do."

NEW DELHI, July 2: The na-

tional capital has the dubious

distinction of accounting for

the maximum number of road

accidents in India, according to

total road accidents in 23 major

Indian cities - with a popula-

tion of more than a million -

occur in the national capital,

says a report by the National

tion has topped ten million, it

has more vehicles than three

other metros — Calcutta, Mum-

bai and Chennai - put together.

By the latest estimate, Delhi

has three million vehicles and

adds 200,000 every year. Of

these, about 60 per cent are two-

persons killed in road accidents

in Delhi are pedestrians, the re-

port says. With a high rate of

46.12 per cent accidental

deaths. Delhi ranks the highest

among the four major

accidents here is also more

The total number of road

metropolitan cities.

As many as 39 per cent of the

wheelers.

While New Delhi's popula-

Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

As many as 22 per cent of the

India Abroad News Service.

#### Delhi's roads, the most dangerous than the total number of road

### Lebanese positions

TYRE, Lebanon, July 2: Hezbollah guerillas attacked Israeli and allied Lebanese militia positions across southern Lebanon Thursday, wounding four people. A Lebanese man was killed in Israeli shelling

The guerillas attacked 16 positions with rockets and machine-gun fire in predawn raids. Lebanese security officials said. Two Israeli soldiers and two allied South Lebanon Army militiamen were wounded and flown to Israeli

In Israeli artillery and mortar shelling that ensued, a Lebanese man was killed in the village of Yater, said the officials, speaking on customary

fired by the guerillas landed inside Israel, an Israeli military

#### One killed as Hezbollah rebels attack Israeli,

that followed, reports AP.

hospitals, the officials said.

condition of anonymity. A number of mortar shells

source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

## Off the Record

#### Parental rights

LONDON: British men who father children outside marriage are to be given the same parental rights as married fathers under proposed law reforms, the Guardian newspaper reported Thursday, says AFP.

The Lord Chancellor Lord Irvine, the head of Britain's Judiciary, has decided that unmarried fathers who jointly sign the birth register with the baby's mother should automatically acquire parental responsibility, said the paper.

It added that the move would affect around 180,000 fathers a

year. Under current law, married parents have equal parental rights to take decisions about the child's upbringing. But where

parents are unmarried, the mother has the sole right More than one in three babies are now born out of wedlock in Britain, the majority to parents in stable relationship.

#### Caring mother at her teens

MANCHESTER, England: A girl of 12 has become one of Britain's youngest mothers after having a baby by her 13-yearold boyfriend, it was reported Thursday, says AFP.

The schoolgirl gave birth to a healthy daughter after a labour of just half an hour, according to the Mirror.

The girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons, is caring for

her four-week-old child at home on a public housing estate at Wythenshawe. Manchester.

#### Jiang inspects China's military base in HK

HONG KONG, July 2: President Jiang Zemin today inspected China's biggest military base in Hong Kong, striding along a red carpet in front of troops shouting "how are you comrades," reports AFP.

Several hundred army, navy and air force troops who have taken over the former British Navy base at Stonecutters Island shouted back "How are young chairman Jiang?"

visit for the first anniversary of Hong Kong's handover, was a rare chance for the public to see the People's Liberation Army

conspicuous by their absence and after handover fears of Chinese troops marching across the border, many members of the public say they would like to see more of the

Jiang who arrived Tuesday land on a launch.



US President Bill Clinton, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and daughter Chelsea wave goodbye as they board Air Force One at Shanghai Airport Thursday. Clinton will spend Thursday touring Guilin before flying - AP/UNB photo to Hong Kong in the evening.

## Florida fire renders 10,000 homeless, closes roads, destroys businesses

moving unbelievable fast and

they've burned at least 10

homes that we know of. These

SCOTTSMOOR, Fla, July 2: Florida's fires drove about 10,000 people from their homes on Wednesday, closed roads, damaged or destroyed a dozen homes and businesses and gave firefighters their worst day in a month, authorities said, reports Reuters.

The most fires were in Brevard County, west of the Kennedy Space Centre, where fire fronts 15 to 20 miles (24 to 32 kms) long forced evacuation of the tons of Scottsmoor and

pable," Brevard Sheriff Phil Williamson said. "They're jumping roads,

"These fires are unstop-

fires are moving so fast they don't burn all the vegetation as they move through. They're able to double back and burn the same area twice." Three firefighters were in-

jured in Brevard county on Wednesday, one with serious burns, authorities said.

A Sheriff's deputy was severely injured when a resident deliberately ran the deputy down trying to get back to his home so he could retrieve a fishing boat, authorities said.

To the north, the entire city of Ormond beach was under ei-

ther mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders. It borders on Daytona Beacha, also threatened by the uncontained fires.

"The fire is literally at people's doorsteps," said Len Ciecieznski of the Volusia County Emergency Management Entre.

The Ormond Beach municipal airport was closed, but the Daytona International Airport

remained open, officials said. The fires have burned about 20,000 acres (8000 hectares) in the county out of a total of

260,000 acres (104,000 hectares) scorched across the rainstarved state since June 1.

#### Hillary urges Chinese women to value their daughters SHANGHAL July 2: US First per in the 20th century.

Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton urged Chinese women Tuesday to value and respect their daughters so that they can move themselves, their families and their country forward, reports

Clinton told the Shanghai Women's Federation that "enormous reservoirs of talents" and "boundless potential" exist for Chinese women to "hold up their half of the sky," a phrase coined by Mao Zedong.

"Women can't hold up half the sky if as girls they are not loved and valued by their parents and given the same opportunities as their brothers to fulfil their potential," Clinton

"Women can hold up their half of the sky when their feet are planted firmly on the soil of freedom and equal justice," she

Clinton is accompanying her husband on the third leg of a nine-day landmark visit to

China. She recalled the May 4, 1919 movement when young intellectuals argued passionately that women must gain social, economic and political equality if

"That message is even more compelling in 1998 as China enters the 21st century," the First Lady said. She also recalled her partic-

ipation in the 1995 UN conference on women in Beijing when she strongly criticised human rights abuses in China, including its one-child policy, forced abortion and gags on freedom of speech.

This time she took a more muted approach, saying too many "women around the world remain on the outskirts of opportunity and their daughters remain undervalued in their societies."

#### Zeroual appeals tor unity in Algeria

ALGIERS, July 2: President Liamine Zeroual appealed for unity in Algeria Wednesday hours after the latest in a longstanding series of outrages killing four people and wounding 14 when a bomb exploded south of the capital Algiers, reports AFP.

#### US spent over \$5.8t on N-weapons since 1940s

WASHINGTON, July 2: The United States has spent more than 5.8 trillion dollars on nuclear weapons since 1940s, and still spends more 35 billion dollars a year on its nuclear arsenal, a study by the Brookings Institution has found, reports

"Atomic audit," the four year study by Brookings scholar Stephen Schwartz, was billed as the first attempt to do a comprehensive accounting of the cumulative cost US nuclear weapons programme.

We cannot rectify our mistakes or build on our achievements if such a crucial part of our nuclear history remains incomplete." Schwartz wrote.

"Neither can we hope to prevent other countries from acquiring nuclear weapons if we do not fully comprehend the forces that have driven our own programme and affect it still," he said.

The study put the cumulative cost of US nuclear weapons from 1940 to 1996 at 5.5 trillion dollars in constant 1996 dollars.

#### LONDON, July 2: London's Royal Opera House is at the

centre of an intractable financial crisis that could force this venerable institution to back down a notch and privatise if it wants to avoid closing down altogether, reports AFP.

The idea of privatising is one of the latest in the search for a solution that has turned into a major headache for Tony Blair's Labour government.

Culture Minister Chris Smith is caught between the treasury, which is reluctant to shell out any more money, the Opera's administration, which is crying poverty, and the demands of the dozen other public cultural institutions that are clamouring for their share of subsidies after years of austerity under the previous conser-

vative administrations. The government had been hoping some sort of solution committee set up to study how to reorganise the opera. It combines representatives from the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera, which together have a 16 million dollar debt. One suggestion is to group them under the same administration to trim costs. Other recommendations fil-

might emerge from a special

tering down to the press include extending a limited loan in exchange for drastic cutbacks in operating costs and much lower ticket prices to make the opera more accessible.

The ticket costs are currently so prohibitive that even stars, including Placido Domingo, have spoken out against prices that can be as high as 275 pounds (459 dollars) per performance.

Last January, the Opera dollar) subsidy was not doubled. turned to the world of pop music

Jiang's inspection, during a

(PLA) forces in the territory. The troops are normally

for a three-day visit to Hong Kong arrived at Stonecutters Is-

to try to get the institution out

of its financial and administra-

tive mess by appointing Sir

Colin Southgate, 59, then head

of the London music giant EMI,

gravity of the situation far sur-

passed any suggestions raised

which share the opera house fa-

cilities have operating debts of

around 4.7 million pounds

(eight million dollars), and the

opera has been twice saved from

bankruptcy in the last year by

Ministry that took the form of

an ultimatum, Southgate

threatened last week that the

opera and the opera ballet

would close if the state's nearly

15 million pound (24 million

To complicate matters more

In a letter to the Culture

private donations.

But he has warned that the

The opera and Royal Ballet

as chairman.

London's Royal Opera House in severe financial crisis the opera in Covent Garden, the heart of London's theater district, is still undergoing a 214 million pound (342 million dol-

lar) refurbishment that is due to

end in late 1999.

According to Southgate. even if all the performances at the Royal Opera once it is renovated are sold out and huge private donations pour, in the opera would still need 15 million dollars more per year to function.

times worst than I had expected," the Daily Telegraph reported him as saying last week. Southgate's threat of closure whether real or a bluff to force more funding — has seriously embarrassed the government since it comes from a man considered a top-notch business manager who was handpicked by the Culture Minister last January to sort out the opera's

The crisis is "one hundred

problems.

His appointment followed a bad year that saw two chief executives and the entire Opera Board resign after a parliamentary report complained of wasted public funds. Doubling the opera's subsi-

likely possibility at a time when the Finance Ministry has promised to keep strict watch over public spending and give priority to education and health. It is backed in this by the

powerful Parliamentary Com-

mittee for Cultural Affairs

which already got rid of the opera's last chief executive. The mess has prompted the

idea based on a US model: To privatise.

committee's Labour chairman Gerald Kaufman, to come up with what seemed like a radical

China were to survive and pros-

# dies, however, seems an un-