

Ex-BNP lawmaker

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Ahmed were adjourned yesterday following time petitions from the prosecution and the defence.

MUNSHI CASE
According to the allegation brought against Munshi by the ACC, the former lawmaker possessed assets worth Tk 5.37 crore beyond his known sources of income and concealed information of his assets worth Tk 3.13 crore in the wealth statement, BSS reported.

Sajeda Ahsan and her two sons were charged for helping Munshi in earning the wealth illegally.

Earlier, Munshi and his wife Sajeda were produced before the court from jail custody.

Other two accused were not present during the charge framing as they were on bail. However their legal representative was appeared on their behalf.

Judge of the special court Mohammad Ahsraf Hossain read out the charge brought against them, but the accused Munshi and his wife Sajeda prayed justice denying the allegations.

Abu Sayeed, deputy director of the ACC, filed the case against them on March 27 with Gulshan Police Station.

After investigation, a charge sheet was submitted before the court accusing them on June 17 and the case was transferred to the special court for trial on June 26.

ARREST WARRANT AGAINST SANVIR
Our Court correspondent reported that Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam passed the order after Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted a petition seeking arrest warrant against Sanvir, now in Britain.

The court also directed the authorities concerned to send the arrest warrant through Interpol and take him back to Bangladesh after his arrest.

In his forwarding report, CID Assistant Police Super Arman Ali said he came to know from different sources that Sanvir was directly involved with the killing and he is now in Britain.

Soon after the incident, Sanvir went there to avoid the arrest. So, he needs to be arrested and take him back to Bangladesh through Interpol, Arman said.

Body of Sabir, 30, a director of Bashundhara Telecommunication Limited, was found stuck over the boundary fence of an apartment on Road 104, Gulshan on July 5 last year.

NASER CASE
ACC Deputy Director Golam Shahriar Chowdhury, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, yesterday submitted a seven-day remand prayer to interrogate Naser, son of former finance minister M Saifur Rahman.

In his forwarding report, the IO said he would quiz Naser to gather information about his ill-gotten wealth, his sources of income and whereabouts of the wealth.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon fixed tomorrow for hearing on the remand prayer and directed the jail authorities to produce Naser before the court during the hearing.

On May 27, ACC Deputy Director Moniruzzaman Khan filed the case with Gulshan Police Station against Naser and his wife Rizina Naser for submitting false statements to the ACC about their wealth.

In the case statement, the complainant said Naser and his wife did not mention properties worth Tk 4.90 crore in their wealth statements.

Naser is now in jail while his wife did not get bail from any court.

BAKIR CASE
The same court yesterday allowed the ACC to interrogate BM Bakir Hossain at Dhaka Central Jail gate in connection with a graft case filed with Motijheel Police Station.

The court passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Jiban Krishna Roy submitted a petition to interrogate Bakir at jail gate.

On May 30, ACC filed the case against Bakir and his wife Nazma Hossain for concealing wealth while submitting the statement to the ACC.

ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Jahangir Alam filed the case saying wealth of more than Tk 1.25 crore of the couple was not included in their statement.

Bakir is now in custody while his wife is still at large.

HUDA'S EXTORTION CASE
Four prosecution witnesses gave judicial statements to a metropolitan magistrate in connection with an extortion case filed with Tejgaon Police Station.

The witnesses are Munzur Ahmed Bhuiyan, Abul Kashem, Mohammad Nur-e-Alam and Mohammad Babul.

The IO Sub-Inspector (SI) Yunus Ali produced the witnesses before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka and prayed for recording their statements.

Following the petition, the CMM assigned Metropolitan Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah for recording their statements.

According to the case filed on June 26, Huda called Wahidur Rahman Azad, a contractor of the Roads and Highways (R&H)

Department, to BSEHR (Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights) office in February 2003 and demanded Tk 10 lakh in cash.

Huda also gave an alternative to Azad, asking him to construct a conference room for the organisation.

Azad said he agreed to build the conference room due to continuous pressure from Huda and it cost him Tk 5.5 lakh.

HUDA'S THEFT CASE
A Dhaka court adjourned the proceedings of a theft case against Huda and two others until July 17 following a time petition by the prosecution.

First Class Magistrate Delwara Begum directed the authorities concerned to ask the complainant of the case to appear before the court on that date.

On May 17, Police Inspector Syed Nazrul Islam, also the IO of the case, submitted charge sheet to a first class magistrate's court in Dhaka against Huda and two others showing 17 people as prosecution witnesses.

On March 6, Mohammad Salahuddin from Nurpur under Dohar upazila in Dhaka alleged that Huda and his men beat him up severely on October 28 last year.

As per Huda's instruction, the two also took away Tk 17,700 from his possession and ordered him not to tell anyone about the incident.

SALAHUDDIN CASE
Another Dhaka court yesterday adjourned proceedings of a money laundering case against former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed until Sunday following a time petition by the prosecution.

The joint forces raided Salahuddin's Shyampur residence in the capital on February 4 and seized a large sum of foreign currencies.

Following the seizure, police filed a case against the former lawmaker under the Money Laundering Act. The IO pressed charges against him on May 16.

Matin denies

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allegation that the government has link with the splitting of political parties. Rather, he said, political party leaders are seeking reforms following difference of opinion among them.

The adviser said they are not running government to give any favour to any party but for the welfare of the people.

He said the incumbent caretaker government did not impose the emergency. "We've assumed office after the declaration of the state of emergency." He, however, said the emergency will be withdrawn if the situation is created.

On corruption cases, Matin, who is also the chairman of the National Coordination Committee to deal with major corruption and serious crimes, said special courts have been set up for trying the corrupt.

He claimed remarkable progress in different sectors in the last six months under the caretaker government.

Moudud

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organisations Moudud and Associates, Asif Moudud Foundation, National Association for Resource Improvement (NARI) and Coastal Area Resource Development and Management Association.

The letter said the task force is investigating offences and crimes committed by certain individuals and as part of the investigation the team needs the listed people's/organisations' bank account information.

It directed the banks to provide detailed bank statements from the date of opening till date as well as applications submitted by the clients while opening the account.

Jessore editor

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doctors declared him dead. Anjan had a bullet piercing through his skull from left to right.

Police and local sources said Anjan's grandmother, a relative and his maid, who were in the house, heard a loud bang from Anjan's toilet and went to the toilet to find him critically injured. Neighbours then rushed Anjan to the local hospital.

Police later found two live bullets in Anjan's pocket but failed to find the gun.

Anjan's mother Hafiza Akhtar Shirin claimed Anjan was murdered but Jessore Police Station's acting Officer-in-charge Abdul Matin told reporters that it was difficult to say whether it was a homicide or a suicide.

Sub-inspector Arif, who wrote the inquest report, said it was initially believed to be a case of suicide but since they could not find the gun, they are not dismissing the possibility of a homicide.

When Deputy Commissioner of Jessore Abu-al- Hossain and district superintendent of police visited Anjan's house, his mother claimed that Anjan was murdered due to an internal family feud.

Unknown assailants gunned down Anjan's father Mukul on August 30, 1998.

Decision on ACC organogram likely today

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government is going to take decision on the proposed amendments to the organogram of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) today.

The activities of the ACC are seriously being hindered due to lack of manpower, as the workload of the commission has increased in the changed situation.

"The National Implementation Committee on Administrative Reforms (Nicar) will sit tomorrow to decide the proposed changes in the ACC organogram. The number of personnel is going to be raised to 1,281 from the existing 650. If the organogram is approved, the commission will be more functional," new ACC Secretary Mokhesur Rahman said in a regular briefing of the commission yesterday.

He said six divisional offices will be functional subject to the approval of the organogram. He said there will be 22 district offices in the country.

About the complaints received by the ACC, he said the commission is scrutinising the complaints and the complaints that are not related with the ACC will be forwarded to the respective departments. "If we undertake all the complaints, the main task will be hindered," he commented.

10 shortlisted

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Mujibur Rahman of Karmasangsthan Bank, Abdul Hamid Mia of Rupali Bank, Yaseen Ali of Dutch Bangla Bank, Shah Mohammad Nurul Alam of Mercantile Bank, Nurul Amin of National Credit and Commerce Bank and SA Chowdhury and Rabiul Hossain, former managing directors of Sonali Bank.

"The list has been prepared on the basis of work experiences in banking sector and education of the applicants," a finance ministry source said adding that the applicants with work experiences as general managers and deputy managing directors were not included in the list.

Recently, the chief executive officer of another nationalised commercial bank, Agrani Bank, has been appointed on competitive basis from the private sector.

Army chief

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Prothom Alo yesterday along with a photo that showed the elderly man being led away by police in handcuffs with a rope tied around his waist to Nilphamari Jail.

General Moeen paid a total of Tk 19,580, which included the original loan of Tk 9,000 and its interest, from his personal fund to the bank (now Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank) through the local army camp.

Advocate Bapi Bardhan appealed and prayed for Manoranjan's bail at the court of District Magistrate Khandakar Mokhesur Rahman in the morning. Accepting the appeal, the court granted the bail and sent the appeal to the additional district magistrate.

Meanwhile, Abdus Samad, manager of the Bangabandhu Branch of Krishi Unnayan Bank, submitted a compromise deed between the bank and Manoranjan to the court, as the bank received the money.

After the hearing, Additional Magistrate Ayub Hossain discharged Manoranjan from the case. Advocate Ashrafur Latif Kibria moved for the complainant in the court.

Manoranjan did not know who actually played the role behind his release when he was freed at about 2:00pm.

"I have only a house on a 4-decimal land where I live with my two sons and grandchildren. I have to spend the night at my nephew Shailen's house, as I have no room of my own. I wondered how I could pay off so much debt. That's why I assumed that I would have to pass the rest of my life in jail."

As soon as he came to know that General Moeen came to his rescue, a tearful Manoranjan said, "May God bless him."

Manoranjan was sent to jail on Sunday as he failed to pay Tk 9,000 with interest to the Krishi Unnayan Bank.

Son of late Padmalochon of Golna village under Kaliganj upazila, Manoranjan took the loan in September, 1988 and bought two cows with it. One of the cattle died, while he was forced to sell the other for the treatment of his ailing wife Dulamoni, who also died. By that time, Manoranjan had repaid Tk 1000.

In 1999, the bank filed a case against him with a Nilphamari court and he was then jailed for 8 days before being freed on bail. The court on June 12 last year sentenced him to six months imprisonment in absentia.

While talking to The Daily Star, Manoranjan's son Nripendranath Roy, 50, burst into tears and said that they could not go to the court to free their father due to financial crisis.

Held politicians

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The jail authorities confirmed that except Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Mirza Abbas, all are taking treatment at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury is at Ibrahim Memorial Cardiac Hospital and Mirza Abbas at Apollo Hospitals Dhaka.

The government bears the medical expenses at the BSSMU but for treatment at the other hospitals the prisoners must dig into their own purse.

The Apollo Hospitals sources said that Mirza Abbas has been staying at a deluxe cabin since June 16. The rent is Tk 7,500 a day.

Besides, there are expenses for medicine and tests and doctors, said a billing section staffer.

Mirza Abbas has already paid around Tk 1,65,000 only in bed rent. The total amount spent would add up to an even higher figure if inclusive of the other costs.

During a recent visit to the Apollo Hospitals, the Star correspondent found three policemen standing guard in front of Mirza Abbas' cabin. However, none of them, two from the jail and one from the concerned police station, could say anything about his condition.

An insider said Abbas has pulled himself through and could easily leave the hospital now. But the hospital authorities kept mum when asked about the former minister's condition.

"We cannot say anything about him as his status is of a prisoner's," said Giasuddin, the general manager (media) of the hospital.

Contacted, the jail officials maintained that Abbas was still sick. "He has kidney problems. I visited him the day before yesterday and found him sick," said Deputy Inspector General (DIG-prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui.

Sources said that Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury is reluctant to receive treatment from local physicians and wants to go abroad. The government is examining his papers to decide if he should be allowed treatment outside the country. The former parliamentary affairs adviser to the prime minister has a heart

condition.

Queried about the possibility of detained politicians being sent abroad for treatment, Shamsul Haider said the decision rests with the government and he does not have any idea if anyone would be sent or not.

UNB adds: So far 62 important prisoners, arrested on graft charges, have been given division considering their social status under the jail code, Inspector General (Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hassan said yesterday.

Among them are former ministers, former lawmakers, bureaucrats and businessmen.

Talking to the reporters, the IG (prisons) said many of these prisoners are down with various health complications and the jail authorities are taking care of them.

DIG (prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told the news agency that 150-200 senior politicians, businessmen and bureaucrats have been rounded up since the caretaker government launched its drive against corruption in January.

Jamuna

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officials presented a slide show on the status of river pollution.

One of the photographs showed how the Beximco Industries at Noyrhat has been polluting the river through underground pipes so that no-one can see it, said Anwarul lqbal, briefing the journalists about the decisions.

"They have been doing it intentionally. The government will take measures against it," he added.

Earlier, the government had directed the DoE to take action against the polluters but to no effect, he said adding, "So we've asked them again to act to stop pollution. The city won't survive if the pollution goes on like this."

Secretary Syed Md Zobayer and other officials from the water resource ministry, DoE, and LGRD were present at the meeting held at the auditorium of the LGRD ministry.

Age-old fleet

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"Parts of those old aircraft are also not available as the manufacturing company discontinued them making it difficult to repair those antiquated planes," the official added.

"Everyday Biman's aircraft face technical delays, as they are very old," Mamdud Khan, general manager of the central control of Biman, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Biman ends up incurring additional cost due to hotel accommodations and feeding of passengers when it cannot maintain flight schedules," Belayet Hossain, general manager of the planning department of Biman, told The Daily Star last night.

"Biman has to spend additional amount of money to buy extra fuel for its antiquated fleet of aircraft, which makes 40 percent of its total cost while a standard airline's fuel cost is usually about 25 percent of its total cost," he said.

"Due to an aging fleet, Biman's maintenance cost is also very high," he said.

"Currently grounding of aircraft for technical reasons occurs almost everyday making Biman's schedule go astray," he added.

Biman's Managing Director Dr MA Momen said, "Replacing the antiquated aircraft with new generation ones is imperative for remaining competitive in the aviation business."

Biman now has air service

agreement (ASA) with 42 countries, but it can use only 18, he added.

"Biman's competitors like Emirates, Singapore Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Kuwait Airways use new generation aircraft while Biman uses antiquated ones," Belayet Hossain quipped.

In 2005, Biman sent a proposal to the erstwhile government for purchasing four Boeing 777s, six A-330 airbuses, and three A-319 aircraft, but due to bureaucratic red tape the proposal bore no result, said a Biman high official.

"Boeing proposed to arrange finances for buying those aircraft, seeking a guarantee from the Bangladesh government," the official said adding, but the government did not provide any guarantee, so Boeing lost its interest.

Dhaka-kolkata

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as part of the process of resumption of train service between Bangladesh and India after more than four decades. The train consisting of seven coaches arrived at Cantonment station carrying a 30-member team of officials and technical personnel.

Jubilant people welcomed arrival of the train that reached the capital after a 500-km journey.

Bhuiyan's men

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Khaleda Zia in her Sunday's speech had also said the reform proposal placed by the party secretary general is personal, but the pro-Mannan reformist leaders yesterday said that proposal is of the entire party, which will be adopted through a council.

Khaleda Zia on Sunday addressed a Jubo Dal meeting in New York over the phone and said, "Those who joined BNP from other parties, are conspiring to destroy the party in the name of reforms, taking the opportunity of the state of emergency."

"The conspiring leaders who came from other parties do not love BNP, they just want to stay close to the state power at any cost and have no ideal, they just love power," she added.

But denying Khaleda's allegations ZA Khan, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, told reporters yesterday, "We are in the party and trying to keep the party united... Those who are talking about breaking up the party, might be thinking of splitting it themselves."

"We will continue our efforts to keep her [Khaleda] with us at least till the council, which will finally decide all of our fates," he said after meeting Bhuiyan yesterday.

When asked about the allegations raised by Khaleda against the reformist leaders, Kamal lbne

Trial of graft case against Huda, Sigma starts

UNB, Dhaka

The trial of a graft case against former communications minister Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda began yesterday at a special judge's court.

Judge AK Roy recorded the deposition made by a deputy director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) who filed the case as prosecution witness.

The detained Huda couple was produced before the court amid tight security.

The case was filed with Dhanmondi Police Station On March 21, accusing Huda and Sigma of taking Tk 2.40 crore in bribe from Mir Zakir Hossain, the owner of a construction firm.

After investigation into the case, the ACC official submitted the charge sheet to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's court on June 4.

On June 21, the case was transferred to the Special Judge's Court for quick disposal.

Mainul

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government was to rescue the country from a possible anarchy and save the nation from an impending civil war.

He accused the political parties of creating such situation and alleged that the unholy activities of the political parties had resulted in that situation and the formation of the present caretaker government.

Responding to a query about the withdrawal of ban on indoor politics, the adviser said the government is thinking about withdrawal of the restrictions conditionally.

"But some people have requested us not to lift the ban on indoor politics," he said, indicating the standpoint of the emerging new brand of reformist politicians.

Terming the present caretaker government unusual one, Mainul said the main goal of the government is to establish a corruption-free democratic country.

Army, cops

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dealer suspended sale and sought help of the law enforcers who assured the farmers that the dealer will make arrangements to sell fertiliser to all on Wednesday (tomorrow) and Thursday.

The district administration sent a requisition of 50 more metric tons of fertiliser for distribution in the union. Farmers told journalists that they need the fertiliser as soon as possible as it will be of no use a week later.

NACHOLE VIOLENCE
Sheer mismanagement in fertiliser distribution system is one of the reasons that triggered the farmer unrest on July 4 in Nachole, said the ministerial committee probing the incident.

"The local authorities failed to ensure a smooth distribution [of fertiliser].... the stock [of fertiliser] was sufficient.... farmers got infuriated at the mismanagement as they were in a hurry," said Anwar Faruk, head of the four-member committee and director general of seed wing under agriculture ministry, after visiting Nachole yesterday.

The committee is likely to submit its report to the government within a few days.

"Our work is almost done.... we will spend a couple more weeks to verify the information and the documents we gathered," Anwar Faruk told The Daily Star.

Other members of the committee are Abdul Hamid, director of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, Ershad Hossain Khan, additional director of Department of Agriculture Extension and Asit Kumar Mukutmoni, additional divisional commissioner of Rajshahi.

The committee heard a number of witnesses in the office of Nachole Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and collected written statements from 26 persons.

Most of the speakers blamed UNO Monjur for cursing and physically assaulting a number of the farmers waiting for fertiliser on July 4. The UNO ignored suggestions from other officials and at one time he slapped an agriculture official as he recommended setting up more distribution points to quell the agitation.

The team also recorded statement of injured UNO Monjur Morshed, currently undergoing treatment in Rajshahi.

Danish Minister for Development and Cooperation Ulla Tornaes yesterday thanked the Bangladesh government for "the excellent cooperation it had extended" in rescuing the Danida personnel, BSS reports.

Tornaes conveyed her government's gratitude by making a telephone call to Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury from Copenhagen.

Iftekhar expressed deep appreciation of Denmark's sustained support to Bangladesh's development efforts, and said Bangladesh looks forward to expanding political, economic and cultural relations with Denmark.

Palestinian PM holds talks with Israeli FM

Arab League sending delegation to Tel Aviv

BBC ONLINE, AP, Jerusalem

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni has met the Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, for the first time since Fayyad took office last month.

The meeting in Jerusalem is seen as a gesture of support for moderate Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Israeli and Arab officials meanwhile said an Arab League delegation would go to Israel for the first time in its history. The 22-nation Arab League will send the delegation to Israel this week, with the mission of discussing a sweeping peace initiative as well as the threat posed by Hamas and other Islamic extremists.

The visit will focus on an Arab peace initiative and ways to help the beleaguered Palestinian Authority.

Israel rejected the Saudi-led peace plan when it was launched in 2002 but gave some aspects a cautious welcome when it was endorsed by Arab states earlier this year.

The Arab League historically has been hostile toward the Jewish state, but has grown increasingly conciliatory given the expanding influence of Islamic extremists in the region a concern underscored by Hamas' violent takeover of the Gaza Strip last month.

An Israeli statement issued after Livni's meeting with Fayyad said: "The discussion dealt primarily with the situation in the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the ways of improving the lives of the residents in the territories while preserving Israeli security interests."

Israeli spokeswoman Miri Eisen said her country saw the new Palestinian government as an opportunity. "This is a government which clearly has accepted the international principles - not only the recognition of Israel, but especially the renouncing of terrorism..."

Musharraf

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wanted terrorists.

A mosque spokesman, meanwhile, claimed hundreds of men and women died in a military assault on the mosque and adjoining Islamic school.

It was impossible to verify either claim in the escalating battle of gunfire and rhetoric between the government and the defenders of Islamabad's Red Mosque.

Musharraf sent in troops last Wednesday, a day after supporters of the mosque's radical clerics fought gunbattles with security forces sent to contain their campaign to impose Taliban-style rule in the capital.

At least 24 people have died so far, including a special forces commando shot as the military blasted holes in the walls of the fortified compound. Officials said they hoped hundreds of students allegedly being held hostage in the mosque could use the gaps to escape.

The siege sparked an anti-government protest Monday by some 20,000 tribesmen, including hundreds of masked militants wielding assault rifles, in the north-west region of Bajur.

Many chanted "Death to Musharraf" and "Death to America" in a rally led by Maulana Faqir Mohammed, a cleric wanted by authorities and who is believed to be a close lieutenant of al-Qaida No. 2 leader Ayman al-Zawahri.

"All of Musharraf's policies are against Islam and the country therefore he has become our enemy. He will not be spared and revenge will be taken against him for these atrocities," he said.

"Innocent scholars and students are being martyred, mosques are being ruined only to please America," he said.

Religious Affairs Minister Ejaz ul-Haq said terrorists, including a suspect in a plot against Pakistan's prime minister, were in control of the mosque.

"I can only tell you they are involved in many terrorist activities inside and outside" Pakistan, ul-Haq said. "And there are a few who are very renowned, very well known, more well known than al-Qaida and the Taliban."

Ul-Haq provided no details. However, Musharraf has said members of Jaish-e-Mohammed, a radical group involved in fighting Indian rule in Kashmir and with links to al-Qaida, was involved.

Military official who said he was not allowed to speak on the record said intercepts of telephone calls from the mosque indicated the defenders also had links to Harkat Jihad-e-Islami.