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Tahawur Hussain Rana, of the Chicago cell of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET) and the principal accomplice of David Coleman Headley, has already been sentenced by a Chicago court to 14 years in prison for his association with Headley and the LET in the abandoned plans to blow up the office of a Danish newspaper in Copenhagen which had published caricatures of the Holy Prophet.

2. Curiously, he has not been convicted for his role in the Mumbai blasts of 26/11 despite the fact that he had facilitated the frequent visits of Headley to India at the instance of the LET to collect operational intelligence and, according to his admission, was aware of the impending terrorist strikes in Mumbai even though had no role in it. According to him, a retired Pakistani Army officer told him of the impending strike during a meeting in Dubai before he flew to China on his way back to Chicago.

3. This was sufficiently strong evidence for convicting him as an accomplice before the act, but this aspect seems to have been ignored by the prosecution and the court. This could open the door for the Government of India moving for his extradition since the bar of double jeopardy may not be attracted. Under this, a person cannot be convicted twice for the same offence.

4. Even though officials of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) have been quoted in sections of the media as saying that they would move for his extradition, I have doubts whether any serious efforts would be made by the NIA to get him to India.

5. Headley is to be sentenced for his involvement in the Mumbai and Copenhagen cases and his co-operation with the LET and suspected officers of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) by a Chicago court on January 24, 2013. Since his trial is based on a plea bargain with the USA's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on the basis of his total confession, the FBI has not sought the death sentence for him. The

FBI has also reportedly made a commitment that he will not be extradited to India. He is, therefore, expected to be sentenced to a prison term likely to be more than that awarded to Rana.

6. Headley and Rana were the tip of the Chicago iceberg of the LET which facilitated the 26/11 terrorist strikes in Mumbai by the LET and ISI masterminds in Pakistan. The FBI and the NIA, whose officials were allowed by the FBI to question Headley in FBI custody, were able to collect details regarding the Pakistani links of Headley and Rana.

7. The hidden iceberg itself consisted of the contacts of Headley and Rana in the Indian Muslim community who facilitated their frequent clandestine travels to India for helping the LET leaders in Pakistan and the ISI in planning and executing the 26/11 strikes. Surprisingly, neither in the narrative of the FBI nor in that of the NIA is there much reference to the Indian cells of Headley and Rana. No attempt has been made to identify them and question them.

8. There has been a huge cover-up of the LET iceberg in India that helped Headley and Rana. While the NIA has shown considerable persistence in repeatedly questioning a few Hindus who had allegedly indulged in some acts of reprisals against Muslims in the Malegaon and Samjauta Express explosions, it has scrupulously avoided identifying and questioning the contacts of Headley and Rana in the Indian Muslim community.

9. Indian analysts and political parties have not shown much interest in exposing this cover-up by the partisan Ministry of Home Affairs and demanding an end to this. One must raise this issue strongly and demand thorough enquiries into the matter.

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