

LeT chief spreading terror in name of jihad: Pak govt

First 'Official' Admission Backs India's Position

TNN & AGENCIES

Lahore/New Delhi: In what could be the first official admission by the Pakistan government that Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed is involved in terrorist activities — he is named by India as the

FULL COVERAGE: P 10 & 12

26/11 mastermind — its interior ministry told a judicial board that Saeed and his aides were spreading terrorism in the name of jihad.

An official representing the Nawaz Sharif government, arguing before the judicial review board that was formed to review the detention of Saeed and four of his aides under an anti-terror Act, countered the Lashkar

LEARN FROM UMMER KILLING, SAYS GENERAL RAWAT



► Army chief Gen Bipin Rawat said on Sunday that **youth of Kashmir 'should introspect and learn from the killing of Lt Ummer Fayaz (right)**. They should expose those who promote and spread terror'



► **'Ours is a professional force. We use force or open fire only if it is required** or if someone is trying to disrupt our counter-insurgency operations,' added Gen Rawat

REPORT, P 10

chief's claim that he was being prevented from raising the Kashmir issue.

According to a PTI report, the Pakistan government informed the review board: "The government detained the Jamaat-ud-Dawa leaders on pressure of the United Nations (sic) and international organisations." The official told the board that Saeed was "spreading terrorism in the

name of jihad".

The admission of the terror links of Saeed, who doubles up as chief of the JuD, allegedly a charitable organisation that acts as Lashkar's political front, is a rare instance of Pakistan endorsing New Delhi's stand that the LeT has carried out several terrorist strikes in India.

► **'Claims not proven', P 10**

Allegations against me were never proved, says Hafiz

► Continued from P 1

The Pakistan government's decision to name Saeed for terrorism is significant as the LeT boss is seen as a key asset and ally of the Pakistani army which helps in training and launching LeT terrorists across the LoC into J&K.

Saeed echoed Pakistan's stand in discussions with India when he told the board that allegations against him were never proved by any state institution. He said he was being victimised for raising voice for "freedom of Kashmir and criticising the government's weak policy". But the official position slamming him for terror in the guise of jihad can also reflect political tensions between the Sharif regime and the Pakistan army on use and support to terrorist organisations.

LeT camps in POK are often close to army establishments and crossings of LeT into J&K are frequently assisted by cov-

ering fire. The symbiotic relationship between Saeed and Pakistan army has ensured that LeT did not attack targets in Pakistan. Though it shares a belief in radical Islamic ideology with Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, it does not see the Pakistan



Hafiz Saeed

army as an "apostate force" for being "US collaborators" and supporting an allegedly un-Islamic government in Islamabad.

The admission before the judicial review board comes as the Punjab government further extended Saeed's detention for 90 days. The detention is not seen as particularly harsh as Saeed has often been under loose house arrest and continues to meet and direct his followers. He has been addressing his cadre and on occasion spoken to Lashkar supporters in J&K over mobile phones. Yet, the official position naming him as involved in terrorism could also point to faultlines between the Sharif government and the army.

The board, comprising Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan of the Supreme Court (head), Justice Ayesha A Malik of Lahore HC and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail of Balochistan HC, directed the interior ministry to submit the complete record regarding detention of Saeed and aides Zafar Iqbal, Abdul Rehman Abid, Abdullah Ubaid and Qazi Kashif Niaz on the next hearing on May 15.

Last Thursday, a Lahore HC division bench questioned why Saeed and others were not presented before a review board before the government issued a notification for extension of his detention.

The Punjab government on January 30 put Saeed and aides under house arrest for involvement in activities prejudicial to peace. The government also placed JuD and Falah-e-Inshiat Foundation under the second schedule of the anti-terror act. The Sharif government reportedly took action against Saeed after the US clearly told Islamabad that it may face sanctions for not acting.