

Judge keeps India terror attack suspect in US custody

LOS ANGELES A former Chicago businessman will remain in the United States as a federal judge in Los Angeles weighs whether he will be extradited to India for his alleged role in the 1993 Mumbai train attack that killed more than 100 people.

Talwar Ramnath (aka HWY-1 or RAH-16), a Pakistani-born Canadian, is wanted by Indian authorities for his alleged involvement in the deadly attacks that are sometimes referred to as India's 9/11. An Indian warrant for his arrest was issued in August 2015.

Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Choolian on Thursday ordered the defense attorneys and prosecutors to file additional documents by July 15. Ram will remain in federal custody.

Indian authorities allege that Ram conspired with his childhood friend David Guttman Headland to assist the Pakistani terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, or "Army of Good," in the orchestration of the 1993 terror attack in Mumbai that killed 166 people, injured more than 300 and costed \$1.5 billion in damage.

Headley and Ram attended military high school in Pakistan together. Ram's immigration law center in Chicago, as well as a satellite office in Mumbai, was allegedly used as a base for their terrorism activities between 2006 and 2008, prosecutors say.

Ram's attorneys said their client was not aware of Headley's terrorism plot and was merely assisting his childhood friend and set up a Mumbai business office. They also said Headley is a serial liar who has deceived the U.S. government multiple times in several criminal cases, and his testimony should not be viewed as credible. The attorneys alleged that Headley had used Ram to further his terrorism efforts without Ram's knowledge.

Ram's two daughters attended the hearing. They declined to comment, as did his lawyers.

Ram wore a white jumpsuit and black gloves, as well as a mask at the hearing. His ankles were shackled.

Only one of the 10 Mumbai terrorist survivors the four-day rampage and went on trial. He was convicted, sentenced to death in India and hanged.

In 2011, Ram was convicted in federal court in Illinois of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism in Denmark for a terrorist plot to attack a Dan-

ish newspaper in retaliation for its publication of cartoons that depicted the Prophet Muhammad in 2005. The cartoons targeted Muslims because pictures of the prophet are prohibited in Islam.

Headley, however, failed to prove that Ram had directly supported the Mumbai attacks. Ram's defense attorneys, in court papers, say because he has been acquired of the Mumbai-related charges in the U.S., extraditing him to India would be tantamount to double jeopardy.

Ram was sentenced to a 14-year prison term in Denmark in-

land case, but his punishment was reduced to time served in June 2020 after he claimed he had contracted the coronavirus in a detention facility in California prison, court documents show. He was ordered released while he held an immigration detainer so he could not return to Canada to avoid his extradition request.

Headley ultimately testified against Ram in the Illinois case after he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to murder. As part of his plea deal, he can't be extradited to India.



Death row inmates in Sri Lanka protest pardon granted to ex-MP



About 150 death row inmates in Sri Lanka have gone on a hunger strike to demand their sentences be commuted after the island nation's president pardoned a terror legislator who had been condemned to death for an election-related killing.

The hunger strike involved death row prisoners sentenced to death who were demanding their sentences be commuted to life terms, prison spokesman Chandan Ekanayake said.

He said the prison officials were holding talks with the prisoners and other government officials to resolve the issue but declined to give further details.

In London prisons are highly congested with more than 30,000 inmates crowded into facilities with a capacity of 10,000.

Unrest related to COVID-19 erupted in one of the prisons last year, and at least 11 inmates were killed and more than 100 wounded when guards opened fire to control the unrest.

Donna Silva's weekly ser-

as a favorite of Sri Lanka's ruling Rajapaksa family and had been sentenced to death over the sentence of a court politician from his own party in an election-related case about 10 years ago.

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Silva's surprise release appeared to have set off the protest, and Silva's case "is another example of selective, arbitrary granting of pardons that weakens rule of law and undermines accountability".

The UN human rights office said the pardon "is a breach of the rule of law and undermines accountability".

Sri Lanka has not hanged a prisoner since 1976, even though courts routinely pass death sentences.

Rajapaksa's predecessor, Maithripala Sirisena, had promised to end the movement in capital punishment and to use it against those convicted of drug crimes.

Prison officials listed two reasons to carry out the hangings, but none took place during Sirisena's tenure.

silvers

President of Kyrgyzstan to pay official visit to Turkmenistan

President of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov will be on an official visit to Turkmenistan from June 27 through June 28, 2021, Tass reports, with reference to the press service of the president of Kyrgyzstan.

During the visit, the head of Kyrgyzstan will hold talks with President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

The presidents will discuss priority areas of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as well as regional issues of importance within the framework of regional and international organizations, the report says.

Previously, the leadership of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan considered proposals to stimulate entrepreneurship and investment cooperation.

In the first seven months of 2019, the trade turnover between Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan amounted to \$6.5 million.

Transport, transport, logistics and agriculture were identified as promising areas of cooperation.

Turkmenistan supplies both bananas, bakery and flour products, textiles, and pipes to Kyrgyzstan. In turn, Kyrgyzstan exports lamps, plastic films and tapes, and machinery for the textile industry to Turkmenistan.



Pakistan aims to double IT industry in two years with tech zones

Pakistan is looking to double its IT industry in two years by setting up dedicated tech zones across the country, after missing out on tech booms that helped nations like India and Philippines become tech and operations for the world.

"The world's fifth most populous nation expects to spend \$100 billion on tech zones by next year, and we are not even close to that," said Asim Hashmi, who heads the government body responsible for developing science and technology zones.

It's offering a 10-year waiver on corporate tax and imports of any equipment or building material needed for the zones, which will give Pakistan's IT industry a "captive market" that could double in size in as much as 36 billion in two years, he added.

Pakistan is heading on the new tech zones to create employment for its masses in young people, nearly two-thirds of its population is below 30. It is ranked 10th to the third-largest gdp economy globally after India and Hong Kong, according to Online Labour Index by Oxford Institute for Future of Work.

A flood of overseas capital into startups from Silicon Valley to e-commerce that began during the coronavirus pandemic is also creating demand for dedicated zones to serve these industries.

The initiative first emerged after Prime Minister Imran Khan sought answers at a meeting last year as to why Pakistan was missing out on the tech boom. Inspired by his own experience as an entrepreneur, Hashmi said the prime minister had the South

Asian nation lacked a tech ecosystem or an enabling environment.

Hashmi, who led his job with International Business Machines Corp. in Canada and moved back to Pakistan to open a technology company, had to struggle with people asking for visas and land delays with setting up his own fiber network and data centers.

The new areas will also have tech zones and will be plug-and-play models in the past.

In 2008, it planned to spend \$1 billion to build dozens of software parks, though that effort failed. This time, the government's efforts will

them and for that you have to give special incentives, which will I think we would have probably been the last in the region to give," Hashmi, now chairman of Special Technology Zones Authority, said in an interview. "China Internet City gave them. They got all the tech companies."

Each tech zone in Pakistan has tried several times to start similar projects in the past. In 2008, it planned to spend \$1 billion to build dozens of software parks, though that effort failed. This time, the government's efforts will

involve attracting global investment to ensure the project takes off.

About half a dozen global companies and 50 domestic firms have expressed interest in setting up in proposed zones, Hashmi said, adding that as much as \$1.5 billion of private investment will come into the zones over the next two years. He is also convincing the government, which is spending millions of dollars on technology-based projects, to give more centers to local entrepreneurs.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan imported mobile phones worth \$4.14 billion (NPR 3247 million) during the first 11 months of the current fiscal year, a decline from \$1.54 billion (NPR 1247 million) over the same period of last fiscal year.

As to the number of mobile phones, 5.55 million sets were imported during the first 11 months of the current fiscal year, as against 4.07 million for the same period of the last fiscal year.

"Soaring demand for smartphones for education purposes is the main reason behind massive growth in import of mobile phones," Sanjeev Agrawal, chief executive officer of Ete Direct, an authorized smartphone distributor, said. Xinhua.



Online classes boost mobile phone import in Nepal

Online classes used the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has boosted the import of mobile phones in Nepal, according to data released by the country's Department of Commerce.

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