

Scenario 153

MQM - FUNDING FROM INDIA

Referring to media reports dated 23rd December 2014:

Once, the MQM demanded that foreign funding to religious seminaries in Pakistan, especially in Karachi, should be stopped.

Speaking during a session of the Senate, MQM senator Nasreen Jalil said that *Jamiat Ulema e Islam Fazl* [JUI-F] chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman should take the lead in offering details of foreign funding to his religious seminaries.

Next Sunday, an FIR was lodged against Maulana Aziz on charges of threatening MQM chief Altaf Hussain over terrorism, provocation and cyber crime. It was the second FIR against the Lal Masjid cleric in a span of two days, the earlier one being filed by civil society activists in Islamabad.

The MQM's case against the cleric was lodged by Advocate Arif Khan. The complainant had submitted as proof the video message as well as the written document in which Maulana Aziz had threatened Altaf Hussain, who had urged the government to demolish Lal Masjid.

JUI[F] and MQM both were sailing in the *same boat of foreign funding*.

Referring to '*the News*' dated 5th July 2015: former RAW chief AS Dulat said that MQM Chief Altaf Hussain was 'guest' of British intelligence agency MI-6 in London. However, he refused to answer a question about India's funding of MQM. He maintained that Altaf Hussain was being hosted by MI-6 and therefore, MI-6 should be questioned about MQM funding as well.

AS Dulat's statement had come amidst rumours that two MQM leaders had confessed to MQM's funding from India.

Referring to '*the News*' dated 20th September 2015; calling itself a patriotic political party of Pakistan, the MQM *Rabita* [coordination] Committee distanced itself from those workers who had gone to India following the

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

1992 operation against the party. The committee, in an *'important policy statement'* said that:

"These workers, who had gone to India for saving their lives, did so without informing the MQM and this cannot be called the policy of the MQM. The MQM has nothing to do with the training of these people in India."

The statement appeared against the backdrop of the then ongoing crack-down on criminals and terrorists in Karachi by Rangers and police. The party said thousands of MQM workers were forced to go to different parts of the country for saving their lives after the 'state' operation in 1992 - some headed to foreign countries where they claimed asylum. The Committee maintained that:

"The countries where the MQM workers headed included USA, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Australia, Middle East states etc. Some went to India for saving their lives as they could not go to any other country."

These MQM workers chose to go to India because they had family ties in India, and they thought that they will not face hardships of homelessness and hunger."

The *Rabita* Committee urged that just as clemency is being announced for the estranged Baloch people who were highly praiseworthy, the establishment should also heal the wounds of *Muhajirs* by forgetting past bitterness. Also that such a step would be in the interest of the nation and the country, and vowed to extend its fullest support to it.

The matter, however, travels far back – even to 1990s.

HOSTILE TARIQ MIR SPILLS BEANS:

On 30th May 2012; as per transcripts of an interview conducted by the London Metropolitan Police at *Egware Police Station London*, Tariq Mir, a senior leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement [MQM] made startling revelations about the nexus between his party and the Indian intelligence, claiming that the Indians used to pay £800,000 to the MQM per annum for running its operations.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

Tariq Mir had made the statements 'voluntarily' and was 'not under arrest or threat'. The transcripts appeared on social media after MQM top leaders in Karachi used absurd and ridiculous language against the Pak-Rangers and army establishment a week earlier. [*'Pakistan Today'* dated 27th June 2015 is referred]

According to the transcripts, Mir told the British police that Indian money was initially received by the party through couriers. He further told that:

'At some stage our expenses (of the Secretariat) were about 100,000 pounds per month. I was aware of our significant increase in funding as a result of the Indian connection.

'That funding continued for, I cannot be exact.... But due to pounds 10k cash limit (on importing currency), on some occasions, we got businessmen to receive the money and use it to pay MQM's expenses.'

During the same days the police had also interviewed MQM senior member Mohammad Anwar about Indian funding, Tariq Mir said the MQM sought money from all over; and added that:

'The Indians approached us – questions were asked about people without passports, etc. ... In about 1994, we started getting some money; some of our frozen accounts were released. In 1995-96, I took-over the finance from (Nadeem) Nusrat and ... that money was coming from India.'

Asked whether MQM Chief Altaf Hussein knew about the Indian money, Tariq Mir said that Hussein himself was getting money from India. *'He [Altaf Hussein] got his money from different sources. The Indian government funded us because they thought it was good to support us,'* Mir added.

Replying a question that who else in MQM knew about Indian funding; Tariq Mir said that:

'It was very secret... The money would have come via Mr Anwar, because apart from me, Anwar and Dr F and Anwar knew about the money. So far as I know, no one else in the party, apart from Anwar, had the money details.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

No one but the four of us knew about it, we did not want to come out open that MQM was receiving from Indians'.

About who initiated Indian money, Tariq Mir said he did not know for sure who facilitated getting the money to Altaf Hussain. Added that the largest amount of money he ever received was for house purchase, but he did not know what part of that funding came from India.

'I would say a large part of the funding for houses came from the Indian money. I said earlier that London gets about Pounds 800,000 per annum (this is not to include cost of purchasing houses) that has been fairly steady over the years.

The request to Indians for money used to be done for more workers. We asked for the funding but I do not believe the Indian people ever paid anything like what we wanted. Some of the expense may have gone on weapons training. People would have been sent to India to get some weapons training.'

According to the transcripts, Mir said he did not exactly remember when the meetings with Indians started but:

'[If I could recall exactly]. ... First meeting, with the Indians was in Vienna or Rome. (Mohammad) Anwar and (Altaf) Hussein were present. We had three or four meetings. One was definitely in Rome, one in Vienna, one in Zurich, one in a small city of Austria (Salzburg); a meeting in Paraguay [or Prague]. First meeting was probably in Rome.

The meetings were held whenever they wanted to meet. The purpose of meetings was to get to know one and other; I believe their names were not the real names, they never gave their names.'

Tariq Mir said the Indian visitors who met with MQM leaders were from the Indian intelligence agency [RAW] as he understood and the head of delegation had direct access to the Indian Prime Minister.

On 6th December 2012; The London Met Police had found the cash at first place ... Before this, money laundering issue was not raised ... And raid was conducted to find out clues in Imran Farooq murder case.

"..... the cash was found when a counter-terrorism unit of police raided Mr Hussain's office on 6th December last year under the Po-

lice and Criminal Evidence Act in connection with the investigation of Dr Imran Farooq murder case."

The reason money laundering issue was not raised before this was that they didn't have reliable evidence. These statements by Tariq Mir could have been enough to grant them a search warrant but not enough to start a money laundering case.

"If you read through the documents, you will see that a lot of it is based on the possibility of MQM having 'killing teams' - which easily fits in with the Imran Farooq murder case investigation. It isn't the British police's fault if Mir sahib gave them some extra information."

However, the London Metropolitan Police, on 30th June 2015, denied that a purported confession statement by MQM leader Tariq Mir was an official document which had been leaked. The London Police spokesperson Alan Crockford, after reviewing the purported testimony carefully, confirmed that they were not official documents of record.

In the short e-mailed reply, Mr Alan told that the London police had carefully analysed excerpts from this alleged confession, printed in various newspapers of Pakistan. In the above paragraphs, the disclosures made by Tariq Mir, it was alleged that the MQM had been receiving funds from the Indian government since 1994 with only four top leaders kept in the loop.

The alleged statement lent credence to the BBC report published on 24th June about two MQM leaders telling the British authorities about the MQM-RAW nexus. However, it must be kept in mind that *the London Police officer had only denied that no document from their police files were removed or copied – but it did not comment that whether the record available with Tariq Mir was false.*

BBC-2 DOCUMENTARY ON MQM:

On 11th July 2013: The London Metropolitan Police confirmed that investigations against MQM's Chief Altaf Hussain had initiated on charges of money laundering worth at least £400,000 and incitement to violence.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

The news was part of a short documentary prepared by Newsnight on the MQM, and included video clips of Mr Hussain making violent statements, an outline of the death of assassinated party leader Imran Farooq, as well as interviews with a former MQM leader, a policeman accusing the party of murder and party leader Farooq Sattar. The said program was hosted by Owen Benett Jones.

The UK authorities had started investigating the MQM in 2010 when a senior party leader, Imran Farooq, was stabbed to death outside his home in north London. During those inquiries the police found around £400,000 in the MQM's London offices and in the home of MQM leader Altaf Hussain. That prompted a second investigation into possible money laundering.

In the course of the inquiries the UK authorities found a list itemising weapons, including mortars, grenades and bomb-making equipment in an MQM property. The list included prices for the weapons; when asked about the list, the MQM made no response.

As the UK police investigations progressed, the British judiciary adopted an increasingly tough line on the MQM. Back in 2011 a British judge adjudicating an asylum appeal case had found that *"the MQM has killed over 200 police officers who have stood up against them in Karachi"*.

Before 2005-06 the training was given to a small number of mid-ranking members of the MQM; later, greater numbers of more junior party members had been trained.

A year earlier, another British judge hearing another such case found that:

"There is overwhelming objective evidence that the MQM for decades had been using violence."

The MQM was also under pressure in Pakistan due to those developments.

On 11th March 2015, the Rangers raided the party's Karachi HQ at Nine Zero. They found a significant number of weapons there for which the MQM said they were planted by the Rangers themselves.

*BBC portrayed Altaf Hussain under caption: **Who is Altaf Hussain?***

- Born in Karachi in 1953 to a middle-class family; studied pharmacy at university.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

- Formed MQM party in 1984 to represent *Mohajirs* - descendants of Urdu-speaking Muslims who migrated from India to Pakistan.
- Requested political asylum in UK in 1992, later gained British citizenship; continues to run MQM from north London.

BBC continued that - [He] lived in self-imposed exile in the UK for more than 20 years. He was given a British passport in 2002. Till recent past, MQM had been accused of using violence to impose its will on Karachi. On other counts, many MQM officials, including Altaf Hussain, were called to police station in relation to the money-laundering case but no-one was formally charged. The party insisted that all its funds were legitimate and that most of them come from donors in the business community in Karachi.

The latest developments in the MQM case suggested that Pakistan would counter such complaints with demands that India should stop sponsoring violent forces in Karachi; especially the MQM.

Next day, the BBC also declared that the Indian government denied the allegation, telling the BBC that the charges were completely baseless. The MQM also strongly denied the claims, saying it never received any funding or training from India.

The MQM has long been a dominant force in the politics of Pakistan's largest city Karachi but as the BBC's Owen Bennett Jones reported, pressure on the party was mounting.

BBC Urdu Service report then released had confirmed that '*a considerable amount of money*' had been found during raids on Mr Hussain's residence and office in London on *6th December 2012* as detailed above, but no arrest was made at the spot. The cash was found when a Counter-Terrorism Unit of Police raided Mr Hussain's office in connection with the investigation of Dr Imran Farooq murder case.

However, no further detail was provided by the London police but the money was seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

The BBC told that on *18th June 2013* two more raids were carried out in MQM's more houses in north London *and again a considerable amount of money was seized*. It was being investigated as to how and under what circumstances the money had reached the three places.

While talking to the host of *BBC Two NEWSNIGHT* referred above, senior MQM leader Dr Farooq Sattar also admitted the seizure of some money

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

during raids in London. However, he was not able to comment on the investigation into possible money-laundering while police inquiries were in progress. BBC News told that in raids on MQM-owned properties in London, police seized hundreds of thousands of dollars in unaccounted-for cash.

The London police had also received thousands of complaints against Mr Hussain for a controversial speech from London to his followers in Karachi and police sent the transcript of the speech to Home Office for translation and analysis. However, the police did not tell the BBC anything about the advice they got from the Home Office on those speech scripts.

BBC's *Newsnight* also confirmed that in 2001 Mr Hussain had written a letter to the then British prime minister Tony Blair in which the former had offered the British government his party's help in getting secret information about *Jihadi* networks in Pakistan. *Newsnight* got this letter under the Freedom of Information Act.

[The said letter verbatim has been placed in 'The Living History of Pakistan' Vol-III with reference to Karachi's former Mayor Mustafa Kamal.]

Dr Sattar was also shown clips of certain speeches of Mr Hussain. Rejecting allegations levelled in the *Newsnight* programme, Dr Sattar said it appeared that *"there has been an influence of pro-Taliban and radical forces while this documentary was being prepared"*.

Meanwhile, another MQM leader, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, told a press conference in Karachi that parts of certain speeches of Mr Hussain had been presented out of context in the BBC programme. Condemning the BBC programme for what he called out-of-context presentation of Mr Hussain's speeches, he asked people to exercise patience and vowed that MQM would raise its voice in a democratic manner at every forum against the propaganda.

In January 2014, another BBC news report had identified the names of two suspects in the Dr Imran Farooq murder case.

The report said that based on the documents received from Pakistani officials the two suspects were identified, for the first time, by the names of Mohsin Ali Syed and Muhammad Kashif Khan, who had been staying on student visa in England.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

[Owen Bennett Jones, a former BBC Correspondent in Islamabad, presents Newshour on the BBC World Service and is the author of Pakistan: Eye of the Storm.]

On 3rd June 2014; the MQM leader, Altaf Hussain, was dramatically arrested from his home in North West London. The Scotland Yard confirmed that a 60-year-old man had been arrested on suspicion of money-laundering but did not name Altaf Hussain. The MQM itself and the police later confirmed that it was Altaf Hussain who was taken in police custody.

The media filmed the North London property of Altaf Hussain being searched by around three dozen detectives from the Specialist Operations Unit. The operation began at 5:30am and all members of the household were asked to leave the property except Altaf Hussain. Initially, the MQM denied the news of the arrest and issued several denials but later on issued a detailed press release and accepted that Altaf Hussain had been arrested.

The media live news bulletin carried that: 'A British citizen, Altaf Hussain, lived in exile in the UK since 1991 after he fled Karachi and sought asylum here. He was attacked in Karachi several times before he left Pakistan'. The MQM said in the afternoon:

"Altaf Hussain has been taken to the police station where the police doctor will examine his health and decide if Mr Hussain is fit to be interviewed. Mr Altaf Hussain is at present in the police station.

The Metropolitan Police arrived at the residence of Altaf Hussain in North London. They had the search warrant and they wanted to arrest Mr Hussain and take him to the police station where he will be questioned about money laundering investigation.

We would like to inform that Mr Hussain has been very ill for past several days and only yesterday the MQM Central Coordination Committee discussed his health situation and contacted his personal doctor. The doctor visited the residence of Mr Hussain and examined him.

The doctor advised to shift him to the hospital. He also consulted various specialist consultants and it was decided that today in the morning Mr Hussain will be admitted to a London hospital where he will undergo treatment for the next few days."

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

Today [on 3rd June 2014], Mr Hussain was getting ready for the hospital when the police arrived at his house and informed him that he is being arrested for investigation."

The Scotland Yard confirmed late on Tuesday that Altaf Hussain had been taken to hospital for the previously scheduled medical appointment.

The police also told that the arrest took place at a residential address in NW London. Officers were then searching the address. The man [Mr Hussain] had an existing medical condition and we would ensure that he could attend pre-arranged hospital appointments. He would remain in the custody of officers throughout.

As news started filtering through the airwaves that the MQM's Chief Altaf Hussain had been arrested in London on money laundering charges, everybody went scared in Karachi. Petrol pumps were cordoned off; markets and offices emptied out; panic spread, and fear and anxiety was writ large on the city's streets. The city – which kept a terrible history of violent protests – seemed like a ticking time bomb, which, upon explosion, could destroy everything any time.

MQM had the capacity to shut down the city if and when it wanted; moreover, Karachi had acquired over the decades of reacting violently to anything directly or indirectly linked to the politics of the city. Rivals and critics of MQM were comprised of a bunch of goons with their leader as don. However, for sympathisers and die-hard supporters, the party and its leader had been saviours of the *mohajirs*; they have given *mohajirs* an identity, and had successfully mobilised the community to stand up against economic injustice and ethnic prejudice.

Main teen tak ginoon ga [I will count up to three], Altaf Hussain roared at a rally held under the shadow of Quaid e Azam's mausoleum in 1989. *Uss ke baad aap sab bilkul khamosh ho jaayengey* [After that everyone of you will become silent].

A quarter of a century later and now from thousands of miles away, Altaf Hussain could still make Karachi fall silent whenever he wanted. His followers used to say:

'Humein manzil nahin rehnuma chahiye' [We don't need the destination but the leader]

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

MQM was the party its followers would do anything for — no questions asked. Even though Altaf Hussain has been away from Pakistan since December 1991, hardly any serious contenders to his authority could match him in the MQM. More importantly, for sympathisers and supporters, the party's ideology, or whatever remains of it, had become subservient to the personality of its Chief – Altaf Hussain.

The turning point; with war raging in Afghanistan during the 1980s, Karachi became the central transit point for foreign weapons being delivered to the Afghan factions. Weapons started fascinating the youth, pilferage and dissemination were there – so the weaponisation of Karachi became a marked feature of that age.

MQM got strengthened with new weaponry and started taking control of the city. Due to the radical preaching of Altaf Hussain, deadly skirmishes between MQM and the state apparatus got mentionable space on the front pages of the print media. This triggered a siege mentality - the party was 'in a constant state of confrontation'. The next few years, especially between 1986 and 1990, Karachi was trained enough to write its own history with blood.

During those four years, the MQM managed to sweep elections for local governments in Karachi and Hyderabad, and won the National and Sindh Assembly seats falling in the two cities with unprecedented margins. Altaf Hussain, however, never participated in any of these elections. The strategy worked; as MQM was able to claim it had brought a middle-class revolution - Hussain emerged as the ultimate kingmaker.

UPROAR IN KARACHI AFTER BBC-2:

On 13th January 2015; Pakistan's Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Asif had claimed far back that India was helping terrorist groups in Pakistan to carry out "*heinous acts*". In an interview on Dawn News's programme '*News Eye*', the minister alleged that India "*has designs on Pakistan. Taliban have links with India. Also, India's involvement in the insurgency in Balochistan cannot be ignored.*"

A day earlier, Adviser to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz had also said that India was involved in acts carried out from Afghanistan's soil in Pakistan.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

Pakistan Military sources had also claimed on the same day that the evidence with them would credibly identify financial support, training and provision of weapons to militants from India.

[On 30th April 2015; SSP Malir Rao Anwar, while speaking to media, announced the arrest of two terror suspects a night earlier, who were members of Indian spy agency RAW. the two suspects – Tahir alias Lamba and Mama Junaid – also belonged to the MQM and had been sent to India (through Indian-held Kashmir) for training in the past.

"We have solid evidence to prove these allegations. We recovered a large number of explosives, hand grenades, 9mm pistols from these suspects. Zulfiqar Haider and Nadeem Nusrat, the deputy convener of MQM, have been funding these terrorist activities from London," the SSP held.]

On 6th May 2015; the Pakistan military's media wing, the ISPR, in a statement following a conference of the corps commanders presided over by army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif at the GHQ in Rawalpindi, said:

"The conference took serious notice of RAW's involvement in whipping up terrorism in Pakistan. The corps commanders confirmed India's hand behind the unrest in the country, although Islamabad has long suspected RAW's involvement."

The statement came days after a senior police officer in Karachi arrested two MQM workers for inciting violence in the metropolitan city at the behest of RAW. The controversy led to a verbal duel between MQM Chief Altaf Hussain and the security establishment.

MQM's Altaf Hussain launched scathing criticism against the military establishment in a frustration on his part. MQM leader was upset over the then ongoing targeted operation in Karachi. Subsequently, the army said it would pursue legal action against Altaf for his unsavoury remarks.

Though the MQM chief apologised for what he called sarcastic remarks, Defence Secretary Lt Gen [rtd] M Alam Khattak told the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence next day for the proposed legal action. The committee chairman, Sh Rohail Asghar, also supported action against Altaf for his disparaging remarks against the army. The army chief, while addressing the conference, said:

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

"A terror-free Pakistan is now a national resolve. Law enforcement agencies and our brave armed forces have given a lot of sacrifices in fighting these misguided and hardened criminals to safeguard a peaceful and better future for our next generation.

These sacrifices will not go waste. We will take this war to its logical conclusion. Dignity and honour of our country, its people and gallant armed forces will be safeguarded at all costs.

With the overwhelming support of the entire nation, Operation Zarb e Azb [in North Waziristan Agency] has inflicted significant damage on terrorists."

On 12th May 2015; Sindh High Court [SHC] directed the police to produce in court the alleged MQM worker, Rehan Tahir, whom SSP Rao Anwar had declared an agent of the Indian intelligence agency, RAW.

A division bench, headed by Justice Ahmed Ali M Sheikh, passed this direction on a petition filed by the suspect's wife, Najma Tahir - for keeping him under illegal detention and extracting a confession under duress.

The petitioner said that law enforcers had arrested him near Mukka Chowk in Azizabad on 24th February 2015. Later SSP Anwar said that they had arrested her husband on 30th April. Najma Tahir requested the court to order a medical examination of the suspect to prove the torture he was subjected to. She sought an inquiry into the confessional statement of Tahir regarding his association with Raw.

The details of the *BBC* report pointing out that how the MQM had allegedly received weaponry training from India and also funds from that country, created a major stir in Pakistan. Such allegations had also surfaced before — Kh Asif Defence Minister's loud announcement on Parliament's floor on 13th January 2015.

SSP Rao Anwar's media conference in Karachi on 30th April 2015 and Pak-Army's media briefing on 6th May 2015 were on the record stating the same facts. But as a credible, independent news source, every Pakistani national believed that the *BBC* report carried much credence.

The allegations that certain MQM officials and the party notables used to receive funding from India, and a Pakistani official revealing that MQM's mid-level operatives had allegedly received weapons training in India a

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

decade ago followed by more junior level members of the party, surfaced at a time when relations between Islamabad and New Delhi were tense.

India categorically denied the charges as did the MQM but the saga could not be cooled quickly. The BBC also reported that an itemised list of weapons allocated to the MQM members was found on one of the premises of the party raided in London. The raid was done in connection with the murder of the senior party leader Dr Imran Farooq years earlier.

The BBC report appeared at a time when an operation was on in Karachi against criminal elements backed by political ones, and it was widely aired that the Pakistani establishment was seeking a treason case against the MQM leadership. The PML[N] government was also under tremendous pressure to pursue the matter. Receiving funds and weapons from India, as well as training on its soil, were generally considered the offences under high treason thus the concerned authorities had to proceed sensibly and on the basis of rationality rather than emotion.

The MQM has been a major party with a huge following in Karachi so the MQM were invited to explain its position given the seriousness of the allegations. While any criminal elements within the party were being apprehended, the general populace was disturbed over the ineptness of the courts and the useless judicial system ever prevailing in Pakistan.

The 'BBC News' dated 24th June 2015 made it more open that:

".....officials in Pakistan's MQM party have told the UK authorities they received Indian government funds.

UK authorities investigating the MQM for alleged money laundering also found a list of weapons and explosives in an MQM property.

.....that India has trained hundreds of MQM militants over the past 10 years in camps in north and north-east India."

MQM & INDIA BOTH DENIED:

The Indian authorities described the claims as "completely baseless"; the MQM also strongly denied the claims. MQM Coordination Committee Member Wasay Jalil in response to the report posted a short statement to Twit-

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

ter, rejecting BBC's allegations. In response to a question on Twitter about a confessional statement available with Scotland Yard, Jalil said, *"We have seen these confessions since '92"*.

In its counter statement, the MQM termed the BBC report a part of the *"media trial that has been ongoing for past several years against the party. All allegations against the MQM in the BBC report originate from a 'Pakistani source,' which in itself speaks for the authenticity of these allegations."*

London-based leader Mohammad Anwar's response to the BBC report was:

"Dear Ms Peevor [of the BBC]

As you will have guessed from my last response, I am frustrated that you are not willing to be more specific. We are not prepared to comment on rumours.

In addition, as far as the UK is concerned you will be aware that there is an ongoing police investigation, although no charges have been brought, and the legal advice which we have received is that we should not comment.

I would urge you not to broadcast these defamatory allegations. They will do nothing to assist a fair trial should any prosecution be brought here, and are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the already tense situation in Pakistan.

Yours sincerely Mohammed Anwar"

Despite the said denials, the British authorities held formal recorded interviews with senior MQM officials who told them the party was receiving Indian funding. Asked about the claims of Indian funding and training of the MQM, the Indian High Commission in London said: *"Shortcomings of governance cannot be rationalised by blaming neighbours."*

Next day, on 25th June 2015; after viewing the BBC documentary Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry said that *'action will be taken against the MQM if the BBC's allegations that the party received funds and training from India are authenticated.'* Secretary said during a briefing to Senate's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs:

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

"Institutions relating to national security are handling this matter and are collecting the facts.

Pakistan reserves the right to raise this matter on every international forum once we have gathered credible information.

It is time the government should move against him [Altaf Hus-sain] in the light of the BBC report on the MQM-India nexus.

Our atomic / nuclear weapons are only for deterrence as we perceive threats from India."

The panel discussed developments regarding the US, Pakistan Working Group on Security, Strategic Stability and Proliferation. Pakistan has serious concerns over India and the United States open deal over civil nuclear technology programme in those days.

During those days, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had acknowledged that his country played a part in the events of 1971 that led to the break-up of Pakistan. The latest BBC revelations soured the already tense relations between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Referring to the 'Express Tribune' dated 25th June 2015; while citing an 'authoritative' Pakistani source, the report by Owen Bennett-Jones claimed that senior MQM officials, in formal recorded interviews, admitted before British authorities that the [MQM] party has been receiving funds from the Indian government.

Quoting a Pakistani official, the above quoted media report said India had trained hundreds of MQM militants in explosives, weapons and sabotage over the last 10 years in camps in north and north-east India. The same official was quoted as saying:

"Before 2005-06, the training was given to a small number of mid - ranking members of the MQM but more recently greater numbers of more junior party members have been trained."

The claims, according to the BBC report, followed the statement of SSP Rao Anwar of Karachi police that two arrested MQM militants said they had been trained in India. As stated earlier, in a press conference on 30th April, SSP Anwar gave details of how the two men went to India via Thailand to be trained by the Indian intelligence agency RAW.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

he MQM, however, rejected the BBC report, saying it was a part of a campaign to smear the party's image in Pakistan and abroad. *"The allegations [made by the BBC] are nothing new. Such accusations have been levelled against us in the past as well,"* MQM spokesman Wasay Jalil once told the media.

Reacting on the surprising revelation made by the BBC that MQM 'received Indian funding', Defence Minister Kh Asif said:

"...it is not 1992 but rather 2015 and MQM has to prove its innocence. Just issuing a statement that the BBC report is a table story is not sufficient - the party has to clarify its position in London."

The minister said if allegations levelled by the *BBC* news story against the MQM proved right then the party would face consequences, adding that *'if it proves that MQM got funding from India then there will not be any difference between India and MQM.'*

JUI's spokesperson Jan Achakzai and JI's Ameer Sirajul Haq said:

"India is involved in an organised proxy war in Pakistan from Balochistan to Karachi to Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and RAW, India's spy agency, has cultivated proxies and was providing funding, logistics, travel documents and training."

They said in separate statements that the rulers had been turning a blind eye towards the MQM during the last three decades due to political considerations - the silence of rulers had entrapped our biggest city [Karachi] and economic hub of Pakistan.

PTI senior leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi said: *"They [MQM] should come out and clarify to the people that this report is not correct; if they think it unjust, they should take legal action."*

Referring to a news bulletin at 'Dunya News TV' on 15th October 2015;

Scotland Yard handed over to Pakistan the evidence of Indian intelligence agency RAW funding MQM party; it was a list of over 10 names who were involved in the process. Reportedly, these people used to take direct funding from the Indian agency and provided it to the MQM.

The Scotland Yard had prepared the said list after interrogation from Altaf Hussain and Muhammad Anwar. Adviser to the Prime Minister, Ishtar Ausaf

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

held meetings with the Scotland Yard police regarding the case. The government started investigation over the issues of RAW funding and money laundering apparently in a serious way but with no results.

Rangers' massive operation against terrorism and target killing in Karachi was ongoing and the authorities were also investigating and taking to task the outfits or parties who allegedly had links with foreign funding sources.

MQM strongly condemned and had been vocal against targeting the MQM in guise of the operation. Their lawmakers even had once resigned from the assemblies in protest.

[Earlier, on 6th October 2015; MQM workers protested outside United Nations [UN] during the UN General Assembly session and demanded freedom from army and the country as well.

PML[N] leader Marvi Memon demanded immediate apology over the action and said that she was shocked to watch the video.

Airing the video on his show 'On the Front' on Dunya News, Kamran Shahid asked MQM leader Rehan Hashmi about MQM's policy over the slogans raised in the video. Though he denied the video at first, Hashmi later admitted that the protest and the slogans raised in the video were completely unjustified and said that it had nothing to do with MQM's policy.

The video showed protesters lined up outside UN building and one of the protesters raising slogans, demanding 'freedom' from 'Generals', 'Colonels' and even the 'country'.

Condemning the video and the slogans aired in the video, the intelligentsia was shocked to see it. Rehan Hashmi could in no way defend such an act. Later, Rehan Hashmi also said that MQM had nothing to do with this video and the party fully supported Pakistan army and the government's policy over Kashmir.

Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf [PTI] leader Ali Muhammad Khan responded to the video saying that the protester raising the slogans seemed to be an Indian agent. He said that Rehan Hashmi should never defend such an action, which was no less than treason. Rehan Hashmi responded, saying that he condemned the video.]

Referring to the daily 'Pakistan Today' dated 19th March 2016;

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

"MQM leader Tariq Mir made startling revelations about party's links with Indian spy agency Research and Analysis Wing [RAW] in his confessional statement to the London Metropolitan Police.

Mir's eight-page-long confession details that the Indian government used to provide funds to MQM chief Altaf Hussain through various sources and the meetings between MQM leaders and RAW officials used to take place in different European cities such as Rome, Zurich, Vienna and Prague."

The confessional statement revealed that MQM's funding by the Indian spy agency started back in 1994 and initially the party used to receive GBP 800,000 annually. With these initial funds, Mir further discloses, nine houses had been purchased in London.

It added that some MQM members did not want to see [slain leader] Dr Imran Farooq in the party, while only four MQM leaders, including Altaf Hussain, had the knowledge of party's RAW funding.

Mir further said that after MQM's inclusion in the government of former president Gen Musharraf, Indian officials were notified that further funds would not be needed.

UK DROPPED CHARGES AGAINST MQM:

On 13th October 2016; Scotland Yard announced that no *"further action will be taken against Altaf Hussain and others"* in the long-running money-laundering case, while deciding to drop the investigation altogether and effectively ensuring that the sensitive evidence involved in this case wouldn't go to public for fear of causing rifts between Pakistan, the UK and India.

[As detailed before; the case against the MQM Chief Altaf Hussain started in December 2012 when the police found a large amount of cash at the MQM's International Secretariat. Scotland Yard had said during the course of investigation that:

"it had credible evidence that the MQM received funds from the Indian government sources and broke the electoral laws of Pakistan and the UK".]

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

The Hammersmith Magistrates Court had given a deadline to the police to produce evidence in the court on the application of Sarfraz Merchant, a co-accused in the money-laundering case, along with Tariq Mir, M Anwar, Yasin Haji, Latif Jiwa and others.

The police and the prosecutors had to decide whether to reveal evidence before the court and thus let the media swoop and jump on it or suppress it by dropping the case altogether so that nothing ever could come to the public light. Said the police in a statement:

"The Metropolitan Police Service on 13th October 2016, following a detailed evidential review and upon receipt of legal advice, made the decision to withdraw their application in that civil case under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 for the forfeiture of over £500,000 in cash.

The cash had been seized from a number of venues between 2012 and 2014. Having examined all of the evidence the Met has accepted that there is insufficient evidence to prove that the money seized was the proceeds of crime or was intended for use in unlawful conduct.

Since 2013, officers from the Met's National Terrorist Financial Investigation Unit investigated allegations of money laundering to which the civil proceedings were linked. Officers have worked diligently on the investigation and thoroughly investigated all of the evidence to establish if any laws had been broken in the UK."

The Met Police record maintained that during the course of investigation, six people were arrested, 11 other people were interviewed under caution, a total of 28 interviews were conducted at police stations of persons under investigation, over 100 witness statements were taken, nine premises were searched, which were located in the south and north of England.

The Police said that all reasonable lines of enquiry had been exhausted, including international enquiries; a case file had been submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] for their careful consideration. The CPS advised, taking into account all of the evidence identified during the course of the investigation, that there was not a realistic prospect of successful prosecution under UK law, therefore the investigation was being declared complete but not recommended for any further action.

The police found £167,525.92 in the MQM's offices in London and a further £289,785.32 in Altaf Hussain's home during raids. Altaf Hussain was arrest-

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-IV

ed on 3rd June 2014 by the Metropolitan Police but then released on bail. On 21st May 2016, the Scotland Yard had passed an incomplete case file to the Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] for the charging decision, giving birth to questions about the very future of the whole investigation.

That the said police file was passed to the CPS despite the fact that the Counter-Terrorism Command Unit [CTCU], responsible for investigating the money-laundering case, was aware that the case file at the stage of submission to the CPS, in April 2016, was incomplete because *of the fact that several people refused to cooperate with the police in its investigations* and the police didn't pursue the suspects rigorously as per their routine working.

Meanwhile, British High Commissioner to Pakistan Thomas Drew called on Minister for Interior Ch Nisar Ali Khan and informed him about the dropping of the money laundering case against MQM Chief Altaf Hussain and his companions. In response, Ch Nisar vowed to pursue the case amidst discussions on the relations between Pakistan and Britain and other issues, including security. They exchanged views on the subject but agreed that their relations should not reach dead-end because of a single issue.

Thus the whole issue went buried despite Interior Minister Ch Nisar's high-tone media addresses that PML[N] would raise the issue strongly before the British government – but ultimately Tain...Tain...Phish.