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Kuber hijacked in Pak waters

Debasish Panigrahi, Hindustan Times Mumbai, December 12, 2008

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The 10 Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terrorists who set sail for Mumbai on the merchant vessel Al Hussaini from Karachi intercepted Indian fishing trawler Kuber in Pakistani waters itself.

Highly-placed sources in the Coast Guard told HT on Thursday that the Kuber, with five crew members on board, was 70 nautical miles inside Pakistani waters when it was intercepted by the terrorists. The finding was made on the basis of the global positioning system recovered from the trawler.

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The sources said the terrorists activated the GPS after they boarded the Kuber in Pakistani waters. The terrorists then sailed via Jakhau coast in Gujarat to reach

Mumbai.

Though the terrorists shifted four of the crew members to the Al Hussaini soon after they took control, they kept the captain Amarsingh Solanki, ostensibly to help them dodge surveillance. Being a master sailor, Solanki used the "safe" route to sail the terrorists to their destination, evading surveillance.

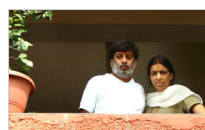
The Mumbai Police are now exploring the possibility of the trawler owner's Vinod Masani, who is from Gujarat, having a role in the operation. Two of his trawlers have been seized by Pakistani coast guard in the past. Moreover, Solanki had spent three years in a Pakistani jail for straying. Joint Commissioner of Police Rakesh Maria said Masani has not yet been cleared.

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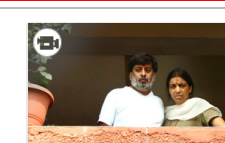


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