

CASE STUDY
2006 MUMBAI TRAIN BOMBINGS



Centurion
UNIVERSITY

BACHELORS OF SCIENCE IN FORENSIC SCIENCE (SEMESTER 6)

SUBJECT

CUFS2416- EXPLOSIVE ANALYSIS AND POST BLAST INVESTIGATION

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INTRODUCTION

Date -11 July, 2006

Time - 16:24 – 16:35pm

Location - Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Target - Mumbai Western Line

Deaths - 209

Injured - 714

Attack type - terrorist bomb blast attack

Accused - Faisal Sheikh, Asif Khan, Kamal Ansari, Ehtesham Siddiqui and Naveed Khan



The **2006 Mumbai train bombings** were a series of seven bomb blasts on 11 July, took place over a period of 11 minutes on the Suburban Railway in Mumbai. The bombs were set off in pressure cookers on trains plying on the Western Line Suburban Section of the Mumbai Division of Western Railway. The blasts killed 209 people and injured over 700 more.^[1]

The incident

- There were seven bomb blasts in all within a span of 11 minutes on local trains traveling on the suburban section of Western Railway's Mumbai division.
- The first blast occurred at 6:24 PM between Khar Road and Santacruz stations on a train that started from Churchgate. All the blasts took place on trains that had started from Churchgate and at or near the vicinity of stations namely Mahim, Matunga Road, Bandra,

Jogeshwari, Khar Road, Borivali and Bhayandar. Another bomb found at Borivali was diffused by the police. The last blast erupted at Borivali station at 6:35 PM.

- The blasts were intended to cause maximum damage since it targeted the after-work rush hour on the Mumbai locals.
- Pressure cooker bombs were placed on trains on the Western Line of the local train network, which forms the backbone of the city's transport network. The bombs were 'pressure-cooker' bombs that were placed in First Class general compartments were used in this bombing and other recent explosions to increase the afterburn in a thermobaric reaction.^[2]

The convicts traveled in different taxis with bombs in pressure cookers and planted the bombs in first class compartments of seven local trains, all headed in the northern direction. The timing was carefully selected and peak hours were chosen as the trains would be choked with passengers going back home.^[3]

- A state of high alert was declared in India's major cities. Both the airports in Mumbai were placed on high alert. The western line of the Mumbai Suburban Railway network was at first shut down, although some trains resumed service later, and stringent security arrangements, including frisking and searching of commuters, were instituted on the other lines of the network.^[4]

Investigation

Some 350 people were detained 36 hours after the incident in Maharashtra; police claimed that those were the people rounded up for investigations.^[5] On 14 July, Lashkar-e-Qahhar, a terrorist organization Front linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba (claimed responsibility for the bombings. In an e-mail to an Indian TV channel, the outfit said it organised the bombings using 16 people who were all "safe". According to the e-mail, the main motive seemed to have been retaliation to the situation in the Gujarat and Kashmir regions, possibly referring to the alleged oppression of Muslim minorities in certain parts of the region. It was also saying that the blasts were part of a series of attacks aimed at other sites such as the Mumbai international airport, Gateway of India, the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Red Fort in New Delhi. The authorities investigated the claim and were trying to track the location of the e-mail sender^[6]. Initially the religious extremists from the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the banned Students Islamic Movement of India terrorist groups, and

Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI were the prime suspects.^[7] There was also evidence about the involvement of the international Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda following a phone call from a man claiming to be a spokesperson for the group on 13 July. The alleged al-Qaeda spokesman had said the blasts were a "consequence of Indian oppression and suppression of minorities, particularly Muslims."^[8]



The charge sheet said Mohammed Majid Shafi had arranged for transportation of Pakistani nationals to India via Bangladesh and Nepal border and back after the blasts. The conspirators underwent training in Pakistan.

Mohammed Faisal Shaikh, the main conspirator, was the Bombay chief of Lashkar-e-Taiba and received money through hawala to execute the bombings. They thoroughly surveyed local trains and other important buildings like, World Trade Centre, Bombay Stock Exchange, Mahalaxmi temple, Siddhivinayak temple. They zeroed down on the trains because other places had high security. The bombs were made at Shaikh Alam's house in Govandi. Mohammed Sajid Ansari assembled the electric circuit, which was used to trigger bombs.^[9]

On 30 September 2006, CNN reported that "The Indian government accused Pakistan's military spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence, of planning 11 July Mumbai train bombings that killed 209 people".^[10]

Arrests and trial

On 21 July 2006, police arrested three people suspected to be involved in the bombings.^[11] Police have detained more than 300 suspects since 18 July but those were the first arrests in the case.^[12] Two of the men were detained on Thursday in the northern state of Bihar and the third later in Mumbai. All three are said to belong to the banned SIMI organisation.^[13]

On 27 February 2009, Sadiq Sheikh, an arrested leader of the Indian Mujahideen confessed to his alleged role in the bombings in a news channel broadcast. Abdul Karim Tunda was arrested in 2013 near the Nepal border^[14].

Kamal Ahamed Ansari (37), Tanvir Ahmed Ansari (37), Mohd Faisal Shaikh (36), Ehtesham Siddiqui (30), Mohammad Majid Shafi (32), Shaikh Alam Shaikh (41), Mohd Sajid Ansari (34), Abdul Wahid Shaikh (34), Muzzammil Shaikh (27), Soheil Mehmood Shaikh (43), Zamir Ahmad Shaikh (36), Naveed Hussain Khan (30), Asif Khan (38) are the accused who were arrested by Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS). Azam Chima, along with 14 others, was absconding in the case.

As per the prosecution's case, the accused persons were SIMI activists. They held several conspiratorial meetings at Mohd Faisal Shaikh's house in Bandra and at another accused Mohd Sajid Ansari's house in Mira Road, where they decided to target local trains as they were crowded and security was not as tight as for the other sites they had surveyed.^[15]

In a trial that lasted for eight years, the prosecution examined 192 witnesses, including eight Indian Police Service and five Indian Administrative Service officers as well as 18 doctors. The defence lawyers examined 51 witnesses and one person was called as a court witness. The deposition made by witnesses runs into around 5,500 pages.

The prosecuting agency, state Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), had examined 200 witnesses in the case against 13 accused, while the defence lawyers examined a total of 40 witnesses.^[16] The ATS, in its charge sheet filed on November 29, 2006, claimed it was a Lashkar-e-Toiba operation, carried out with the help of the Students' Islamic Movement of India. But two years later, a terror suspect's confession left security agencies confused. The crime branch stumbled upon a fresh lead after the arrest of Mohammed Sadiq Israr Sheikh on September 24, 2008.

In 2008, the Supreme Court stayed the trial as it heard a petition by the accused, who had challenged the provisions of MCOCA. Trial resumed two years later, after a go-ahead from the Supreme Court.

Convictions and verdict

After a trial lasting more than seven years, special anti-terror court in Mumbai convicted 12 men on 4th September, 2015 in connection with near-simultaneous bombings in 2006 on seven commuter trains in the city, an attack that killed more than 180 people and left 800 wounded, a prosecutor said.^[18]

The MCOCA (Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act, 1999) court convicted 12 of the 13 arrested in the case. The court sentenced five convicts – Kamal Ansari, Faisal Shaikh, Estesham Siddiqui, Naveed Khan and Asif Bashir Khan – to death. The other seven convicts—Mohammed Sajid Ansari, who prepared the electrical circuits for the bombs, Mohammed Ali, who provided his Govandi residence to make the bombs, Dr Tanveer Ansari, one of the conspirators, and Majid Shafi, Muzzammil Shaikh, Sohail Shaikh and Zamir Shaikh who provided logistical support – were sentenced to life imprisonment.^[19]

Abdul Wahid Din Mohammed Shaikh was the only one acquitted by court. He was booked for providing his house at Mumbra to harbour Pakistanis. No evidence was found against him.^[20]

CHALLENGES

- The anti-terrorism squad (ATS), in its charge sheet filed on November 29, 2006, claimed it was a Lashkar-e-Toiba operation, carried out with the help of the Students' Islamic Movement of India. But two years later, a terror suspect's confession left security agencies confused. The crime branch stumbled upon a fresh lead after the arrest of Mohammed Sadiq Israr Sheikh on September 24, 2008.^[21]
- The police filed charges against the men four months after the attack the evidences were difficult to gather because there were no unexploded bombs and it was raining at the time of the blasts and therefore the crucial evidences might have washed away.
- The police used call records to establish a pattern of communication between the conspirators, he said. Since there was a long list of suspects and many suspects were

absconding from the state and even from the country it was becoming difficult to arrest the suspects.

- The CBI investigated and tried to track the location of the e-mail sender .However, on 17 July, the forensic science laboratory Mumbai confirmed the use of a mixture of the highly explosive RDX and Ammonium Nitrate for the bombings. The presence of these explosives in the post explosive debris was confirmed by modern techniques such as Liquid Chromatography with mass detector (LCMS), Gas Chromatography with mass detector (GCMS) and Ion Scan Chromatography. They had indicated a strong possibility of all explosives being planted at the Churchgate railway station, which was the starting point for all affected trains.^[23]

INFERENCE

- a. Terrorist attacks are carried out by a number of terrorist and insurgent groups including the StudentsIslamic Movement of India terrorist groups terrorist attack have mainly focused on indian government but also have targeted places visited by foreigners including restaurants,hotels,railway stations,markets.
- b. The goal of any terrorist strike is to invoke fear and use violence as a method of getting their point across like releasing one of their group members if one terrorist is detained, whether it be political, religious or of another nature.
- c. The government should release order for the investigation of the ministers because they are the only persons who give access to the terrorist to india for their own benefit.
- d. Our criminal justice system follows the ideal that no innocent should be wrongly confined, but that also puts pressure and burden on the prosecution to prove the crime and this is a time-consuming process that might slow down the justice system and therefore it takes a long time period to provide convictions and verdict and the punishment for a terrorist should always be death penalty no suspect in connection with a terrorist group should be acquitted, every suspect should be punished with death penalty.
- e. The indian government should tighten the security in railway stations so that anything if suspicious could be brought under control.

- f. Installation of closed circuit televisions (CCTV's) inside the railway stations should be made compulsory on every stations and presence of police officials should be there in railway stations where a good crowd gathers.

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