

WHO KARKARE? WHAT 26/11? QASAB PLAYS AMNESIA CARD

By ANAND HOLLA | Aug 30, 2010, 02.20 AM IST



The gunman refused to recognise both his HC-appointed lawyers and told them that he did not remember anything about the 26/11 attacks, his confession or who slain ATS Chief Hemant Karkare was. Questioned over such weird behaviour, Qasab blamed the jail authorities for lacing his food with drugs, which he said

made him lose his memory. When contacted, Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam and a senior jail officer, refused to comment saying that they were unaware of what Qasab spoke with his lawyers.

Qasab's lawyers Amin Solkar and Farhana Shah said they were flabbergasted when they recently met their infamous client for a 20-minute chat in the interview room below his first storey high-security cell inside Arthur Road Jail. Having sought the jail chief's consent to provide Qasab with pen and paper so that he could jot down key points that could be used in his defence, the legal eagles were looking forward to draw some material from him. But they were stunned when Qasab failed to recognise them. "We asked him if he had thought and deliberated on his defence and loopholes in the prosecution case. He said he doesn't remember anything about it. He then said he doesn't remember ever having met me or Farhana. Obviously, we were taken aback," Solkar said.

In February, Qasab had complained to the special court that jail authorities were providing him food laced with drugs that made him giddy. Special judge M L Tahaliyani had then admonished Qasab for making such pointless allegations as the gunman had mentioned the same problem to the judge a few days before as well.

Clad in his jail uniform of white shirt with dark-blue lining and trousers, Qasab bluntly denied having ever met Solkar and Shah. When they asked him about the 26/11 case, the gun-battle outside Cama Hospital and what he remembered about the killing of ATS Chief Hemant Karkare and others, Qasab lost his cool. "Mujhe kuch bhi yaad nahi hai. Aap log mujhe yeh Karkare ke baare main kyon pooch rahe hain? Kaun hai yeh Karkare?" Qasab asked them, conjuring a confused face.

His lawyers seemed to be have no luck in gleaning any useful information, as Qasab refused to talk about his magisterial confession – a vital piece of evidence which was relied upon by the court while

convicting him. Solkar said, "I prompted him to recollect it, but he wearily said Main yaad karna bhi nahi chahta...Mere dimaag ko takleef hoti hai."

When his lawyers asked him if he went through the charge sheet, Qasab said he couldn't as it was not in Urdu, but in English. "We met him so as to gather his inputs and contentions that can be used in his appeal. However, our purpose was defeated as he maintained that his mind was blank and couldn't remember anything." Mumbai Mirror had first reported on June 13 on Solkar and Shah meeting Qasab for the first time in his special cell at the Arthur Road Jail, after he was sentenced to death on May 6.

