



The Oracles of Delhi  
Shailaja Bajpai



## Hospital terrorist was tall, fair, dressed in a pathani kurta, recalls 56-yr-old braveheart

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Mumbai, Wed Dec 10 2008, 23:26 hrs



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*When it looked he would die anyway, Harishchandra Shrivardhankar decided to act; he swung his office bag onto a well-armed terrorist and kicked him... and blacked out completely*

"Anyway, it looked as if I was going to die. So I decided to take my chance against the terrorist," says 56-year-old Harishchandra Shrivardhankar as he recovers at JJ hospital.

In a combined act of self-defence and retaliation, Shrivardhankar swung his office bag onto the terrorist and kicked him once, as the terrorist held him at Cama hospital. Shrivardhankar was gashed twice by the terrorist and shot at in the back on the fifth floor the hospital, where two of the terrorists had allegedly taken refuge.

Recalling that fateful night, Shrivardhankar — admitted to the Ear-Nose-Throat (ENT) ward — was on his way home when he got caught into the terror attacks. Employed with the state government's Food and Civil Supplies Department, he had been on special duty for the coming election name registration process since early November.

He had been allotted ward number 187, which covers Colaba, and his colleagues and he were working out of the technical institute building near CST station.

On November 26, they finished their work late and he left for his Kalyan home at around 9 pm. Making his way to the CST via Cama

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hospital, a shorter route to the railway station, he realised that there had been trouble and decided to run back for safety. On his way, seeing the back entrance of Cama Hospital open, he decided to take refuge within the hospital for women and children.

"When I reached the back entrance of the hospital, half the wire-gate was open. I hid behind it for a while and realised that there was a body lying next to the gate. Scared they might be around on the hospital grounds, I decided to take refuge in the hospital building. I ran upto the fifth floor and suddenly came face to face with the terrorists," said Shrivardhankar.

Shrivardhankar can clearly recall his attacker. He described the terrorist as a fair skinned, 5.5 to 6 feet-tall person speaking in Hindi. The terrorist, says Shrivardhankar, was dressed in a pathani style off-white or cream-coloured kutra and pyjama.

"He had a machine gun kind of weapon slung around his neck and no other bags on his back. He was dressed in a pathani kurta like the one worn by Pran in the film Janjeer. I can clearly identify this person," Shrivardhankar said.

The terrorist held Shrivardhankar. Facing death, he hit at the terrorist with his bag and kicked him. The latter then took out a knife from his pocket and slashed Shrivardhankar's neck twice. As Shrivardhankar slumped, the terrorist shot at him twice.

"I cannot recall anything that happened after that. I don't even know how I reached this hospital. Thankfully, I survived," said Shrivardhankar.

The gash wounds on his neck have been stitched and one of the bullets from the back removed. The other bullet lodged near the kidney is yet to be removed. A decision on surgical removal of this bullet may be taken on Wednesday.

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