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# Police laxity let Kasab slip out of Cama

INDIA, Updated Jun 17, 2009 at 07:22am IST

Shoaib Ahmed, Toral Varia, CNN-IBN

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**Mumbai:** Police officers present at Cama Hospital during the Mumbai terror attacks gave repeated and clear instructions asking for the area to be encircled and reinforcements to be sent but their calls went unheard.

Anti-Terrorism Squad chief Hemant Karkare, additional commissioner Ashok Kamte and senior inspector Vijay Salaskar were all gunned down near the Cama Hospital on the night of 26/11.

Six months later, a CNN-IBN investigation has sifted through police call records on that fateful night to reveal some startling facts.

Video Photo Gallery

Karkare, Kamte and Salaskar all reached the Cama Hospital separately on the night of November 26, 2008.

At 1124 hrs IST, when Pakistani terrorists Mohammed Ajmal Amir Kasab and Ismail Khan had already been inside Cama Hospital for 25 minutes, Karkare called the control room from his position at the rear entry of the hospital.

"I am at Cama Hospital. There is firing going on here.. Blasts are taking place... three-four grenade blasts have taken place in front of us in the last five minutes. It is important to encircle Cama Hospital. We are next to Special Branch office. Send a team to the front side of Cama Hospital and this needs to be co-ordinated to ensure that there is no cross firing," Karkare told the Control Room.

Four minutes later, Karkare called again.

"ATS, QRT (Quick Response Team) and Crime Branch's team are on the side of



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SB2 office. So we need a team on the front side of Cama. We need to encircle Cama Hospital. Surround it. Ask Mr Prasad (Joint Commissioner (Law and Order)) to request Army authorities," Karkare said.

The Control Room responded by saying, "Sir, noted."

Meanwhile, Additional Commissioner of Police Sadanand Date was battling Kasab and Ismail inside the hospital.

Date had arrived at Cama soon after the terrorists, and was taking them on with other officers. Starting at 2319 hrs IST, at regular intervals, Date kept telling his wireless operator to ask the Control Room for reinforcements.

**Date's conversation with the Control Room:**

At 2319 hrs IST: Firing going on in Cama Hospital. Send commandos immediately.

At 2320 hrs IST: Firing going on, on the sixth floor. Help quickly.

At 2323 hrs IST: Two-three blasts have taken place. Help immediately.

At 2325 hrs IST: Firing is going on, on sixth floor of Cama. Need reinforcements.

At 2326 hrs IST: Shortage of striking at Cama.

At 2327 hrs IST: Send striking to Cama, running short of men.

At 2328 hrs IST: Heavy firing. We are all injured. Need help. Please need reinforcements.

Date's right eye was injured, his left leg badly wounded during the gunbattle. Yet he continued to shoot. At around midnight, Kasab and Ismail left Cama Hospital from the front entrance

They went to hide in the Rang Bhavan lane, nearby and when they saw Karkare, Kamte and Salaskar looking for them in their car, they shot them dead.

The crucial question is: Why were Karkare's orders for encircling Cama and securing its front gate not followed promptly? Did Sadanand Date's repeated calls for help go unheard?

The Mumbai police say they did send reinforcements that night - at least 70 to 80 police officers. They say the problem was that there were too many officers, and not enough co-ordination.

Negligence, carelessness or a sheer lack of co-ordination - whatever the reason, the fact remains that Kasab and Ismail were able to walk out of Cama Hospital on the night of 26/11 without being stopped. They had killed, and would kill again... and they could have been prevented.

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