

26/11 MUMBAI

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News

Mumbai driver recounts battle for survival

Prachi Jawadekar Wagh

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A Mumbai street, which houses St Xavier's College and Cama hospital, was the witness to one of the most gruesome terror attacks in the city's history. But it also saw an extraordinary story of survival of one of its residents Maruti Phad.

Maruti, who lives near Cama hospital, is the driver of the medical education secretary.

He was called by the secretary at 11:30 pm on Wednesday to said he had to urgently rush to the Mantralay. But by then, the firing has already started outside Maruti's home.

He managed to drive into this lane. But as he approached the end of the lane, the firing was directed at him.

"They fired at me there. I quickly bent down and put the reverse gear. With my right hand on the steering, I pressed the accelerator with my left hand and went about 25 metres behind. They kept firing at me. I was hit in the hand and the waist. I lay at the bottom of the car and pretended to be dead. I put the central locking. They came and peeped into the car, tried to open it. They thought I was dead. All this happened while my wife and child were watching from the window there," he recalled.

Maruti's wife Rani and four-year-old son watched in horror from their window, which overlooks the lane. Rani collapsed not knowing if Maruti was alive or not.

"When he was fired at I fainted. My brother-in-law asked me to hold on. We started calling him but could not get through," said Rani.



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What Maruri saw later was even more chilling.

"I looked up after 10 minutes and saw through my rear view mirror. They were hiding in a bush. A police car came. They fired at the car. They pulled out bodies and threw them out. Then they took the car and drove past me. Later, I came to know that it was Karkare, Salaskar and Kamte. My pain is not so much from losing my fingers, but these men were the pride of Maharashtra. I felt very bad," said Maruti.

Thus, Maruti's quick thinking helped him save himself from the men who attacked Mumbai on 26/11.

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