

Title: 26/11 : "Towards war" written on timer

Author: Reporter

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Staff Reporter

Security guard at store saw the two terrorists

Court forbids publication of name and address of another witness

Mumbai: A piece of paper pasted on the timer of one of the unexploded bombs recovered from the vicinity of the Taj Mahal hotel, had the words "Towards War" written on it.

Police inspector Prakash Bhoite, while describing the contents of two metal boxes found near the hotel and at the Gateway of India, told the court on Wednesday that each box contained one electronic timer, four batteries, apart from 8 kg of RDX.

He said a piece of paper was affixed on each timer. One of the chits had something written on it in Urdu. The police had got the writing translated.

"A signal for war"

Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal told the court that the words meant, "A signal for war."

Asked later, Joint Commissioner of Police Rakesh Maria told The Hindu that the Urdu words "Amar Askari" had been written in hand on the paper, and translated as "Towards war."

He said only one timer had the inscription, out of the three unexploded bombs recovered by the police in the entire terror strike. In his testimony, Mr. Bhoite said when he learnt of the firing at Leopold Café while at the Colaba police station, he went to get his pistol and rounds.

Search conducted

However, by the time he returned from the armoury, the terrorists had moved to the Taj.

When Mr. Bhoite and a police team conducted a search of the area, they found two metal boxes covered in pink foam at 1 a.m. and 8 a.m. respectively on November 27.

One was placed near a renovation site at the Gateway and the other near Gokul hotel behind the Taj. Investigations later revealed that each had 8 kg of RDX. The bomb detection and disposal squad (BDDS) defused both the bombs.

On Wednesday, the court recorded the testimony of Sachin Sorte, a security guard at a garment store opposite the Leopold. Mr. Sorte had seen the two terrorists, one of whom had fired at the store he was guarding. He described the attacker as a man of medium build, up to five feet seven inches tall, wearing a grey t-shirt and carrying a blue backpack and a gun. Mr. Sorte said he was so terrified after the incident that he dashed off to his village.

On Wednesday, the court passed an order forbidding the publication of the name and address of an eyewitness, who was held hostage at the Taj. The witness is set to depose on Thursday.

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