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The hero and the survivor

SACHIN KALBAG MUMBAI, DECEMBER 26, 2008 | UPDATED 11:55 IST

HANIF, THE HERO

In the movie *Spider-Man*, the superhero who saves the world is a pizza delivery boy.

At Nariman House, the man who saved nearly 20 lives on the midnight of November 26 was a Baskin Robbins ice-cream vendor.

Hanif Sheikh is a diminutive 23-year-old, and his life revolves around the 31 flavours of Baskin Robbins ice-cream. On November 26, though, dessert was the last thing on his mind.

Hanif was one of the many onlookers who had gathered around Nariman House soon after everyone realised that terrorists had attacked Colaba, Mumbai's oldest and possibly its most bustling neighbourhood.

It was Hanif's inputs that the Maharashtra Police commando team used to draw maps of the entire area and specifically the building. "It helped us take positions in the two neighbouring buildings without losing our own lives," says Rohit Sawant, the 28-year-old commando team leader, now an ardent fan of Hanif.

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A five-man state commando team was the first to reach Nariman House around midnight of November 26.

Mangesh Chavan from the team picked Hanif to guide him and draw a blueprint of the area. "We wanted maps so we could secure the perimeter," says Chavan, who became such great friends with Hanif that he invited him for his December 8 wedding.

"Amid the cacophony, I found Hanif to be the one with the smartest inputs. He knew just about everything there was to know about the area, including Nariman House." Hanif is more modest about his heroics. "I did it for my Colaba, my Mumbai and my India," says Hanif.

"You ask me to do it again, I will do it all over again."

What surprised the police commandos and later the NSG team was the courage Hanif displayed when they were told to rescue five families from the two neighbouring buildings who were stuck in their homes for more than 24 hours.

Bulletproof jackets were in short supply," remembers Hanif. "There were no extra helmets. So I told the NSG commandos that it does not matter if I die; the country needs you to kill the terrorists."

And that was how it was. Starting from around 9.30 pm on November 27, Hanif and the NSG commando team began the rescue operation in the middle of fire and grenade attacks. The grenades were so loud that Hanif lost his hearing for 15 days.

"I just could not take the noise," says Hanif. "But it was a matter of saving nearly 20 lives."

Hanif risked his life again to send food and water to the commandos. "We had no idea how hungry we were," says Hemant Patil, one of the state commandos who went without food for nearly 36 hours before Hanif sent the first supply.

"We could not even relieve ourselves as we were on high alert. Any false move and we could be dead." The biggest thing to happen to Hanif after his heroics is that every policeman in the area recognises him.

"Earlier, they used to come for free ice- cream," he says. "Now they come just to meet me."

PRADOSH, THE SURVIVOR

sisters?

PC and Parineeti have left their cousin sister Meera aloof because of her scandalous past



Bollywood's 'flop' Khans

Here are the names of few actors who despite having 'Khan' as a surname, could not make it big in Bollywood.



Manyata Dutt gets hubby Sanjay's name inked

Manyata Dutt has recently got her husband's name tattooed on her right finger.



Megastar Amitabh Bachchan greets his fans

Big B makes it a point to meet his fans every Sunday who gather outside his residence.

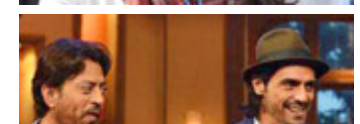


Kareena reveals why she has not joined Twitter

Bebo has finally revealed why she has been reluctant in joining the micro blogging site.



Did Arjun Rampal chop off Irrfan's scenes in D-Day?



Pradosh Perekar - a 30-year-old Colaba local - loves to drink.

On November 26, the small-time real estate agent had his usual rounds of his favourite brew and was returning home around 9.35 pm when he heard gunshots from Nariman House.

He went inside, but found the elevator locked. In frustration, he kicked its door and began mouthing choice swear words.

A few seconds later, he saw a man holding an AK-47. As if to greet Perekar, the man showed him the finger and shouted an expletive.

Parekar didn't lose a moment and ran. But he slipped on his own blood and fell. "I could see my muscles. Blood was flowing out like water from a fountain," he said.

He felt excruciating pain but somehow managed to reach a doctor, who said he was hit by an explosion so intense that the shrapnel pierced his shin and exited from his calf. He was operated at the St John Hospital next day. The surgery lasted four hours and he was let off only after no signs of infection remained.

"I could not walk for 20 days," said Perekar. "I had lost a muscle tissue and around four litres of blood. I later realised he had begun firing as soon as he showed me the finger."

This was not Perekar's first brush with death. On March 12, 1993, he was at Mumbai's Worli Passport Office to accompany his cousin who wanted to go abroad. One of the seven bombs that ripped the city apart went off there. His cousin - hit by a large piece of glass - died on the spot.

"I was hit by glass shards on arms and chest. I was hospitalised but survived," he said while showing off his wounds with the pride of an athlete showing off his medals.

It took three weeks for Perekar to get back to work. He still limps, but he is also the only earning member of his family.

"And the real estate market sucks these days," he said. "If I don't turn up for work one day, it could mean a tremendous loss. I don't have time for self-pity."

A source points out that Arjun felt Irrfan's character was getting more prominence than him.



Ranbir, Rajkumar Hirani send letters to Sanjay Dutt on his birthday!

The letters were sent to Sanjay in a bid to let him know that he is remembered.



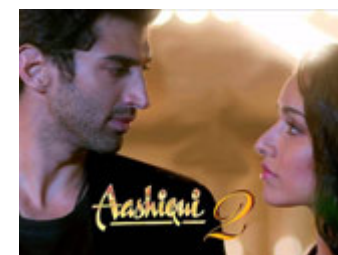
When Chennai Express made a halt at Indian Idol Junior sets!

SRK proposed to the youngest contestant on the show and danced for his fans.



Aashiqui 3 in the pipeline?

Producer Bhushan Kumar has expressed his desire to turn 'Aashiqui' into franchise.



Poonam Pandey's Nasha passes with grace marks

Poonam Pandey's Nasha has managed to do reasonable business.



The king of romance gets mushy with Sandhya

