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# Police: Mumbai gunman trained as terrorist

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**MUMBAI, India** — The lone gunman to survive the Mumbai terror attacks was a petty street thug from a dusty Pakistani outpost who was systematically programmed into a highly trained suicide guerrilla over 18 months in jihadist camps, India's top investigator into the attacks said Saturday.

Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, 21, was one of the 10 men who came ashore on a small rubber raft Nov. 26, divided into five pairs and attacked some of Mumbai's best known and most beloved landmarks.

Kasab and his partner rampaged through the city's main train terminal, then shot up a police station and a hospital, carjacked a police van — killing the city's counterterrorism chief and four other police inside — and stole a second car.

They finally were brought to a halt in a shootout that killed Kasab's partner and left Kasab with bullet wounds in both hands and a minor wound in his neck, said Rakesh Maria, the chief police investigator on the case.

Photographs of Kasab walking calmly through the train station with his assault rifle made him a symbol of the attacks.

In the days since Kasab's capture, police have repeatedly interrogated him about his background, his training and the details of the attack. Maria declined to divulge the interrogation methods, saying only that Kasab was "fairly forthcoming."

## Attacker's origins uncertain

Kasab said he was one of five children of Mohammed Amir Kasab, a poor street food vendor in the Pakistani town of Farid Kot, Maria said.

But residents of the impoverished town of 7,000 people, 90 miles south of the Pakistani city of Lahore, said they had never heard of Kasab or his father.

"Absolutely wrong, we don't know Mohammed Ajmal Kasab and no person having such name lives here," said butcher



Sebastian D'souza / AP

Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, 21, walks the Chatrapathi Shivaji Terminal railway station in Mumbai, India, on Nov. 26. He was one of the 10 men who attacked some of Mumbai's best known landmarks in a bloody siege that killed 171.

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Mohammed Ramzan, 60.

Ramzan said he had seen

Kasab's photo on TV and was certain he had never seen him before.

Mayor Ghulam Mustafa said police and investigators from Pakistan's spy agencies had also investigated the gunman's link to the town and found nothing.

Maria said that as a teenager, Kasab became a low-level thief, robbing people at knifepoint.

But he dreamed of starting his own gang, and began poking around Lahore, trying to buy guns. He was put in touch with a man who offered to send him for weapons training, and he readily agreed, Maria said.

Kasab soon found himself in a camp run by Lashkar-e-Taiba, Maria said. Lashkar, a banned Pakistani militant group, has alleged ties to Pakistan's powerful intelligence agencies.

Though he had always been a religious Muslim, Kasab had never ascribed to the violent ideology of some extremist groups, Maria said.

That quickly changed in the camp.

"The moment he came under their wings, the indoctrination started. And that's when he decided there should be some meaning to his life and jihad (holy war) was his calling," he said.

### **A terrorist in training**

For 18 months, Kasab was put through a multiphase training program at different camps in Pakistan. It started with physical fitness and jihadi indoctrination, proceeded to small arms lessons, moved on to explosives training and eventually to classes in handling assault rifles, Maria said. He was also trained in how to navigate a boat.

The training was done in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani-controlled Kashmir and the mountain town of Mansehra, in Pakistan's deeply conservative North West Frontier Province, which was a center of training for Kashmiri militants before Pakistan began its peace process with India. Some was also done in Murdike, the base of the Islamist charity Jamaat-ud-Dawa, which has been accused by the U.S. of being the front group for Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Three months before the attack, Kasab, along with nine other men he had never met, were put in isolation in a house in Pakistan and trained for the assault on Mumbai by three or four operatives, Maria said.

The 10 men were divided into teams of two and each was given a target. Kasab and his partner were assigned the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus train station. They were shown maps of the area on the Internet and quizzed on detailed photographs of the station that appeared to have been taken by an accomplice in Mumbai, Maria said.

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Their mission was "to open indiscriminate fire at CST, take people hostage, go to a vantage point and prolong the siege as long as they could," Maria said. After killing dozens of people, the two men abandoned the station under police pressure and continued their killing spree outside, he said.

The other teams — two targeting the Taj Mahal hotel, one the Oberoi hotel and one a Jewish center — also studied detailed photos and were given the same instructions, Maria said.

All the men were given fake IDs from Indian universities to confuse authorities about the source of the attacks, Maria said.

None expected to survive the attack, he said: "It was a suicide mission."

Under questioning, Kasab has steered authorities to the Indian boat the men hijacked to get to Mumbai, told them where to find their GPS trackers and satellite phone and divulged the real names of his nine fellow gunmen, Maria said.

Maria declined to reveal the names Kasab gave of his recruiters and contacts in Lashkar, saying he was waiting for independent verification.

But he said everything else Kasab said has checked out.

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