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Planned 9/11 at Taj, reveals caught terrorist

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Media reports claimed that the caught terrorist, who was involved in the Mumbai attacks and was caught alive by security forces, has confessed during interrogation that they had planned to blow up the historic Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai. Police sources revealed that the terrorists had brought enough explosives with them to blow up the building.

The terrorist – 21-year-old Azam Amir Kasab from Pakistan’s Faridkot – reportedly told police that they wanted to replicate Islamabad’s JW Marriot Hotel attack, do a 9/11 in India, and reduce the Taj Hotel building – a symbol of India’s economic prosperity – to rubble.

Azam and his accomplice had opened fire at Mumbai’s CST station on Wednesday night before moving to Metro Cinema and then to Girgaum Chowpatty in a stolen car. There, they were intercepted by a team from the Gamdevi police station. In the ensuing encounter, Azam’s accomplice was killed and he himself was injured and caught alive.

The lone terrorist nabbed by National Security Guards (NSG) commandos has reportedly told his Mumbai Police interrogators that he and his 39 colleagues were given the impression that they would come back alive after carrying out their mission of mayhem in India’s commercial capital.

Ajmal Amir Kasab revealed that the terrorists were scheduled to sail out of Mumbai on Thursday, a day after launching the attacks, adding that their recruiters had even charted out the course to be taken with the help of a global positioning system device. Kasab also told police they had done a recce of Mumbai few months ago. He said he had come along with eight operatives, posing as students and lived in a rented room at Colaba market.

Sources told a newspaper that this safe return bait was enough to convince the

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terrorists to undertake the audacious mission that has so far left over 183 dead, including several foreigners and nearly 300 injured.

According to Kasab, the Lashkar-e-Taiba had trained all terrorists in marine warfare. According to one report, they received training in a special course called Daura-e-Shifa which converts a routine terror strike and into a specialized commando raid.

According a newspaper report, Kasab has revealed the name of his fellow jihadis, all Pakistani citizens, as Abu Ali, Fahad, Omar, Shoaib, Umer, Abu Akasha, Ismail, Abdul Rahman (Bara) and Abdul Rahman (Chhota).

The terror group is said to have set off for Mumbai on November 21 from an isolated creek near Karachi without the deadly cargo of arms and ammunition they were to use against the innocents in Mumbai. The group received arms and ammunition on board a large Pakistani vessel which picked them up the following day. The vessel, whose ownership is now the subject of an international probe, had four Pakistanis apart from crew members.

A day later, they captured an Indian-owned trawler Kuber and killed all four fishermen on board. The skipper, Amarjit Narayan, was forced to take them to India and was killed immediately thereafter. Ismail, one of the terrorists and a trained sailor, is said to have then guided the trawler towards Mumbai and reached its shoreline on November 26. The group slowed down its advance and planned for a landing after dusk. They shifted to inflatable boats and disembarked at Badhwar Park in Cuffe Parade and began their killing spree, distributing themselves in batches of five.

Kasab, who sustained minor injuries in the police firing in Girgaum, was produced before the Esplanade Metropolitan Magistrate on Friday and a magistrate has remanded him to police custody till December 8.

Sources say that the satellite phone and global positioning system (GPS) map recovered from the trawler Kuber is now among the most crucial pieces of evidence.

The trawler was owned by Vinod Masani and had a five-member crew. Sources said that it is likely that the trawler was hijacked near the maritime boundary, where incursions by vessels on both sides are frequent.

Vinod Masani and his brother Hiralal have been detained for questioning by the Gujarat police.

The four fishermen on the boat, Balwant Prabhu, 45, Mukesh Rathod, 20, and Natu Nanu, 20 and Ramesh Nagji, 37 are still missing.

Kasab has also told his interrogators that he had no regrets about carrying out his mission of mayhem in Mumbai this week.

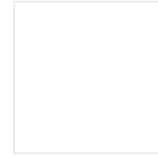
He further told Mumbai Police that the terrorist group undertook the terror mission to avenge the death of Palestinians, and therefore, one of the main targets identified by them was Nariman House, which housed a Jewish synagogue visited by Israelis.

Kasab said that the terror mission was planned at least four months ago.

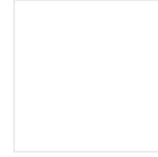
He said that a detailed recce was undertaken four months ago by another group, which included taking satellite pictures of the hotels and various locations and preparation of detailed maps.

The terrorists, he told his interrogators, booked rooms in the Taj Hotel where they kept their ammunition. They booked room 630 for four days using fake identity cards from

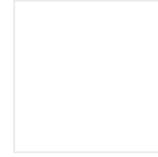
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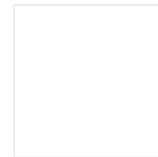


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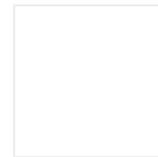
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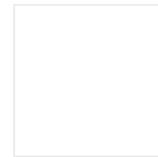
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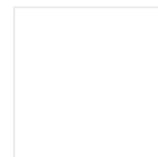
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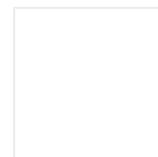
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Mauritius. Posing as Malaysian students, they had many visitors.

The police are now trying to locate these visitors.

He has also said that he and his associate Ismail Khan were the ones who shot Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad chief Hemant Karkare, and top cops Vijay Salaskar and Ashok Kamthe. Salaskar was the first to be killed followed by Kamthe and Karkare.

Kasab also revealed names and addresses of at least five locals in the city who helped in facilitating the terror operation. These people are said to have provided shelter, escorted them around and passed information on police stations and check posts, besides prominent landmarks.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Rakesh Maria said: "We suspect there could be local assistants, but it is subject to verification. It will be very premature to comment on this at this stage as our investigations are going on. All the (identity) cards are in different names and of different banks. Now, we are at least trying to figure out how they procured credit cards from various banks."

The names of the 10 terrorists released by the Mumbai police include:

Babbar Imran alias Abu Aqusha: Multan

Fahadullah: Bipalpur Taluqua

Hafeez Arshad Abdual Rahman: Multan

Nasir alias Abu Umar: Faisalabad

Abdul Rahman: Arafwala Multan

Md Ajmal Md Amir Kasab: Abu Mujahid

Abu Ismail: Dera Ismail Khan

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Nazeer alias Abu Umer: Faisalabad

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