

Anger fuelled us on

Nov 26, 2009, 03.20 AM IST

Like Tweet g+1

Share

1 Comments

More

A A

DAX Prognose - Exklusiv

www.gruener-fisher.de/Gratis-Studie - Was tun: Kaufen oder verkaufen?

Ads by Google

A policeman fires at the terrorists at Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus

For four months after the 26/11 attacks, a white board inside the office of Mumbai Crime Branch's Unit 1 bore a simple yet powerful message: Yes, I can.

These three words inspired a team of 98 policemen, including 37 officers, who worked night and day with joint commissioner of police (Crime) Rakesh Maria and additional commissioner of police (Crime) Deven Bharti to crack the case.

Driven by an intense sense of duty, the team not only collected all evidence and recorded every statement, but also prepared a 11,480-page chargesheet (the largest filed yet in the history of the Mumbai Police)... all in 90 days. The evidence, spread across nations and terrain.

Over 170 people had died across the city and there were at least 1,000 witnesses. The international media was watching every move; there was no room for error.

JCP (crime) Rakesh Maria For those 90 days, not a single policeman from the team took a day off. Looking back, Maria says, "It was the most important investigation we had handled. The country's reputation rested on our shoulders."

Inspector Dinesh Kadam

Officer Ramesh Mahale

Inspector Arun Chavan

ACP (crime) Deven Bharti

On the dedication of his men, he beams with pride: "Many of our men did not go home for a month. Some had ill family members. We had to push them to go and see their families, take rest and resume work."

Describing a typical day during those testing times, chief investigating officer Ramesh Mahale adds, "Our day would start at 8.30 am and never ended before 1 am, but no one complained. Even if they had problems, they discussed it with us or asked for leave.

There was a certain anger that pushed the officers to give their best.” It was perhaps this collective emotion that led to the inclusion of several other officers in the investigating team, even though the Crime Branch was officially probing the case.

Barely a week after the case was registered, more than a dozen officers from south Mumbai met Addl CP (South Region) K Venkatesham and expressed their desire to be involved.

“Many of them had lost colleagues and were angry. They wanted to contribute in getting Qasab hanged. We took them in and they worked with great passion and dedication,” says Bharti.

However, putting together a team so quickly, for such a complicated a case, was not easy. Every officer had to be carefully chosen: Service records were carefully examined, abilities evaluated.

Those with good track records in detection were sent on field to collect evidence; those with expertise in handling paperwork were stationed at the Unit 1 office; those with sound knowledge of technology were made part of the technical team; and those excelling at interrogation took care of Ajmal Amir Qasab.

Twelve investigating officers were assigned to the 12 different cases registered against Qasab. Each team member was given a target and time frame.

While much of the detection was done by police inspectors Dinesh Kadam and Arun Chavan, the paperwork was handled by the 12 investigating officers under Mahale.

And as for Mahale, the law graduate got the job because of his reputation of creating flawless case papers.

The case papers were being written till five minutes before they were to be presented in court on February 25, 2009.

As a Crime Branch team left with the chargesheet for the court around 2.45 pm, Maria realised that a crucial paragraph was missing.

The police vehicle stopped, the team was called back, and the last paragraph was written. “The last three days were an absolute frenzy.

There was continuous work... Bharti and I checked every page of the chargesheet. There were hundreds of witness statements and we had to sift through all to choose the right ones.

I personally translated each and every page into English, as it had to be accessed by foreign agencies as well,” recalls Maria.

For Bharti, who liaised with foreign agencies such as the FBI apart from supervising investigations, the job was tougher.

“Their investigation and evidence collection is very different from ours. For example, a statement recorded by a police officer in the US is admissible as evidence in court.

We can't do that. I had to tailor-make their evidence to be used in our case. It was a challenge, but we

did it in a way that no one could point out any error,” he explains.

‘I feared one of our own would gun down Qasab’

Another big challenge was keeping Qasab alive. “All our efforts and good work would be washed away if anything happened to Qasab. More than the underworld and terror organisations, I feared policemen.

The force was so angry that I was afraid if he was not isolated and well-protected, one of my own men would shoot him,” says Maria.

Elaborate arrangements were made and carried out in complete secrecy. “Apart from giving only a few trusted officers access to Qasab, we had to keep him away from the media,” says Mahale.

He was taken out of the Crime Branch twice — once for an identification parade and the other time to the hospital — but no one knew of it even though at least 20 cameramen were camping outside the crime branch those days.

“There is a secret door at the back, which we used to whisk Qasab away.

We also cheated the media by giving them wrong timings, and did most of this early in the morning,” Mahale adds.

‘We’re just glad our work has been appreciated’

The team takes satisfaction in the fact that the charge sheet was appreciated by the union ministry of home and foreign agencies.

“There were so many dots to join that our to-do list never seemed to end,” says Maria. “But once we saw that we had done our job well, all our fatigue and stress gave way to satisfaction and elation.”

We Recommend



How To Name Animals in German
The Babbel Blog



10 clever storage ideas for the bathroom
Dwell



iPhone - Enemy of the State?
Learnist



Former Treasury Secretaries, Financial Leaders Press Business to Cut Climate-Change Risks
The Washington Post

Recommended by

From Around The Web

Is that English? Or is that Denglish? The Babbel Blog

More from Pune Mirror

7 of the best German words Babbel

Shape Your Eyebrows Like A Pro Bigoodi

Beware the Giraffes in Your Data! Optimove

Scotland's Ruggedly Beautiful Isle of Skye is the... Talisker Storm Adventure

How Starbucks Introduced Contactless Payment Gemalto

Recommended by

BusinessKonto

www.deutsche-bank.de/BusinessKonto - Attraktive Lösungen für Unternehmer

GALLERIES

Paris Hilton

Pamela Anderson

Hrithik Roshan

Mila Kunis

Share your views - post your comment below

Your comment

Characters remaining (3000)

Log in to post this comment

facebook **twitter** **Indiatimes Network** or **Fill in your details:**

Name

Will be displayed

Email

Will not be displayed

Location

Will be displayed

Share this Comment:

Post to Facebook 
 Post to Twitter 

Please answer this simple math question.

0 + 1 =

Sort by: [Newest](#) | [Oldest](#) | [Most Discussed](#) | [Logged in Comments](#) ^{New!}



Richard Gordon ()
1689 Day ago

A job well done. A great team effort appreciated by many and myself. I hope all concerned received a period of lengthy leave but knowing their calibre they will still be at work after the briefest time away. Great to know there are determined people like these men in the Bombay police force.

[Agree \(0\)](#)
[Disagree \(0\)](#)
[Recommend \(0\)](#)
[Offensive](#)

[Reply](#)

	Home	Pune	Columns	Entertainment
Bangalore Mirror		Cover Story	Ask the Sexpert	Bollywood
Ahmedabad Mirror		Crime	Talk of the Town	Hollywood
Mumbai Mirror		Civic	Letters to the Editor	Film Reviews
Times of India		Others	Columnists	Variety
Economic Times				Marathi Reviews
E-paper				
M-Paper				
Lifehacker India				
Gizmodo India				
Happy Trips				
Weekend Getaways from Pune				
Go Cricket				

[About Us](#) [Advertise with us](#) [Terms of Use and Grievance Redressal Policy](#) [Privacy Policy](#)

Copyright © 2014 Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. All rights reserved. For reprint rights:Times Syndication Service