

Mumbai plot partially planned in Pakistan: Islamabad

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Islamabad on Thursday admitted for the first time that the Mumbai attacks, which killed 165 people, were planned partly in Pakistan and filed a case against eight suspects, six of them in custody.

New Delhi has blamed the bloody 60-hour siege on the banned Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and last month handed over information which Islamabad has been using to investigate the attacks.

"The incident happened in India and part of the conspiracy was hatched in Pakistan," interior ministry chief Rehman Malik told reporters.

It is the first time the government has admitted that Pakistani soil played any part in the attacks, which saw tensions soar between the nuclear-armed neighbours, who have fought three wars since independence in 1947.

Pakistan previously acknowledged that only the lone surviving gunman -- out of 10 who attacked high-profile targets in India's financial capital from November 26 to 29 -- was one of its citizens. He is in Indian custody.

The authorities on Thursday lodged a "first information report" with a special police investigation unit in Islamabad and six people are in custody in connection with the attacks, including the alleged mastermind, Malik added.

"The FIR has been registered against eight individuals -- eight accused. Six are with us," Malik told a news conference, adding that it would not be in the interest of the investigation to reveal their identities for the moment.

"I want to show all of you, I want to show our nation, I want to show the international community, I want to show all those who have been a victim of terrorism, that we mean business," the official said.

Malik said three boats were used by the attackers, who sailed from Karachi. One vessel was refuelled in the Indian state of Gujarat he said, adding that two houses in the sprawling port city of Karachi had been "identified".

"The information that we have suggests, yes they did sail from Karachi near (the coastal town of) Thatta. But we have to go and prove to the court. That is why it is important that India and Pakistan should work together," he said.

The presumed Pakistani mastermind of the attacks -- Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi -- had been "located and (is) under investigation".

Two "controllers" who used the voice over Internet protocol -- Mohammad Ashfaq and Javed Iqbal, who had been in Barcelona before being repatriated -- were also in custody.

Malik named other countries, where he said the plotters had made payment transfers or where equipment used in the attacks was registered.

For example one telephone SIM card came from Austria, 238 US dollars was transferred from Spain to acquire a domain name for Internet communication that was registered in Houston, Texas and money was paid in Italy, he said.

"Therefore we will be requesting through Interpol to (the) FBI to help us investigate it,

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because this is also a good piece of evidence," he said.

Vienna said Wednesday it had no evidence that the Mumbai attacks may have been planned in Austria, following media reports.

Another domain name used by the attackers was registered in Russia, and a satellite phone, registered in a Middle Eastern country was bought by someone "not based in Pakistan", said Malik, giving no further details.

Pakistan has 30 questions seeking more information from India, Malik said, which have been submitted to the Indian high commissioner in Islamabad.

Last Thursday, Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon directly accused Pakistan's powerful military spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence, of involvement in the attacks -- a charge Islamabad vigorously denied.

India, which this week accused Pakistan of delaying the investigation, said it was waiting for a formal copy of the Pakistani report.

"It's likely that we will receive a reply through the diplomatic channels later today," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

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