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## Pakistan makes arrests over Mumbai bombing

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Pakistan was holding in custody the ringleader and five other suspects in the conspiracy behind a militant attack that killed 179 people in Mumbai, the top Pakistani interior ministry official said today.

Rehman Malik, adviser to the prime minister on the interior, told a news conference that the gunmen had sailed from Karachi.

"Some part of the conspiracy has taken place in Pakistan," Mr Malik also told a news conference.

He said six suspects were in custody and two were known but still at large, and the findings were being shared with India's High Commission in Islamabad.

Tensions have been running high between India and Pakistan since the attack by 10 gunmen on India's financial capital last November, though fear of a conflict between the nuclear-armed neighbours has receded in recent weeks.

India has maintained the plot was hatched in Pakistan, and has pressed for forceful follow-up by Pakistani authorities against militants belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a jihadi group it says was responsible.

Tracing telephone calls and bank transfers had led to the capture of a key figure in the conspiracy, Hammad Amin Sadiq, Mr Malik said.

"He was basically the main operator," Malik said, adding that his interrogation led to the raid on two hideouts, one in the port city, and one two hours outside.

"We have located those locations which were used by the terrorists before launching themselves," Mr Malik said.

"They had some kind of training, they went into ocean," Mr Malik said, saying they had sailed from Karachi.

Mr Malik said the breakthrough in the investigation had resulted from tracing the fishing vessel used by the militants, purchases of equipment like life jackets and the engine for the rubber dinghy that militants came ashore in in Mumbai.

Mr Malik said Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi and Zarar Shah, two members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba jihadi group, were still in custody.

He said two other men being held were Khan and Riaz, withholding their full names so as not to compromise the investigation.

One of those arrested, identified as Javed Iqbal, was lured back to Pakistan from the Spanish city of Barcelona, Malik said.

Investigators had also discovered that some funds transferred from Italy and Spain were used to finance the attack, Austrian telephone sim cards were used, and he also spoke of a link, possibly an Internet domain, to Houston in the United States.

Mr Malik said investigators had been unable to confirm the identities of the nine gunmen killed in the

attack, though Pakistan has confirmed Mohammad Ajmal Kasab, the gunman caught alive, was a Pakistani.

Malik said a first information report (FIR), the term for a police complaint, had been lodged to initiate a case but he wanted more help from India to make charges stick.

**Reuters**

