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## PUNE REACTS TO KASAB'S HANGING

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It was to be a morning to be remembered. The coldest day for Pune at 7.9 degrees yet, it turned out to be the last day for Ajmal Kasab, the Laskhar -e-Toiba terrorist who created mayhem in Mumbai four years ago on 26 November 2008. He was hanged on 21st November 2012 just five days before the fourth anniversary of the dreaded day.

7.30 am, 21st November 2012, when Ajmer Kasab was hanged and buried in Yerwada Jail, people in Mumbai and Pune heaved a sigh of relief. Victims' families and relatives couldn't have been happier with the news of Kasab's hanging.

### Victims and relatives recall the day

This reporter and her brother too were in Bombay Hospital in November 2008 where her father was admitted in ICU when she heard the gunshots of the terrorists running towards the hospital. When the hospital shut their heavy doors and shouted for everyone to stay inside, no one thought it would be such a big thing. "Now we realize how close we were and that any stray bullet fired by the terrorists across Liberty cinema could have hit us. We are very happy that Kasab is finally hanged," the siblings say.



For Pooja Thorat, a high court lawyer who travels from Pune to Mumbai, it was a close call that day. "My friends and I had just

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wrapped up for the day and had thought of heading to Leopold's for an evening out. With my parents out of town, I was not very keen on going home hence we made plans to party and spend the evening with friends. Suddenly one of my friends got a call and we changed our plan thus heading home. If that call hadn't come, we all would be dead today. I am pleased that Kasab was finally hanged."

Jayashree Chemburkar, resident of Aundh recalls the Day she lost her brother in law. Shaunak Jaiwant Chemburkar was the lobby manager in Oberoi Hotel. He had finished his duty and he was leaving when he was gunned down and died on the spot. "I

am happy that Kasab was hanged but it is a little too late but atleast his death gets some justice."

Neeta Iyer, resident of Sanghavi was the sister in charge at GT hospital who recalls the horrifying incidents in 2008. " I am feeling much better ever since I heard about the Kasab hanging. Although it is delayed, we were expecting him to be hanged within two months but never the less, it has happened." Iyer witnessed the killing of Karkare and Salaskar through her hostel window. "It was pitch dark outside and we were all locked up in our hostel by the hospital authorities fearing our safety. "We heard gun shots, several of them and then we saw that the terrorists dressed in commando vests dragging the dead policemen out of the jeep. We were stunned and shocked at what was happening but we couldn't do a thing except watch it happen."

#### Public prosecutor jubilant

Ujwal Nikam who was the public prosecutor for the Kasab trial was elated and said that justice prevails in India. "I am very happy that Kasab was finally hanged and on behalf of the 166 departed souls and 34 injured during the massacre, I thank the Law for upholding the judiciary system. With this hanging, India has given a clear message that the judiciary system is well established and will not do injustice to anyone."

There are two jails in India, one being the Yerwada Central Jail and other being the Nagpur Central Jail where Death by hanging is conducted. The police and the Courts felt it apt for Kasab to be hanged in Yerwada for its proximity to Mumbai, added Nikam.

#### Outside Yerwada Jail


As soon as the news flashed on television sets about Kasab's death, People started gathering near the Jail. The first reaction after listening to the news of Kasab being hanged was a smile on everyone's face. One could help getting carried away by the

hysteria. The crowd started celebrating by distributing sweets among the police officers. Some people arrived in cars carrying the national flag in their hands and shouting slogans of Jai Hind and Vande Mataram. People and media personnel were eagerly waiting outside the jail to hear from the police officials. But that didn't happen. Some people were anticipating seeing the body of Kasab but after some time the news broke out that Kasab has been buried inside the Yerwada jail.

D B Purohit, insurance Advisor had reached the spot at 8 am and distributed chocolates among the crowd and media people. He said, "It is the happiest day for the citizens of our country as the person who had killed so many Indians has been hung finally." Another resident of Dhanori, Dhananjay Jadhav said, "The news comes as a big surprise for all of us. People out here were clueless about what is happening. When I switched my Television in the morning, I learnt about Kasab's hanging in Yerwada jail. I immediately rushed to the site. I also brought sweets for the people. At last the victims got their due."

Jyoti Nalawade and Manoj Chakraborty

--Prachi Bari

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