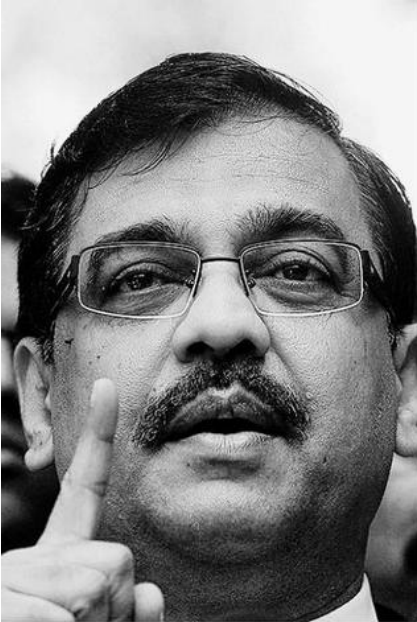


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## Victory for impartial judicial system: Nikam

• STAFF REPORTER



Ujjwal Nikam

Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam, who tried Mohammad Ajmal Kasab in a special court here, remembers the gunman as someone he has never seen in his career.

He termed Kasab's hanging as a victory for India's impartial judicial system.

"He was not only intelligent but was also specially trained to face the worse of the situations here. His case was the most crucial case in my career as I have never seen a criminal as shrewd as him," Mr. Nikam told *The Hindu* on a telephone conversation from his native Jalgaon in north Maharashtra.

"We have exposed Pakistan's hand in the terror attacks... through Kasab's trial, which is our biggest of achievements. We gave him a fair trial and an opportunity to defend himself. But the truth prevailed at the end, and he was hanged only after the proper judicial process was followed. It's a victory for India and its impartial judicial system," he said.

"Through Kasab's conviction and death penalty, the country has paid tribute to the memories of those who died in 26/11..." he said.

### Justice delivered

Countering the claims of delay in the execution of the death penalty, Mr. Nikam said such criticism would be unfair to the hundreds of Indians who tirelessly worked to secure his conviction. "This time-span should not be called delay, because the trial was on. We have delivered the justice."

Besides the trial in the special court, Mr. Nikam assisted senior counsel Gopal Subramaniam in the Supreme Court, where Kasab went on appeal against the death penalty awarded by the special court. His plea was rejected by the Supreme Court on August 29, 2012.

### Painstaking

Rakesh Maria, chief of the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorist Squad, called the entire process of investigation and execution as laborious and painstaking.

"Today, he [Kasab] received justice, though he deserved none. This is the beauty of our legal justice system, sanctity of our democracy and the country," he said.

The legal and religious sanctity was observed in the operation to shift Kasab from Mumbai to Pune. "The facility to hang a person is available only in two places in the State, Pune and Nagpur, and Pune was nearer for us," he said.

Inspector-General of Police (Law and Order) Deven Bharti, who held a key post in the Crime Branch during the probe, congratulated the entire team of investigators on building a strong case against Kasab.

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