

[NEWS](#) » [NATIONAL](#)

Published: November 22, 2012 01:00 IST | Updated: November 22, 2012 02:18 IST MUMBAI, November 22, 2012

## Why did it take four years to hang him, ask survivors

- MEENA MENON
- ALOK DESHPANDE

Mumbai police officers Sanjay Govilkar and Hemant Bowdankar never expected to catch a terrorist in their lives. On the midnight of November 26, waiting at a barricade put up at Girgaum Chowpatty, they saw a silver Skoda driving up with its headlights on. The car took a U turn to avoid the cops and smashed into the divider. For the first time Bowdankar, then assistant police inspector and his colleague Bhaskar Kadam fired from their 9 mm pistols injuring Kasab's companion Abu Ismail.

Govilkar and Tukaram Ombale went to the other side of the car and tried to grapple with a severely injured Kasab who fired from his AK 47. Govilkar sustained a bullet injury while Ombale was later declared dead. "Everyone is proud of the role of the police and Kasab's execution shows that we have a transparent system of justice," Govilkar, now a police inspector in the Protection Branch told The Hindu on Wednesday.

"For once the Mumbai police showed the world that we could catch a terrorist and this helped proved the Pakistani hand in the strike," he pointed out. "The hanging of Kasab is a victory for truth, he added. Govilkar is modest about his exploits that night. "I was only doing my duty," he adds. A writer of the bestselling book Stop watch, Govilkar says he is happy with the decision and nothing could stop the march of justice. He remembered his colleague Ombale on this occasion.

For Bowdankar also promoted to police inspector and now at Dongri police station, it was a night he will never forget his entire life. "I fired three rounds at Abu Ismail who was sitting next to Kasab," he said. This was the first time Bowdankar had used his pistol which he uses only during his annual firing parade. The incident made people respect the police more, he said.

Unarmed Railway Protection Force (RPF) constable Jillu Yadav was posted at CST on November 26 and as the station emptied out and the firing began, he saw one of the terrorists sit down to reload his weapons. Yadav thought he should do something and borrowed a colleague's rifle and shot at them but the rifle jammed. He then threw a chair at them, something that has become immortalized in 26/11 lore. Today 56-year-old Yadav is an assistant sub-inspector and he has access to sophisticated weapons. "As a Hindustani I am proud and obviously I will be glad that Kasab is punished," he said. "This will set an example to other terrorists and no one will come here again," he said.

"Every year I remember that day and I am happy it has ended like this," he said. The painful memories of death an injury remain for families and survivors. Vandana Chavan, NCP MP and sister in law of Ashok Kamte, the police officer who was shot by Kasab near Cama hospital, said in Pune, "The family and the country have been waiting for this for a long time. We are satisfied now. It is a signal to the world that India followed due process and is not tolerant of terrorists. Our loss will never be redeemed, but we hope that Pakistan will take a serious note of this and find the masterminds."

Photographer Sebastian D' Souza made history by sneaking behind pillars and empty trains to get close shots of Kasab and Abu Ismail as they marched through CST like killing machines. His photograph grabbed world attention and he also testified at the trial. "I didn't know he would be hung so soon. I was so surprised this morning," he told The Hindu. "Now it's over, everything gets over," he remarked.

### Eknath Ombale says no Indo Pak matches

Attacking the government's decision to restart cricket ties with Pakistan, Eknath Ombale, brother of assistant police sub-inspector Tukaram Ombale who died while trying to capture the terrorist Mohammad Ajmal Kasab, asked the government to cancel the series in the memory of those who died in the 26/11 terrorist attack on Mumbai.

"How can you restart the cricket series? They attacked us then and even made blasts in country since then. The attacks will continue if we go on taking soft stand and you will have few more Tukaram Ombales dying," said Mr. Ombale, while talking with The Hindu on Wednesday.

Mr. Ombale said that he and his brother's family are happy that Kasab has been hanged, but expected it much earlier. "We never thought that we will have to wait for four years to get justice. Especially at a time when there were so many witnesses around," he said.

"Why was he even allowed making appeal to the higher court? We are too mild on terrorists and hence we need stricter laws. Kasab should not have been treated with humanity," said Mr. Ombale.

The survivors of the terror attack echoed the similar feelings as by Mr. Ombale. "I was on duty at CST railways station and the bullet hit my chest. It took me two years to recover and rejoin the duty. I was the living witness of his terror attack. Why did the government take four years to hang him?" asked Parasnath Giri, 56, who works in the Railways Protection Force (RPF) at the CST railways station.

Raj Solanki's mother, Harikabai Lalji Solanki was on duty at 9.45 PM, working as a sweeper at the CST railway station when she was shot thrice and died. "I do not believe government's claim that Kasab is dead. Why was it kept a secret from us? We wanted to see his death. He killed my mother for no reason," said Mr. Solanki. Pankaj Gohil, who was working with Ms. Solanki said that, he survived the attack only because he had gone out of railways station for some work. "Give us the proof that he is dead. Tell government that, we want to see his dead body," said Mr. Gohil.

For Santosh Veer, who was injured in the hand grenade blast thrown from the Nariman House, Kasab's hanging is not only late but also shows government's lack of interest in fighting terrorism. "We four were injured in the hand grenade attack that night and fifth person died. The government should take steps on curbing the terrorism, instead of boasting the hanging of a terrorist," said Mr. Veer.

Printable version | Jul 2, 2015 4:26:26 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-did-it-take-four-years-to-hang-him-ask-survivors/article4120519.ece>

© The Hindu