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Terrorists had a back-up steamer off Mumbai coast

Vicky Nanjappa in Mumbai | November 28, 2008 13:37 IST

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Even as the world expresses shock over the barbarity and the level of preparedness of the fidayeen attacks on Mumbai, the Intelligence Bureau has said that the assault was being planned for the last six to seven months.

Investigations have revealed that the team of terrorists that carried out the attacks had a back-up steamer, standing by just a few miles from the Gateway of India.

IB sleuths investigating the case say that the steamer had trailed the team that carried out the fidayeen attack, and was laden with ammunition.

The Navy has taken control of the steamer, but it is unclear whether the forces have arrested the men who were on board.

Calling it a war-like situation, the IB said that the terrorists were well aware that it would be a long-drawn operation and thus came prepared with back-up. The idea, said the IB, was not to go back into international waters to procure more ammunition.

The IB said that the arrests made so far have made it clear that the Lashkar-e-Tayiba was behind the attacks, but it was also certain that local modules too were involved. The IB said that the local Indian Mujahideen [\[Images\]](#) module was also used in the attack. However, the mail was not sent out by the IM this time; instead, it was the handiwork of the LeT which used the alias Deccan Mujahideen.

Intelligence sources said that the fidayeen threw an open challenge to the Army, the Anti-Terrorism Squad, and the Navy and has now engaged these three forces in a fierce gun battle.

Intelligence Bureau sources also said that it was a three-pronged attack. The first reason for the attack was to target foreign nationals. The second was to get back at the Mumbai ATS, and the third reason was to spark off communal tension in the country.

It may be noted that the LeT had ordered a fidayeen attack on India's financial capital in February this year. This information was obtained during the interrogation of the accused involved in the attack on a CRPF camp in Rampur. Investigations had revealed that the Taj Mahal Hotel [\[Images\]](#) and the Bombay Stock Exchange too would be targetted.

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