



## 26/11 phone trail points to local links, says FBI report

Stavan Desai, Hindustan Times, Mumbai | Updated: Jul 11, 2009 02:00 IST

Ten days after home minister P Chidambaram said that there was no local help guiding the terrorists during the November 26 attacks, the log of phone calls made by the handlers of the attackers to numerous phones in Mumbai, Pune and Nashik before, during and after the attacks suggests that there were local contacts. None of the people who took those calls have been identified, let alone investigated.

The calls were made from the Voice over Internet Protocol (Internet telephony by which calls can be made to any part of the world by connecting to a computer) phone used by the accomplices of the attackers said to be based in Pakistan.

The details of the call logs turn up in the report submitted by the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), which helped in the probe, to the Mumbai crime branch.

The FBI report, a copy of which is with HT, is part of the chargesheet filed in the court trying the 26/11 case. It is the first time an FBI report has been submitted as evidence in an Indian court. "We'd asked the FBI if there were any local numbers reflected in those logs. They never told us," said crime branch chief Rakesh Maria.

"We sent an email to Joseph Persichini Jr, the assistant director of the FBI, and asked if the agency had specifically alerted the crime branch about these calls, and whether the calls conclusively proved complicity in India. We have not yet received a response."

The chargesheet says accomplices of the 10 attackers used 30 VoIP connections to provide "instructional and motivational" help to them. An analysis of the calls revealed 23 mobile phones and 12 landline phones were called from those VoIP numbers. Between November 23 and 28, 91 calls were made. In all, they lasted 51 minutes (see call logs on p2).

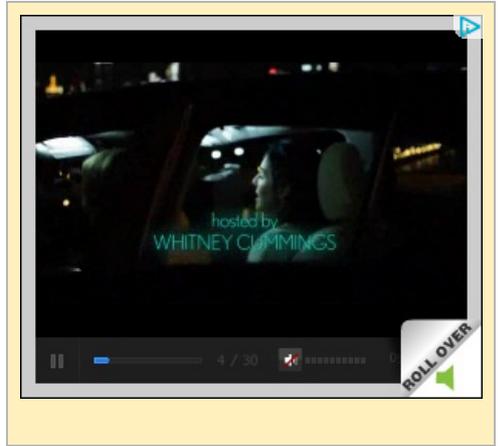
The first call recorded was to a Delhi landline number. The call lasted a minute-and-a-half early on November 23, three days before the attack.

A couple of hours later three calls were made to a Mumbai phone number. It went on for nearly two minutes. The next day, November 24, 15 calls were made to 11 mobile phones in less than an hour.

We checked out some of the numbers called. At 8.12am on November 25, for instance, a 109-second-long call was made to the office of the Post Master, Nashik Road. Post office staff said the opening time is 10am. "No one has made enquiries," a post office official said.

Another 104-second-long call was made to the office of a firm selling TVs in Pune — at 7.33 am on November 25. Youths at the office located in a residential building refused to answer any queries when this reporter visited them.

During the 60-hour attack and siege, a Mumbai mobile number was called several times from the VoIP connection. Each time after this local number was called, the attackers were contacted in each of the locations — the Taj Hotel, the Trident and Nariman House



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