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Kasab's contradictory statements

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From "kabool nahin hai" (it is not acceptable) to "kabool hain" (I plead guilty), Ajmal Amir Kasab, the lone surviving terrorist of the Mumbai terror attacks, has given a spate of contradictory statements in the last eight months to hoodwink the investigators. In his deposition in May, Kasab, who last week turned 22, rubbished the charges against him. "Yeh sab galat hai. Mujhe kabool nahin hai" (This is all wrong. These charges are not acceptable).

"Sir, mujhe mera gunah kabool hai" (I plead guilty to my crime), he told the special court in Arthur Road jail on Monday in a complete reversal of his earlier deposition.

His sudden confession came on the 65th day of the trial that began after a 11,000-page chargesheet was filed in the case against him in February this year.

Kasab's images were picked up last November by close circuit television during his attacks at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus alongwith another terrorist Ismail Khan.

The duo moved on to attack a police vehicle, a white Toyota Qualis, at Cama Hospital. In the vehicle were Maharashtra ATS chief Hemant Karkare, encounter specialist Vijay Salaskar and additional commissioner of Mumbai police Ashok Kamte).

After killing them and taking two constables hostage, Kasab and Khan drove towards Metro cinema. At Chowpaty, they confronted a barricade and there was exchange of fire when they tried to reverse. Khan was killed and Kasab taken alive.

In April, Kasab had sought retraction of his earlier confession to the November 26 attacks saying it was taken under "duress" by the investigators. The terror strikes had left 183 dead including 22 foreigners.

"Kasab is a good actor," Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam said adding he was taken by surprise when the terrorist abruptly decided to confess to the crime.

Attempting everything under the law to wriggle out of the charges or delay the trial, Kasab initially claimed that he is a juvenile and said the special court has no jurisdiction to take up his case.

Documents were produced by the prosecution to state that Kasab was born on July 13, 1987.

Kasab maintained for long that he was not a Pakistani but it turned out that he hailed from Faridkot village in the Okara district of Pakistan's Punjab province.

His father makes a living selling dahi puri while his elder brother Afzal works as a labourer in Lahore. His elder sister, Rukaiyya Husain is married in the village. A younger sister, Suraiyya and a 11-year-old brother, Munir, live with the parents.

Starting his life as a petty criminal, Kasab was soon inducted into the Lashkar-e-Taiba getting his training from the outfit's base camp, Markaz Taiba.

During the court hearings, Kasab, said to be fluent in English, Hindi, Urdu and now also understands Marathi, has also pleaded for a Pakistani lawyer to fight his case, a move seen to delay the proceedings.

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