

MAJOR TERRORIST ATTACKS IN INDIA (2000-2006) A PROFILE

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20 March 2000

Massacre at Chattisinghpora, J&K

On the eve of President Clinton's visit, militants massacred 35 Sikhs in the village of Chattisinghpora.¹ The militants were dressed in Indian Army uniforms, a tactic which is now commonly used by the insurgents. No group claimed responsibility for the attack

1 October 2001

Attack on J&K State Legislative Assembly, Srinagar

A car bomb exploded near the State Assembly killing 38 people.² The bombing was followed by an armed assault into the Assembly premises by three armed terrorists.

13 December 2001

Attack on the Indian Parliament, New Delhi

Militants attacked the Indian Parliament in which nine policemen and parliament staffer were killed. All five terrorists were killed by the security forces and were identified as Pakistani nationals. The attack took place around 11:40 am (IST), minutes after both Houses of Parliament had adjourned for the day. The suspected

terrorists dressed in paramilitary uniforms entered Parliament in a car through the VIP gate of the building.

The extent of the attack could have been worse because the car [which had a Home Ministry label and a red beacon light] was packed with 30 kg of RDX and containers with hand grenades.³ The militants used AK-47 rifles, and grenades for the attack. Investigations revealed that the terrorists' aim was not only to kill important political figures but also to create chaos inside Parliament and take hostages.

Senior Ministers and over 200 Members of Parliament were inside the Central Hall of Parliament when the attack took place. The attack also led to a military standoff between Pakistan and India ["Operation Parakram"].

22 January 2002

Attack on American cultural centre, Kolkata

Militants attacked an American cultural centre in Kolkata killing at least four police officers and injuring 21. Police arrested at least 50 suspects in the aftermath of the incident. The

¹ Praveen Swami, "The massacre at Chattisinghpora," *Frontline*, Volume 17 - Issue 07, April. 01 - 14, 2000

² Praveen Swami, "An Audacious Strike," *Frontline*, Volume 18 - Issue 21, October 13 - 26, 2001

³ Purnima S. Tripathi, "Terror in Parliament House," *Frontline*, Volume 18 - Issue 26, December 22, 2001 - Jan. 04, 2002

government accused Pakistan of involvement in the attack.⁴

14 May 2002

Massacre of family members of Army personnel, Kaluchak, J&K.

At least 30 persons, most of them members of families of Army personnel, were killed and over 60 wounded in one of the militant suicide attacks in Jammu on the Kaluchak cantonment area.⁵ As a result of the attack security was beefed up at all cantonments around the country.

21 May 2002

Firing at Hurriyat meeting; Abdul Ghani Lone killed, Srinagar

Abdul Gani Lone, senior leader of the the separatist All-Parties Hurriyat Conference was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Srinagar, a day ahead of the visit of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Kashmir valley.⁶ Shortly after the assassination Indian intelligence learned that three operatives, code-named Abu Hadid, Abu Hamza and Abu Rahel, carried out the execution. The rally on May 21 was held to commemorate the assassination of religious leader Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq by the Hizbul Mujahideen in 1990.

25 August 2005

Twin Blasts, Mumbai

Two powerful car-bomb explosions took place in South Mumbai killing at least 46 persons and injuring over

160.⁷ The first of the two blasts, several kilometres apart took place at 1.03 p.m. in the crowded Jhaveri Bazar, close to the temple of Mumbadevi. The second, four minutes later, occurred in a pay-and-park facility close to the famed Gateway of India and the Taj Mahal Hotel. The timing of the blasts and the choice of locations were apparently decided for causing the maximum damage.

24 September 2002

Akshardham Temple Attack

The siege of the Akshardham temple complex of the Swaminarayan sect ended after a commando operation. The two terrorists who stormed it the previous evening were killed. A total of 29 individuals including 16 women and four children, were killed in the terrorist attack and 74 were injured, a few of them seriously.⁸ A National Security Guard commando was also killed and one critically wounded in the operation. Two State police commandos lost their lives while rescuing the people trapped in the complex before the NSG men took position. The Prevention of Terrorism Act court on July 1, 2006 awarded death sentence to three persons in the 2002 Akshardham temple terror attack case.⁹

5 July 2005

Attack on makeshift Ram temple, Ayodhya

Six heavily armed militants, who made an attempt to storm the high-security makeshift Ram temple in Ayodhya were killed before they

⁴ Rahul Bedi and Jack Fairweather, "Gunmen kill five in attack on American offices," *The Telegraph* U.K, 23 January 2002.

⁵ Luv Puri, "30 killed in Jammu suicide attack," *The Hindu*, 15 May 2002

⁶ Praveen Swami, "The Killing of Lone," *Frontline*, Volume 19 - Issue 12, June 8-21, 2002

⁷ Mahesh Vijapurkar, "46 killed as twin blasts rock Mumbai," *The Hindu*, 26 August 2003

⁸ Manas Dasgupta, "Temple siege ends," *The Hindu*, 26 September 2006

⁹ "Akshardham attack: 3 get death sentence" [<http://www.rediff.com/news/2006/jul/01akshar.htm>]

could reach the shrine. The attackers came in an ambassador car at around 9:00am, following an explosive-laden jeep, which they rammed into the security barricade to breach the cordon. While one militant who rammed the jeep was killed, five others were killed in the encounter with security personnel from the CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] and PAC [Provincial Armed Constabulary].¹⁰

A woman devotee was killed in the crossfire while a tourist guide was killed because of the explosion. The driver of the ambassador car has been arrested and three security men were injured in the operation, which lasted nearly one-and-a-half-hours. Police sources said that the militants were disguised as devotees. The consequences of a successful assault on the “makeshift” temple would have been catastrophic for communal harmony. The attack was similar to the attack on the Jammu and Kashmir legislature in that a combination of suicide car-bombers and conventional small-arms attack was used.

29 July 2005

Jaunpur Train Explosion

At least 10 people were killed and more than 50 others injured in the explosion on the Shramjivi Express in Uttar Pradesh. Traces of the high explosive RDX had been found in the compartment where the blast occurred.¹¹ Two Bangladeshi nationals belonging to the banned

outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were arrested at New Delhi railway station by the Special Cell on February 28, 2006. The police claimed to have recovered 3 kilograms of RDX, two electronic detonators, two pistols, Bangladeshi passports and fake Indian currency worth Rs. 40,000 from them.¹²

18 October 2005

Ghulam Nabi Lone, Education Minister of J&K Killed, Srinagar

The Jammu and Kashmir Minister of State for Education Ghulam Nabi Lone was shot dead by a militant, while CPI (M) State secretary M.Y. Tarigami escaped unhurt in a similar bid in the high-security Tulsi Bagh area of Srinagar on October 18, 2005. Two security guards and a civilian were also killed in the incidents, for which the Islamic Front and Al-Mansoorin had claimed responsibility.¹³

29 October 2005

Blasts in New Delhi

At least 70 persons were killed and several injured in three powerful serial explosions on the evening of October 29, 2005.¹⁴ While two bombs went off at busy marketplaces [Paharganj and Sarojini Nagar], one exploded inside a Delhi Transport Corporation bus [near Govindpuri].

No terrorist outfit has so far claimed responsibility. The first explosion took place around 5.25 p.m. at Chheh Tuti Chowk in Paharganj, central Delhi, and the bus blast at 5.40 p.m.

¹⁰ Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, “In search of answers,” *Frontline*, Volume 22 - Issue 15, July 16 - 29, 2005

¹¹ “Explosives found on India train”

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4726737.stm]

¹² Staff Reporter, “Alleged Bangladeshi militants held at New Delhi station,” *The Hindu*, 28 February 2006

¹³ Shujaat Bukhari, “J&K Minister Lone shot dead,” *The Hindu*, 19 October 2005.

¹⁴ Staff Reporter, “Serial blasts kill 70 persons in Delhi,” *The Hindu*, 29 October 2005.

at Govindpuri in South Delhi and the third and most powerful one at 5.45 p.m. at the Sarojini Nagar market in South-West Delhi. An explosive device was defused outside the State Bank of Bikaner at Chandni Chowk in the Old City area. Chargesheets were eventually filed against Tariq Ahmed Dar and Rafiq Shah in this case.¹⁵

28 December 2005

Attack on the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

A senior scientist from New Delhi was killed and at least five persons were injured when assailants opened fire and lobbed grenades at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) Suspected terrorists of the Lakshar-e-Taiba barged into the prestigious Indian Institute of Science campus and opened fire indiscriminately killing a retired professor of IIT Delhi and injuring four others.¹⁶

7 March 2006

Serial Blasts in Varanasi

The first explosion occurred in Sankat Mochan temple near Benaras Hindu University. Many pilgrims were in the temple, as Tuesdays are considered particularly holy by devotees of Hanuman, the deity of the Sankat Mochan shrine.

Two other explosions occurred at the Cantonment railway station — one in the Shivganga Express bound for Delhi and another in a waiting hall.¹⁷ At least 100 people were injured. Six bombs were found from other areas

in the city, including in a restaurant frequented by foreigners.

A mastermind of the Varanasi blasts and five of his accomplices were arrested on the April 6, 2006 by the Uttar Pradesh police. A module of the Bangladesh-based Harkat-ul-Jehadi-Islamia (HuJI) was also discovered. Wali Ullah and his associates were arrested from different parts of the state and a large quantity of arms and ammunition recovered from them.¹⁸

1 May 2006

Massacre of Hindus and Gujjars, Doda & Udhampur, J&K

35 Hindu villagers were killed in two separate terrorist attacks in the districts of Doda and Udhampur. Twenty two residents of the mountain hamlets of Kulhand and Tharva, were shot dead outside their homes late at night. Thirteen shepherds were shot dead north of the Lalon Galla, a high-altitude meadow above the town of Basantgarh.¹⁹

1 June 2006

Attack on RSS Headquarters

Three militants were killed in an attack on RSS Headquarters.²⁰ Police said the militants attempted to drive a white Ambassador car, fitted with a red light, towards the building at dawn. They were killed in an exchange of fire with security personnel, on being challenged.

¹⁵ Praveen Swami, "War on Many Fronts," *Frontline*, Volume 22 - Issue 24, November. 05 - 18, 2005

¹⁶ Staff Reporter, "Scientist killed as gunman opens fire in Bangalore," *Hindu*, 29 December 2005.

¹⁷ "Serial blasts in Varanasi"

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1060308/asp/rontpage/story_5941755.asp]

¹⁸ "Varanasi blasts mastermind, 5 accomplices arrested" [<http://www.hindu.com/2006/04/06/stories/2006040608120100.htm>]

¹⁹ Praveen Swami and Luv Puri, "Serial terror strikes claim 35 lives in Doda and Udhampur," *The Hindu*, 2 May 2006

²⁰ Praveen Swami, "Terror strike on RSS headquarters foiled," *The Hindu*, 2 June 2006

11 July 2006

Mumbai Train blasts

The toll in the serial blasts that took place in the city rose to 190. Police said 190 persons were killed and another 625 injured in the blasts that took place in first class compartments of trains at Mira-Bayandhar, Jogeshwari, Mahim, Santacruz, Khar, Matunga and Borivli on the Western Railway on the 11th of July between 6:00 and 6:40pm. Over 200 suspects²¹ had been rounded up as a result of the ongoing investigation, with no group claiming responsibility suspicion has fallen on the Lashkar-e-Taiba and SIMI. A possible hurdle to the ongoing peace process has been created with both India and Pakistan exchanging acrimonious comments over the incident. The National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan in fact accused Pakistan of complicity in the blasts.²²

²¹ Special Correspondent, "Anti-Terrorist Squad conducting combing operations in Mumbai," *The Hindu*, 14 July 2006.

²² Shishir Gupta, "Pak hand, says NSA; Arjun, Antulay have a different take," *The Indian Express*, 14 July 2006.