

Nanded Blast

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One person was killed on the spot and another severely injured when a powerful explosion took place in the house of Shivram Manganarikar at Shastri Nagar, Nanded. The explosion is suspected to be caused by the accidental blast of a bomb that was either stored or was being manufactured.

According to reports, the explosion took place at around 12:30 on Friday [February 9, '07] night. Shivram Mangnarikar is a retired school teacher whose house was severely damaged due to the explosion. One youth called Pandurang Bhagwan Anilkandwar, aged 30 years, was killed on the spot.

Another youth, Gyaneshwar Manikwar, was severely injured with 70 percent burns. The explosion was so powerful that the shutter of the front-side shop was thrown off to a distance of 40 feet. The windows were burnt and glass cracked. The household belongings were scattered everywhere with blood and flesh, walls were cracked and the site is in total disarray.

It should be noted that a similar "accident" took place in the same town on 6 April last year at the house of one Rajkonwar, a retired irrigation department official. Two persons were killed on the spot and a few injured by a powerful bomb blast. Initially police took it very lightly. Later it was revealed that a permanent bomb manufacturing factory was functioning in the area. Fake beards were also found on the site revealing the intention of the conspirators to link their terrorist acts to Muslims. Special IG Police Mr Surya Prakash Gupta had declared that it was not an isolated event; rather a bomb-manufacturing centre (*bamb nirmiti kendra*) was functional at the house of Rajkonwar. After the narco-analysis of the bomb makers, their connection with many terrorist attacks in mosques was established. The conspirators allegedly belonged to Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Maharashtra government was severely criticized for its soft attitude towards the conspirators. Mainstream media was also criticized for its silence. Later the chief minister of Maharashtra announced a CBI enquiry of the incidence and a few newspapers like *Tehelka* covered the issue in detail.

The February 9, explosion is very similar to the last year's. Maharashtra DGP Mr Pasricha has already announced that the police was carrying out investigations as to whether the two incidents were linked. Patbandhare Nagar, where .last .year' s incident took place, is much closer to the site of blast. According to sources, the deceased and the injured youth are activists of right-wing Hindu organizations. The nature and intensity of the explosion is also very similar to last year's. All these factors have already established that this explosion is the proof that a bomb manufacturing centre is still functional in the city.

In Maharashtra, bomb blasts are routinely pinned down to so-called "Muslim terrorists". Even before the first wisp of smoke is settled, police and politicians are out on TV screens blaming Muslims as the perpetrators of the heinous crime. Within no time, suspects are dug out, paraded before TV crews and hauled away to prison cells. Dozens of people having any remote link to the accused are arrested and within days the issue is declared to be solved.

No such spectacle is visible in cases when bomb makers appear to be Hindu radicals, it is great irony that even after last year's big explosion, the bomb making effort was persistent in the same place and in the same vicinity. Either police was so careless that even after last year's incidence it did not think necessary to have a watch over the activities of the Hindu radicals of the city or it just overlooked what they were doing. It shows how vigilant and responsible the police and intelligence agencies are and how safe citizens are in the care of such administration.

There is great resentment among the minorities, Muslims and other citizens of the city. It has further strengthened their doubts that Hindu extremists were behind the Malegaon blasts and that the Maharashtra Police was not fair in its conduct to nab the real culprits.

It is testing time for Chief Minsiter Vilas Rao Deshmukh who has already faced the Muslim wrath in the Mumbai municipal elections and is reportedly under fire from the Congress high command. If he could not come out with iron hands to deal with the conspirators, this incidence could further aggravate the communal crisis. □□□