

Uncle~ garage!

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Catherine (name changed)

Back in 1993, she was a teenager and stayed in the same building as Tiger Memon (Al-Hussain in Mahim). On March 15, she provided then DCP Rakesh Maria with the biggest breakthrough in the 1993 blasts case with just two words, Uncle, garage.

With that tip-off, Marias men stormed the garage of the building to find empty cartons of RDX and established the RDX-laden vehicles which were utilised as bombs in the blasts.

While my family watched TV that night, I was watching Tigers men from the window of my flat, says Catherine, who continues to reside at Al-Hussain.

Vijay Patwardhan and Dr Vishwas Sapatnekar, deep-sea divers

Following the discovery of RDX inside Nagla creek, the police were in search of divers who could retrieve it. Patwardhan and Sapatnekar, who ran a deep-sea diving club in Thane, were contacted on April 2, 1993.

The smugglers had stored the RDX and gelatin across half a kilometre of water and it took us almost four hours to retrieve the explosives, says Patwardhan.

Chandar Khudade, a farmer

On April 1, 1993, Khudade helped unearth 2,380 kg of RDX and gelatin, one of the biggest hauls of explosives in India. My son brought home a black substance he found in Nagla creek, Thane, and said it would be very useful in lighting wood during the rains, says 55-year-old Khudade, a farmer.

I set a pinch of it on fire and I was shocked with the long and intense flames, says Khudade.

A worried Khudade contacted his friend, constable Shyam Phutane of Kalamboli police station and handed him a small amount in the afternoon on April 1. The constable returned with a posse of vans at 1.30 in the night.

They barged into my house and put a gun to my head and asked me to show them the place where my son found the black substance, adds Khudade.

All Khudade can say of his tip-off now, Achcha kaam kiya na. Abhi sab log jaante hai mereko.

Arup Patnaik, joint commissioner (law and order)

On March 26, 1993, Patnaik, the then DCP, led a search team accompanied by a bomb disposal squad to Mumbra.

His squad seized 1,034 kg of RDX and 574 kg of gelatin hidden in a building in Mobin Nagar.

Shyam Phutane, a constable

Recalling April 1, 1993, Phutane says, After completing my night shift I went to Nagla Bunder to meet Chandar to whom I had sold my bike. While conversing he happened to mention how his son had accidentally found a black substance which almost exploded on catching fire.

With the RDX recovery in Mumbra fresh in his mind, Phutane carried back a small amount to show it to his seniors.

The rest is history, says Phutane 13 years later and adds, It pays to do the job one feels from the heart for.