

26/11 family steels itself to cope with life

A year after 26/11, a Bhendi Bazaar resident, 68-year old Mohammed Hanif Peer Mohammed, still remembers his beloved brother-in-law, Mastan Qureshi, 50, who fell a victim to terrorists' bullets at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) that night.

'My sister Saeeda (40) and three children awaited the return of their father to Govandi (a northeast [Mumbai](#) suburb) as usual so they could have dinner together. He worked as a professional tourist guide and used to take foreign nationals in and around Mumbai on sight-seeing,' Mohammed recalled.

Around 9.45 p.m., the horrified family learnt from the television news that there was firing at CST, one of the two main stations in Mumbai for suburban train services. The family was immediately concerned for Qureshi and tried to contact him on his mobile phone, but the number was not reachable.

'Suburban trains had been suspended beyond Byculla so there was no way of reaching CST station. My sister called me and I launched a frantic search for Qureshi,' Mohammed said in a choking voice.

After a few hours, they got a call from Qureshi's mobile number and learnt that he had sustained bullet injuries and was rushed to Sir J.J. Hospital, which was close to Mohammed's house.

'He had the presence of mind to tell a fellow injured commuter to take out his home number from the telephone diary and call up. The other victim somehow obliged and conveyed the message to us, so I rushed to the hospital,' he said.

There was a huge crowd of anxious relatives of the victims who were being taken there from different parts of the city where the terrorists had struck in quick succession, shocking the entire country that night.

Mohammed managed to reach his brother-in-law but the hospital staff, despite all efforts, could not succeed in saving Qureshi.

'My sister is yet to fully recover from the tragedy. All of us remind Saeeda that she has to now live for her children, daughter Sanaa and sons Tausif and Sohail.'

The tragedy has steeled the family and the children have also matured. While Tauseef has started taking civil contract works, Sohail is awaiting a promised job offer from the railways.

'The issue is stuck for over 10 months in some documentation formalities and bureaucratic hassles. If he does not get the job soon, we shall write to Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee, seeking her help. The children should not have a bleak future,' Mohammed said.

This Nov 26, the family is planning to have a special commemorative prayer for Qureshi in Govandi and Bhendi Bazaar mosques and a traditional 'fateha' lunch.

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