

Suspects Are Arrested in India Commuter Rail Bombings

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By Amelia Gentleman

NEW DELHI, July 21 — One person was arrested in Kenya and three people appeared in an Indian court on Friday in connection with the train bombings in Mumbai last week that killed more than 200 people and wounded at least 800.

The men are accused of helping to organize the July 11 attacks on seven trains crowded with commuters traveling home from work, officials said.

“We have definite evidence that these people are linked to terrorist activities,” one of the police investigators, K. P. Raghuvanshi, said about the arrests in India. “They have connections with groups in Nepal and Bangladesh, which are directly or indirectly connected to Pakistan.”

The Kenyan authorities also arrested a terrorism suspect who may be connected with the Mumbai attacks, Agence France-Presse reported. The Kenyan police said they had detained Abdul Karim Tunda, one of India’s most wanted men. He will be turned over to prosecutors for possible extradition to India, they said.

Mr. Raghuvanshi identified the suspects in Mumbai as Khaleel Aziz Sheikh, Kamal Ahmed Ansari and Mumtaz Ahmed Chowdhury, but declined to give further details. “We will place the evidence before the court,” he said.

Two of the suspects were detained in the northern state of Bihar and were transferred to Mumbai for questioning on Thursday, said the chief of the police in Bihar State, Ashish Ranjan Sinha. Television stations reported that the third man had been detained in Mumbai.

The “Mumbai antiterrorist squad came and sought these arrests,” said Amrit Raj, the police chief in the district where two of the men were arrested. “Two mobile phones and a white powder in a small bottle were recovered from them. The nature of the white powder will be known after investigations.”

Wearing black hoods over their heads, the three men made a brief court appearance in Mumbai, and were remanded into police custody for 10 days.

“We believe these three have knowledge of the attacks. Some of their links with certain networks have come to light,” a senior police official, who requested anonymity, told Reuters.

But it was not immediately clear how significant the arrests were. The police gave no details of how the men were suspected of being involved in the attacks.

Prosecutors said that the arrests were made in order to learn more about the bombings. Hundreds of people have been detained across India since the attacks, but most were released after brief questioning. The three arrests in India were thought to be the first formally made in connection with the bombings.

The police have indicated unofficially that they suspect an Islamic militant group, Lashkar-e-Taiba, based in Pakistan and fighting Indian rule in Kashmir, helped orchestrate the attacks, but no evidence has been publicly produced to support the assumption.

The president of Pakistan, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has condemned the attack and rejected accusations of any Pakistani role, but Indian officials postponed planned peace talks with Islamabad after the attacks.

“I want to tell the people of Bombay that the reaction of the Indian government to the blasts was strange,” General Musharraf said Thursday, using Mumbai’s other name. “There should not be any blame game. There should not be any unsubstantiated comments.”

General Musharraf offered Pakistan’s assistance with investigations in his country “if you give us proof.”

On Friday, however, India dismissed his offer, saying Pakistan had not responded effectively to earlier appeals for crackdowns on militant groups.

“We are disappointed at Pakistan’s continuous denial of presence of jihadi groups in Pakistan,” Navtej Sarna, the Indian Foreign Ministry’s spokesman, told reporters.

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