Spot Report
Serial Bomb Blasts in Bangalore, India
25 July 2008

The Incident
A series of bomb blasts took place in India’s Information Technology (IT) hub, Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka State on 25 July 2008. A total of seven synchronized crude bombs went off within several minutes of each other, killing four persons and injuring several others.\(^1\) According to an Indian police official, the blasts took place between 2:00-2.45 pm (India Standard Time).\(^2\) According to other sources, the first three blasts took place between 1.30-1.45 pm (India Standard Time).\(^3\)

According to details, two blasts occurred close to police facilities in Bangalore city, while another bomb went off in a business centre. The fourth targeted Koramangla district that houses several computer software firms. The first four explosions took place on a two-km stretch on Hosur Road leading to Electronics City that houses many IT firms.\(^4\) The other three blasts were reported from the southern suburbs of religiously-mixed quarters of Bangalore.\(^5\) According to the Indian Home Secretary, Madhukar Gupta, all the blasts occurred in a radius of 10-15 km in Bangalore.\(^6\)

Map of Bangalore City

\(^1\) ‘Seven Bomb Blasts Rock Bangalore’, \textit{The News}, 26 July 2008
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) ‘SIMI, LeT May be Behind Bangalore Blasts: IB’, \textit{The Times of India}, 25 July 2008
\(^6\) Ibid.
Reaction to the Serial Blasts
The Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh condemned the terrorist attacks and urged the Bangaloreans to “remain calm and maintain communal harmony.” The Indian Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, said, “such incidents will not deter government from pursuing its policy of dealing with anti-national elements in a resolute manner.”

Bangladesh condemned the serial blasts in the “strongest terms”, and called it an act of “mindless terrorism.” The US also condemned the vicious terror attacks in Bangalore on Friday (25 July) and Ahmedabad on Saturday (26 July), and extended its condolences to victims of these senseless attacks and to their families. Pakistan described the serial blasts as “dastardly acts of senseless violence” against innocent people.

The Modus Operandi
According to senior Indian officials, improvised explosive devices (IED) were used in the blasts. The Bangalore Police Commissioner, Shanker Bidri, while talking to media, confirmed that all these bombs were of low-intensity and were triggered by timers. Initial reports leaked to the media by Indian officials say that some of the blasts are low intensity using gelatin (gelignite explosive) sticks. Furthermore, the crude bombs were stuffed with nuts and bolts in an attempt to increase the impact of the blasts.

It was also reported that the explosive device used in two of the blast-site, Madiwala and Nayandahalli, were powerful in nature, while in other places crude devices were used. The Police also recovered some explosive materials from a park in Rajaram Mohan Roy road, which include Sulphuric Acid and urea stacked in a pack. According to Bidri, “the materials recovered however were not bombs but supportive materials that could have been utilized in making bombs.”

The Suspect
While the Indian government continues to focus on multiple suspects that could be involved in the Bangalore serial blasts, a recently known, Mujahideen fi-al Hind (The Indian Mujahideen) have claimed responsibility for the serial blasts. A person who

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8 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
identified himself from the terrorist outfit, claimed the responsibility saying, “yesterday, it was Bangalore, today it is Ahmedabad, and tomorrow, it will be Kerala.” The Indian Mujahideen released a 14-page manifesto e-mailed to the media minutes before 26 July Ahmedabad serial bombings, entitled “The Rise of Jihad”. The manifesto stated that the bombings were carried out to avenge the 2002 anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat. “In the light of the injustice and wrongs on the Muslims of Gujarat,” it says, “we advance our jihad and call all our brethren under it to unite and answer these irresolute kafireen [infidels] of India.”

However, the Indian government is not ruling out the involvement of Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) or Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI) in the Bangalore serial blasts, on suspicions that the Indian Mujahideen could be a fake name used by any of the two latter organisations. The Indian investigators are also looking into the prospects of the Indian Mujahideen being a loose coalition of elements from SIMI, Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and the HUJI.

The blasts are similar in their modus operandi with those of Jaipur serial blasts of May 2008, which were also claimed by the Indian Mujahideen. The blast came at a time when India is recovering from the political instability due to the present Indian government’s decision to go ahead with the Indo-US nuclear deal. The fact that serial blasts took place in the Karnataka State, which is being run by the main opposition party in India, the BJP is also significant. In recent years, the Muslim factor in the Indian politics has assumed tremendous importance. This Muslim issue also factored into the debate of whether India should sign the Indo-US nuclear deal, given the wide anti-US sentiments among Muslim population in India.

The serial blasts in Bangalore may affect the economy of the country, especially the foreign direct investment (FDI) that is flowing in the country since early 2001. While the bombs were crude and the casualty figure remained low, it nevertheless had an expansive psychological impact. The Indian government need to improve its intelligence infrastructure aimed at interdicting and foiling such terrorist attacks.
