

## Another calamity strikes Mumbaikars

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### ***Aayi, Baba kadhi yenar?***

(When will daddy come?) Tanya, aged 4 years asks her mother who is crying uncontrollably. Little does she know that her daddy won't return home tonight or ever. He was killed in the bomb blast that took place on the Western Railway local at Matunga yesterday evening. Â

### The memories of the March **1993**

serial blasts in Mumbai are still etched in the minds of Mumbaikars. Hundreds were killed then. The case still hasn't reached any conclusion. That was the day people came to know what the black soap like substance RDX explosive meant.

Mumbaikars owe their existence to the Mumbai local trains - nearly 6 million travel by them daily through various networks, the Western, Central and the Harbour line. Â Some commuters travel all the way from Pune and Palghar to reach their work place. They do not mind - for, for them this is the cheapest and "safest" mode of transport - **until now**

. They are packed in the local trains like sardines, some three thousand of them in a rake which can carry half the number.

Yesterday's bomb blasts all along the Western line at eight places in the evening peak hour and the scenes of devastation immediately brought to mind the blast that took place on the Central Railway local train on March 13 th 2003 when it approached Mulund Railway station. 11 people died and more than 65 were injured, nearly 20 persons were arrested.

The ripped off first class compartments that are being aired on all television channels are a gruesome reminder of that incident which took place three years ago. Â Certainly, some one wants to disturb the peace and the tranquility prevailing in Mumbai, but the fact remains that it is the daily wage earner and the **white**

collared worker who has to sacrifice his life in this process - a meager compensation from the Government is what his family receives and which more often than not comes too late.

As if being a prelude to today's blasts, the first week of July saw heavy rains lashing Mumbai making the Mumbaikar reminiscence scary experiences of last year's 26/7, the rioting at Bhiwandi in Thane district a couple of days later and then the un-official bandh on Sunday against the desecration of the statue. Â Each of these events made every Mumbaikar hang his head in shame and wonder what makes the place still being referred to as the Commercial capital of India.

There is nothing certain here, when you leave your home for work, you pray that the trains are running on time, there are no morchas or squatting on tracks by protestors, that there is no flooding of rail tracks, that there are no blasts any where in Mumbai and you return safe and sound.

Everyone acknowledges that Mumbaikars are sitting on a time bomb, any incident either incurred by nature's wrath or nonsensical human actions will cost the lives of many. There is nothing to be lost by the politicians or the business class who stay in palatial houses and who are not required to travel by the local trains. It is the common man who has to bear the brunt of everything. Â Already three days of leave in July due to the rains, probably some more to follow from tomorrow and the pay you receive at the end of the month, that is if you are lucky to be retained in your private job that is, will be another headache.

Little said of the daily wage earners - they have accepted this as the risk of staying in the commercial capital which ensures that come what may they will certainly get two square meals a day.

Rags to riches stories are plenty in Mumbai - it has taken every one in its bosom, whether he is a South Indian or a North Indian or even a Bangladeshi - one can make his dreams come true here.

Hundreds of lives have been lost in the train blasts yesterday, hundred others injured, some have lost their limbs - no one has a count of them. The people who came to the rescue were the ones who stay near the railway tracks and who are already facing eviction from their homes for being too close to the railway line. There are many who will reach home today, some stayed in their offices or friend's place overnight. People have been frantically trying to contact their family members and friends since last night. Many have spent sleepless night yesterday, waiting for their dear ones call. Those who lost their near and dear ones will be seeking questions from the Almighty as to what wrong had they done.

Tomorrow would be another day. If the Railway authorities manage to remove these wrecked bogies like they did in March 2003 and run the train services, you will find commuters going to work as usual. ^ That is the indomitable spirit of Mumbaikars. ^

Probably, this time it could be different - they are fed up, **tomorrow it could be their turn, they were lucky today.** The country is more concerned about the BSE sensex. ^ Why should they live in such an un-predictable ^ ^ Mumbai?

Even the rain gods were crying - at least they are sympathetic to the Mumbaikars.

May the departed souls rest in peace.

**(The views expressed are personal of the author)**