

New Delhi Police Doubt a Boast; Shoppers Back, a Day After Blasts

The New York Times

October 31, 2005

By [SOMINI SENGUPTA](#)

NEW DELHI, Oct. 30 - A day after a synchronized string of bombs tore through packed holiday-season markets in the Indian capital, killing 59 people, the city's shopping centers crept back Sunday to a cautious normalcy, a little-known militant outfit in disputed Kashmir Province claimed responsibility, and the police insisted that investigations remained inconclusive.

In Srinagar, the summer capital of [India](#)-controlled Kashmir, in a telephone call to a local news agency called Kashmir News Service, a man identified his group, Inquilabi, or Revolutionary, as having carried out the bombings. The joint commissioner of Delhi police, Karnail Singh, told reporters on Sunday that his office was investigating the lead. The police official gave a slightly different name of the organization: Islamic Inquilabi Mahaz, or Islamic Revolutionary Group, and said it was linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a [Pakistan](#)-based militant organization responsible for several attacks in India.

Ajai Sahni, a security analyst and director of the New Delhi-based Institute for Conflict Management, said Lashkar-e-Taiba, when it first surfaced in Kashmir in 1993, operated under the name Islamic Inquilabi Mahaz. "They are the same group," he said. "They are what we could call a front organization."

Lashkar-e-Taiba, outlawed in Pakistan, has spawned a charity that calls itself Jamat-ud-Dawa and provides relief to survivors of the Oct. 8 quake in Pakistan.

No one has yet been arrested in connection with the blasts, the police official told reporters. Nothing about the materials used or the pattern of the attacks suggests the hand of a particular organization. The police announced a reward of \$2,200 for any information leading to the arrests of the bombers. India faces a host of armed insurgencies: from Maoists in its forests, ethnic guerrillas in the northeast, Sikh separatists, and Islamist guerrillas fighting for Kashmir. India accuses Pakistan, its neighbor and rival, of supporting the Kashmir militants.

The blasts came just hours before India and Pakistan agreed to open the de-facto frontier that divides their respective swaths of Kashmir. The accord is intended to allow members of divided families to visit one another and convey relief.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India blamed terrorists for the bombings, but neither he nor any among his cabinet members would identify who was behind the attacks. The blasts wounded more than 200 people on the eve of the country's most important Hindu and Muslim holidays. For New Delhi, as across much of North India, this weekend is

akin to the weekend before Christmas in the [United States](#) and represents one of the busiest shopping periods of the year.

The first bomb struck at Paharganj Market in the city center shortly after 5:30 p.m.; a second struck Sarojini Nagar Market in south New Delhi a few minutes later; the last struck shortly thereafter near a bus in an industrial area called Govindpuri, also in the city's south.

On Sunday, shopping centers opened their doors, though traffic was considerably lighter than normal and business was far more sluggish than normal on the weekend before Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, and Id al-Fitr, marking the close of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Yusuf Jameel contributed reporting from Srinagar for this article, and Hari Kumar from New Delhi.