

City on terror radar, but CCTV camera project still incomplete

'Won't Be Able To Meet Aug 28 Date For Installation'

Asseem Shaikh | TNN

Pune: Consecutive terror attacks in 2010 and 2012 were not enough for the local police and the administration to wake up to the urgent need to install CCTV cameras across the city. After a low-intensity blast outside Dagdu Sheth Halwai Ganapati temple in Budhwar Peth on Thursday, the Pune police accepted that the project is indeed moving at a snail's pace and that it won't be ready by August 28, the deadline set by the state government.

The project to install 1,285 CCTV cameras across the city was mooted after the German Bakery blast in 2010 that killed 17 people and injured 64 others. It failed to gain momentum even after the JM Road serial blasts in August 2012.

Though the Pune police says the CCTV cameras won't be ready on time, Allied Digital, the company that has been given the contract to install the cameras in the city and Pimpri Chinchwad, said it would meet the deadline set by the state government.

Home minister R R Patil, who visited the site of the fresh terror attack in which five people were injured on Thursday, said CCTV cameras would be installed in the old city, Pune Camp and adjoining areas before the Ganesh festival.

Patil's statement came after the Shiv Sena-BJP opposition led by MLA Girish Bapat protested against the delay. Patil said the work is underway and that all problems related to installation of cameras would be resolved soon.

Police commissioner Satish Mathur declined to comment. He asked this reporter to seek an explanation from the contractor. Mathur also avoided making a statement on the number of CCTV cameras installed till date. It may be recalled

THE PROJECT

- The Rs 224.31-crore plan would comprise installation of 1,285 CCTV cameras at 444 locations in the city
- 300 cameras each will be installed in zone 1 and zone 2
- Spots for cameras selected by the city police and the contractor
- Every police station will be able to see the footage
- High resolution cameras to enable photographing of vehicle number plates and activities in the area
- Home minister R R Patil has said the project will be completed before Ganesh festival



The CCTV footage from Thursday's blast site is blurred, police have said

that Mathur, in a meeting of citizens' groups and traders at Chinchwad on June 19, had said that not a single camera has been installed so far.

Additional commissioner of police (administration) Abdur Rehman told TOI that the contractor has started the work, though the progress is slow. "About 300 CCTV cameras will be installed in zone I and zone 2 covering 17 police stations in south region area," said Rehman.

Speaking to TOI over the phone from Mumbai, Allied Digital's CEO Jawahar Ali said, "This is a security project. Certain information pertaining to the project is classified and we cannot share the details."

On why the project has not picked up momentum, Ali said, "The work is in progress, but civil works pertaining to digging, trenching, re-surfacing, underground cabling, erection of poles, installing internet connections among others were affected because of rains. The deadline set by the government will be met."

Soon after the bakery blast, the Pune Municipal Corporation had mooted installation of CCTV cameras in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad in its annual budget. The Rs 220-crore project was sent to the state for approval. It was cleared by the state home department and the govern-

ment has also allocated funds for the same.

The Rs 224.31-crore contract includes setting up 1,285 cameras at 444 locations across the city. A project implementation committee, headed by Pune police commissioner, has been constituted to monitor the installation work. The additional commissioners of Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad municipal corporations, representatives of the district administration, the state department of information and technology, Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (MSEDCL) and Public Works Department (PWD) are other members of the committee.

The spots for the CCTV cameras were selected after a survey done by the police and company's officials. The company will have to maintain the cameras for the next five years. The server will be installed in the police commissionerate. The additional commissioners and the deputy commissioners will be able to view the visuals. Every police station will be able to see the footage. The high resolution cameras will enable photographing of the number plate of every vehicle or activity in the vicinity. The company will train policemen to understand the functioning of the cameras.

Forensic experts to look at footage from blast site

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: The state anti-terrorism squad (ATS), Pune, has decided to send the CCTV camera footage from the site of Thursday's low-intensity bomb blast near Dagdusheth Halwai Ganapati Temple to a forensic science laboratory for analysis, sources said.

ATS officials took the decision after it was found that the CCTV cameras installed on the building housing the Faraskhana and Vishrambaug police stations had captured blurred images of the suspects parking the motorcycle. The ATS recordings will be sent to a private expert for analysis.

The Pune police have meanwhile decided to install superior quality CCTV cameras at the police stations.

Parking at the blast site has been banned, while the civic parking premises near the police stations can only be used by policemen. Private individuals have to park their vehicles on the road.

Police constable Dada Rasge's motorcycle, which was used in the blast, was stolen from the Satara court premises on June 25. The bomb was placed in the storage unit of the bike. Rasge has given a statement to the ATS and other police agencies that he had not installed a storage unit on his vehicle.

The ATS and Pune police have started checking criminals on police records involved in vehicle thefts. "We have formed police teams to check suspects involved in vehicle thefts after obtaining a list from the Pune and Satara police," officials said.

"We are checking suspects released on bail and will also be checking criminals lodged in jails. Criminals who have gone missing after the blast or have changed their addresses will also be looked at," police said. Meanwhile, the Satara police said that the investigations in the vehicle theft had not revealed anything as of now.

AICTE nod to colleges binding on state: HC

Vishwas Kothari | TNN

Pune: The Bombay high court has ruled that the state government cannot back out from sanctioning new engineering and diploma colleges and courses after they have been approved by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in consultation with the government.

"Having participated at all the stages (of approval by the AICTE), the respondent state and the director of technical education (DTE) cannot withdraw themselves from the obligations to grant approval at such stage," a high court division bench of Justices Anoop Mohta and A A Sayed observed in 19-page judgment on July 9.

The court granted relief to Kolhapur-based D Y Patil polytechnic and 12 other institutions, while directing the government and the DTE to include their names in this year's centralized admission process (CAP) for the post-SSC (Std X) engineering diploma courses. Through an interim order on June 26, the court had directed the DTE to display names of these institutions on its website, subject to further orders.

In its July 9 judgment, the bench observed, "We are of the view that everybody concerned should be permitted to participate in admission process at the earliest. The interim order so passed (should) also be merged into the final order to enable the institutions and students to participate in the admission process as scheduled. The time action, therefore, is must for all."

The process for online submission of application

forms, document verification and confirmation of pleas at the application receipt centres for the diploma CAP is to conclude on July 14, according to an extended deadline declared by the DTE. A provisional merit list is to be released on July 15, after which the schedule for online submission of option forms will be declared.

The 13 institutions had filed separate petitions in the high court against the state's reluctance to issue a govern-

also relied on the high number of vacant seats that are reported for engineering degree and diploma courses in the last few years.

The bench, however, noted that the state on July 3 has granted approval to the degree courses at unaided institutions and this was also the reason for the court to dispose of — by a common order on July 8 — all those writ petitions in the D Y Patil Pratinthan college of engineering vs DTE and others case. In that case, the state had taken a similar defence of prospective plan, financial burden and existing vacancies.

"The state, therefore, in spite of such a defence, having granted approval to similar situated degree courses, the denial of same benefits and approval to the diploma courses, though AICTE has granted approval is unjustifiable. The similar defence so raised in this affidavit is also unsustainable and self-contradictory," the bench observed.

Citing the AICTE's supremacy in the approval of new colleges and courses, the bench observed, "Having once granted the approval after following the due procedure prescribed, including after taking views of state government and other authorities, the role of the state of Maharashtra, in our view is quite restricted. There is nothing pointed out that the state/DTE has power to override the decision taken by AICTE."

The bench also observed that the state, at no stage of the approval process before the AICTE, had objected to approval to the new institutions on the grounds of the prospective plan.

“Having participated at all the stages (of approval by the AICTE), the respondent state and the director of technical education cannot withdraw themselves from the obligations to grant approval at such stage

— An HC division bench

ment resolution sanctioning their inception from 2014-15, even after the AICTE had approved them. Among other things, they prayed for the court's directions to the state to issue the GR and to include them in the engineering diploma CAP by mentioning their names in the institute information brochure with course-wise sanctioned intake, institute code and choice code.

On July 2, the DTE and the department of higher and technical education filed an affidavit resisting these prayers on the grounds that sanctioning new institutions was not in the interest of the 'Perspective Plan for Technical Education in Maharashtra' and that the same would cast an additional financial burden on the government. It

Delay to protect interests of firms: Fadnavis

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: BJP state president Devendra Fadnavis alleged on Saturday that the state government had delayed the installation of CCTV cameras in Pune and Mumbai to "protect interests of certain companies".

Fadnavis was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of BJP's core committee meeting held in Pune. When asked about Thursday's blast in the city, Fadnavis said, "The state government is responsible for the incident (the blast). After every bomb blast, home minister R R Patil reiterates

“Certain companies are interested in the CCTV tender and the government has repeatedly amended tender conditions for them. Besides, the state is going for a static CCTV network and not a dynamic one, which would help to keep a close eye on suspicious movements

Devendra Fadnavis | BJP STATE PRESIDENT



that the government will install CCTV cameras. But no steps have been taken till date. It is appalling that the state has not installed the cameras because of a war between some companies."

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dynamic one, which would help to keep a close eye on suspicious movements."

The BJP state chief said that some blacklisted companies had submitted bids for the CCTV project, while others with no financial status were also in the fray. He alleged that the state government had deliberately allowed such companies to enter the bidding race.

"The government has completely failed to fulfill its promise to install CCTV cameras in Pune and Mumbai. This is a glaring example of incompetency, for which R R Patil should resign from the post

of state home minister. He (Patil) has only made repeated announcements without taking any action," Fadnavis said.

He said that Pune had become unsafe thanks to state government's apathy. "This city has become a soft target because police and the state have failed to nab culprits responsible for earlier attacks. The state government has failed to protect the city," Fadnavis said.

On Friday, city BJP leaders, led by MLA Girish Bapat, staged an agitation to protest against the state government's apathy towards CCTV camera installation.

GURU POORNIMA CELEBRATED

Shyam Sonar



Students of 'Veda' pay respects to their guru on the occasion of Guru Purnima at Ved Bhavan, Chandani Chowk, on Saturday

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Germans in city all set for football World Cup finale

Meenakshi Rohatgi | TNN

Pune: Germans living in Pune are all geared up for the mother of all battles on Sunday night when their team takes on South American giants Argentina at Rio.

Pune is home to a large number of German companies and expatriates who do not want to miss out on the action.

Helmut Scholz of The Cultural Centre, a community space in Mundhwa, has been in Pune for the last four months. He has made arrangements to screen the 2014 FIFA World Cup final live at a venue. "I have made new friends here and will make sure we have fun," he said.

Helmut said the Cultural Centre has been decorated with flags and snacks have been arranged for about 40 people. "There is a lot of hope from this German team to convert its brilliant teamwork into a win after 24 long years! Even after a player got injured, the team did not crumble or let it affect its performance. This is our strength," Helmut said.

Mathias Knorr, director of production at German construction equipment major Liebherr, has planned a barbecue dinner for his 10 friends at his residence in Kalyaninagar. He hopes the match will be a nail-biting contest. "I have not missed a single Germany match in this world cup and I won't miss this one either. We all will wear white jerseys to cheer for our team," he said.

Several commercial outlets are cashing in on the eu-



The German expatriates in the city have made elaborate plans to enjoy the match with friends and colleagues

phoria in the German community. Nitin Goswami, the food and beverages head at JW Marriot, Pune, said the hotel's open-air restaurant, Spice Kitchen, will screen the match live. "The previous matches had a full house — with in house customers, expatriates and other regular patrons creating quite a buzz. We are expecting more than 100 people for the final," Goswami said.

Hermann Prax, Pune communications head at German car company Volkswagen, said a special screening has been arranged for employees and friends at a five-star in Mundhwa. "Everyone around here has been discussing the 2014 FIFA World Cup matches since past few days. Indians and Germans are equally excited about it," said Prax.

"An astonishing number of people are talking about football. It's all over — in restaurants over lunches, offices and during screenings. I frankly did not expect such

Pic courtesy: Helmut Scholz

After a slow start, 150 families opt for girl-child scheme

Prasad Kulkarni | TNN

Pune: The Ladki Lek Dattak Yojana scheme aimed at supporting girls from poor families financially has gathered momentum. The scheme was started to check female foeticide. Nearly 150 girls will benefit from this scheme, now.

According to the civic body, a new-born girl in a family with an annual income of less than Rs 1.3 lakh will be eligible. The girl's family will have to contribute a one-time amount of Rs 10,000, while the PMC will contribute Rs 20,000. The total amount of Rs 30,000 will be deposited in a nationalized bank and when the girl turns 18, she will receive Rs 2.4 lakh.

"Nearly 50,000 babies are born in the city every year of whom 22,000 to 28,000 are girls. Despite getting approval in March 2013, the scheme could not gather speed as the rules were not formed and approved at the civic body for four months. Not a single girl could benefit from the scheme. The scheme was approved in August," said PMC sources.

Elected members expected at least 2,500 girls to benefit. But the number of beneficiaries was negligible. Civic officials said publicity about the scheme has increased awareness. "We have got a response from families with low income. Nearly 150 applications have come to our department," Hanuman Nazirkar, head of urban

Girls born on or after April 1, 2013 are eligible for the scheme. Applications should be submitted within four months of the child's birth. One family can apply for a maximum of two girls

community development department, told TOI.

Nazirkar said all the applications have been processed. The family will get the documents confirming their participation in the scheme next month.

In order to avail the scheme, the applicant should be a resident of Pune for three years and should have documents like ration card, electricity bill, property tax receipt or a telephone bill.

The scheme is applicable for girls born on or after April 1, 2013. Applications should be submitted within four months of the child's birth. One family can apply for a maximum of two girls. If the girl marries before 18, the amount will be deposited into the PMC's account.