

Killers of Lalit Maken held

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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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IN one of the most remarkable operational successes, the Ludhiana police on Wednesday, nabbed two hardcore terrorists wanted in the world's biggest bank robbery in Ludhiana in February 1987 and killing of the daughter of President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Lalit Maken in New Delhi.

Daljit Singh alias Bittu, the mastermind behind setting up of the second Panthic committee and his close associate Gursharan Singh Gama, were nabbed by the police after a raid on a farm house in Suara village in Ropar district.

Speaking at a press conference here today, Director General of Punjab Police O P Sharma, said this prized catch was the result of the renewed intensive operations against terrorists, criminals and other anti-social elements.

Bittu and Gama were prominent members of a gang of the first-generation dacoits and murderers and were pursuing criminal activities in close association with such notorious and dreaded terrorists as the self-styled General Labh Singh alias Sukha Sipahi and Harjinder Singh alias Jinda.

Sharma said Gama had purchased a 60-acre farm in the Suara village and was living there with his family under an assumed name of Jagjit Singh Orissa. Bittu was in Pakistan till early 1992, and, because of his destructive qualities, was a favourite of the authorities in Pakistan. He was also one of those who had asked militant outfits and political groups to boycott the state Assembly elections in 1992.

The duo were involved in the biggest bank robbery of Rs 5.70 crore committed in the Millerganj

branch of the Punjab National Bank here in 1987. The other cases listed against them include, a shootout at Daresi Road here in which 13 persons were killed, an attack on the former SSP, Ludhiana, A P Pandey, killing of Lalit Maken and his wife Geetanjali, son-in-law and daughter of Shankar Dayal Sharma, killing of the earlier Patiala SSP A P S Brar and SP K R S Gill, killing of former MP Arjan Das in Delhi, killing of three security jawans in Udaipur (Rajasthan), killing of IG Police Katoch and a Hindu leader Kali Charan.

The two, along with their other associates, were also involved in a spate of bank robberies and killings in Ludhiana, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bombay.

Sharma and other senior police officers were, however, tight-

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lipped about many other details which led to their arrest and disclosures made during the preliminary interrogation because of what the DGP termed as "continuing operation."

However, the DGP described them as active members of a most murderous outfit responsible for at least 60 per cent of the killings, massacres and other terrorist crimes committed in Punjab and elsewhere during the last more

than one decade.

According to him Bittu, head of a faction of the Sikh Students Federation, which, for all practical purposes, was also a fullfledged terrorist group, had distributed an estimated Rs 10 crore worth of looted money and around 1,000 Chinese assault rifles among different groups of terrorists.

The Ludhiana district police chief Anil Kumar Sharma, giving details of the operation, said that Bittu and Gama were arrested following a raid conducted on the

basis of a definite information on Wednesday morning.

He said Gama purchased the farm in the Suara village in 1987 and had built a palatial house. Bittu had joined him in 1992. Both of them had not only made new voter identification cards under the fictitious names of Jagjit Singh and Sukhjot Singh respectively, but had obtained loans from the commercial banks to purchase a tractor and other farm implements.