

The Enforcer

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An IPS Officer's War on Crime in India's
Badlands

Anirudhya Mitra

 juggernaut

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To my police fraternity ...

*This book is dedicated to each one of you.
What you do is not just a job, it is a calling.*

*And you have always responded to that call with grit, grace and
unwavering commitment.*

*To the constable who stood in the rain to manage traffic,
To the officer who cracked cases through sleepless nights,
To the teams that innovated when the odds were stacked against us –
You are the true soul of this force.*

This journey, and this book, would mean little without you.

– Prashant Kumar

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Preface

One morning, a distinguished filmmaker – someone I had known both as a colleague and a friend – called me out of the blue. His voice carried that unmistakable tone of intrigue, the kind that tells you something interesting is coming. ‘Would you like to write a biography?’ he asked.

My instinctive response: ‘Whose?’

‘An IPS officer. Prashant Kumar.’

I took a beat. ‘Prashant Kumar, you mean...?’

Across the line, he clarified, ‘He is in the UP Police. That big moustache.’

And just like that, the image clicked in my mind. ‘Oh, you mean the top cop of UP? Yeah, of course, I know him ... I mean, I keep seeing him on television.’

Every time there was an encounter in UP, there he was – Prashant Kumar, the moustachioed Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, staring unflinchingly at the news anchor, his sharp eyes unwavering as he laid out his version of events. He had a presence, an aura that made you believe that if anyone could take on the kind of criminals who had long ruled the state, it was him. You don’t just need tactics to dismantle organized crime, you also need

an attitude, a presence that makes men who believe themselves untouchable realize they are not.

I had seen him dominate television screens, his unwavering gaze locking horns with news anchors, his voice carrying the weight of law and order. He had an aura that made even the most hardened criminals rethink their bravado.

So, when I was asked to write his biography, there was only one answer. Yes. But nothing had prepared me for the man I was about to meet. The tiger in the room, the officer who seemed larger than life, turned out to be something else entirely.



It was mid-October. I had arrived early at his office. He landed sharp on time. No uniform, no insignia of rank or power. Instead, he walked in wearing steel-grey trousers and a crisp white half-sleeved bush shirt. The man who had loomed large on television screens, the no-nonsense cop with a stare that could unsettle the most seasoned criminals, now stood before me with a warm, almost disarming smile.

‘How are you, sir?’ he said, his voice polite, his demeanour humble. He extended his hand for a firm but welcoming handshake.

It threw me off, if I am being honest. In all my years as a crime reporter, having met and written about some of the most powerful and formidable police officers, I had never encountered one of his rank and stature who greeted me with such genuine warmth. The contrast between the man I had imagined and the one standing in front of me was striking.

I hesitated for a moment, waiting for him to take his seat first. But he gestured towards the chair opposite him and said, ‘*Pehle aap.*’ You first.

That's when it hit me – I was in Lucknow. And here was Prashant Kumar – tough-as-nails, feared by gangsters, the man leading the charge in one of the most brutal crackdowns in UP's history – embodying that very essence of old-world politeness. In that moment, I realized something. However much I thought I knew about him, this was going to be a story full of surprises.

Power in UP comes wrapped in symbols – grand residences, armed security, offices buzzing with political and administrative clout. The DGP house in Lucknow is one such fortress, sprawling across 7 acres and boasting expansive rooms, guest houses, staff quarters, courts for badminton and tennis and massive gardens. It is a residence every senior officer dreams of.

But Prashant Kumar doesn't live there. He chose a different path. He stays in a house he built himself, on land he bought with his own money. His father had once told him a man should build his own home, not live in something borrowed, no matter how grand. I asked him why he didn't move into the DGP house like every other officer would.

'Aadat bigad jaati hai,' he said simply.



One day, while I was on my computer writing, a WhatsApp message popped up from Prashant Kumar. It contained an African proverb: 'Until the lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter.'

I told him it was an interesting proverb, no doubt, but what could be the context? Knowing Prashant Kumar, he had no time to waste with me. Then he clarified. He was curious: Why had I agreed to write his story when the media rarely shows interest in going deep into a cop's side of the story?

It struck a chord with me. This wasn't just a casual remark, it was also an insight into the mind of Prashant, a man who had spent his life on the frontlines of crime and law enforcement, watching how narratives were shaped, reshaped and sometimes hijacked.



Sometime later, I was in Lucknow to meet him. He called me at precisely 7 a.m., inquired about my well-being, laid out his day's packed schedule and informed me that he would meet me at 11 a.m. at his office in the DGP house. At five minutes to 11, a staff member escorted me to his office.

He sat behind his desk in full khaki uniform, the gallantry medals on his chest gleaming under the lights, his police cap set perfectly. Before anything else, he checked if I had been attended to properly. His staff could not have been more accommodating. Only after ensuring my comfort did he return to the stack of papers on his desk, signing documents while continuing to talk to me.

Multiple television screens lined the walls, displaying real-time updates from across UP. His phone rang non-stop, yet he balanced his attention effortlessly, shifting seamlessly between our conversation and the stream of updates requiring his attention. Amidst all this, I noticed something unexpected – he was signing birthday greeting cards. They weren't for high-ranking officials or bureaucrats but for his officers – every rank and file. Each one received a personal message from him.

He had just returned from a two-day DGP conference in Bhubaneswar, and his desk was flooded with pending files. Even as he navigated administrative tasks, visitors streamed in. Among them was a senior politician – a stalwart in his own right, now

a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Dressed in a *bandhgala* suit instead of his old khadi attire, Kripashankar Singh had come not for a non-police matter but to ask for help in road construction. A four-time member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and former home minister of another state, and yet he had to request Prashant Kumar's assistance for something beyond policing. That was the extent of Prashant's influence. With composed politeness, he assured Singh that he would look into it.

Sitting in his office felt like riding in a police patrol van through a trouble-torn area. The difference? Instead of the crackle of a wireless set filling the air, it was his cell phone – ringing non-stop, an unrelenting stream of updates, crises and decisions waiting to be made.

He answered most calls without hesitation, knowing that only the most urgent, high-priority matters reach his personal number. Every call was a live case file, a developing situation somewhere in UP – some unfolding in real time, others simmering just beneath the surface. He navigated them with clinical precision, his responses crisp and to the point.

What fascinated me was how he instinctively decided which calls to put on speaker mode. Without intending to, he granted me a front-row seat to his world – letting me witness how he operated, how he unravelled a crisis, how the tension built and dissipated, how he pulled invisible strings to contain a volatile situation before it exploded into a law-and-order nightmare. It was like watching a real-time thriller unfold, except this one wasn't scripted.

At one point, I couldn't help but ask, 'What about the calls you don't put on speaker? Those must be the most interesting ones.' He looks at me, his lips curling into a half-smile. Then, as if to humour my curiosity, he says, 'No problem. From now on, all incoming calls will be on speaker mode.'

For a moment, I thought he was joking. Then his phone rang again, and true to his word, he answered it – on speaker. And just like that, I found myself eavesdropping on a world few outsiders ever get to hear.

Between these interruptions, our conversation continued – each break a reminder of how seamlessly he juggled roles. A deputy superintendent of police (DSP) sought intervention in an internal matter and a former army officer (his brother-in-law) stopped by; within moments, he shifted from law enforcement to a personal exchange without missing a beat.

As time slipped by, he glanced at the clock. ‘Let’s go,’ he said. The setting changed as we arrived at the police headquarters (PHQ), but his routine did not. The files, the officers, the calls – they followed him everywhere. From the DGP house to PHQ, his day remained the same – piles of files, endless visitors. But at PHQ, the influx was larger – constables to additional director generals (ADGs), officers from different jurisdictions, all seeking his intervention. Some came for professional matters, others for personal concerns.

A fleet of IPS officers, vertical heads and senior officials lined up outside Prashant Kumar’s office, waiting for their turn. They sought approvals, discussed career moves and handled operational matters. He treated each case with the same even-handed approach – no raised voices, no unnecessary delays. Even when a high-level political functionary called, sounding agitated over an unfolding political crisis, he remained unruffled. He briefed the veteran politician in his signature calm tone, explaining the brewing situation with clarity. His ability to stay composed in high-pressure moments was remarkable.

Yet his ability to maintain order in a state long accustomed to lawlessness has not come without controversy. His policing style, though undeniably effective, has drawn both admiration

and sharp criticism. Depending on whom you ask, Prashant is either a fearless reformer or a symbol of authoritarian policing. The truth, as always, lies somewhere in between.

His tenure as DGP has been anything but conventional. His critics denounce his methods as ‘draconian’, accusing him of ‘orchestrating encounters driven by caste and religious biases to appease political masters’.¹ Allegations of selective demolitions – bulldozers targeting specific communities – have fuelled fierce debates, with Opposition leaders branding him a mere enforcer of the ruling party’s agenda.

Yet his supporters tell a different story. They argue that Prashant Kumar’s no-nonsense approach has brought a long-overdue sense of order to a state once synonymous with lawlessness. Under his watch, UP saw a dramatic drop in crime rates, fostering an environment that attracted 400 times more investment from outside the state. His leadership redefined the ease of doing business in a region that once repelled investors with its culture of fear and instability.

For every charge of being ‘trigger-happy’ or politically motivated, there exists a counter-narrative – one of lives saved, communities rebuilt and an economy revitalized by stability.²

A second call from the government followed, this time regarding the Tikait situation – a sensitive farmer agitation at the Delhi–UP border. Rakesh Tikait, an Indian farmers’ rights activist, wanted to lead a protest march to Delhi despite prohibitory orders. Without hesitation, Prashant Kumar called an officer who had a personal rapport with Tikait and gave detailed instructions on handling the matter delicately.

His ability to resolve delicate situations effectively was astonishing.

His juniors had immense faith in him, knowing that if they sought justice, they would receive it. When he called an officer

about a particular case, the discussion naturally transitioned into personal matters. He knew not just the professional issues his officers faced but also their struggles outside work. That was one of his greatest qualities as a leader – his knowledge of his people. But there were boundaries he never crossed. A friend called about a fatal accident in which his son was an accused. Prashant's response was firm: 'How can anybody be helped when a life is lost?' However, after hearing out the details, he said he would look into it.

Shortly afterward, a large contingent of officers arrived. A senior police officer was retiring, and a farewell ceremony was underway.

Even after lunch, his phone continued to ring. Each call brought new problems – some trivial, some critical. A politician's domestic staff had an issue, and they expected Prashant Kumar to intervene. An officer wanted his transfer stalled. This was a common request from inspectors to inspectors general (IGs). Yet in every single instance, Prashant refused to misuse his power. He rationalized why transfers were necessary and why officers needed to accept government orders. He never picked up the phone to call in favours for anyone. His own career had been marked by frequent transfers, many of them politically motivated, but he had always accepted them without resistance. He had moved forward, even at the cost of staying away from his family for years.

Another call from the government in the evening. The issue this time? Sambhal. Pakistan-made cartridges had been recovered, and the situation was escalating. Prashant provided a debrief, explaining the latest developments with the assurance of 'Sir, situation is under control.'

Then came the fallout from the leader of Opposition (LoP) incident at the Delhi–Noida border in connection with the Sambhal unrest. Reportedly, the government was not happy, even

as the LoP managed to get media footage – exactly what he had come for – alongside his newly elected member of Parliament (MP) sister, who too was a very high-profile politician.

Through all of this, Prashant Kumar remained calm, responding with precision.



His life is remarkably simple. His house, his car, his food – everything about him is stripped of excess. I have never seen an officer of his stature live such a modest life. He speaks so softly that I often had to remind him to raise his voice for clearer audio recordings. And yet for all his authority, he is a reluctant subject when it comes to discussing himself. He is shy about talking about his own achievements.

The same man could have been far wealthier, and not necessarily through corrupt means. There are plenty of legitimate ways to multiply one's wealth in a country whose economic progress is the talk of the world. I know many officers, both of his rank and junior to him, who are far wealthier. They lead extravagant lives filled with social events; playing golf at five-star resorts; owning lavish homes with swimming pools, snooker tables and imported cutlery; taking regular vacations in other countries; and providing prestigious university educations for their children abroad. Their evenings are often reserved for the finest single malts and, following the latest trend, Japanese whiskey – savoured in dimly lit bars of luxury hotels and private lounges.

He did none of that. Instead, he ate a simple lunch at home and then, in his characteristic quiet manner, asked me if I would like some homemade *gajar ka halwa*.

This was his world – structured, disciplined, yet constantly shifting beneath the weight of power dynamics, crisis control

and political pressure. Sitting across from him, watching him navigate these complexities with quiet authority, I realized that Prashant Kumar was not just a cop dismantling the mafias in UP, he was also someone far more layered, more enigmatic.

A man who lets his actions speak louder than words, he remains reluctant to discuss his own achievements. Yet his work has reshaped the very landscape of law enforcement in the state. That is why his story must be told – for the general readers and for every police officer who sees him on television without truly knowing the man behind the uniform.

In a world where titles are handed out too easily and often worn too loosely, Prashant Kumar's journey stands apart – etched not in words but in the weight of every medal, every commendation and every quiet nod of respect earned through decades of unrelenting service.

His pursuit of excellence began not in uniform but in academia where, in 1988, he emerged as the top-ranking postgraduate student in MSc (Applied Geology) from the University of Delhi. A gold medal marked his early brush with distinction. Years later, another gold would grace his journey, this time in an MBA in Disaster Management from Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi – proof that learning never ceased, and neither did the pursuit of mastery.

But the classroom could only prepare him so far. The real tests came in the field, among smoke, gunfire, mobs and missions few dared to lead. Here, Prashant Kumar's mettle was forged. And the Republic of India took note.

Four times, he was decorated with the Police Medal for Gallantry (PMG) – in 2020, 2021, 2022 and again in 2024 – each occasion honouring moments when courage overtook caution and leadership outpaced fear. The third and fourth medals bore additional bars – first and second bars to PMG – an

honour earned only by those who have returned to the fire not once but again and again. On 26 January 2024, when he was awarded the Gallantry Medal, it wasn't just a ceremony, it was also the culmination of years spent walking into conflict zones while others walked away.

Recognition followed in quieter, less visible forms too. In 2014, he was awarded the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, and long before that, the Police Medal for Meritorious Service in 2007. He has worn the Parakram Medal (2020), the Kumbh Mela Padak (2025) and the Chief Minister's Medal for Outstanding Services (2018) – each a reminder of the many faces of duty: operational, ceremonial, humanitarian.

Specialized agencies didn't overlook his contributions either. The director general's commendation rolls and discs from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Uttar Pradesh (UP) Police tell a story of inter-agency respect and regard. The Platinum Disc, the rarest of insignias, was conferred on him by the UP director general of police (DGP) on 15 August 2020 – an acknowledgement few in the force ever receive in a lifetime.

Beyond medals, there are moments that can't be hung on a wall yet speak volumes. In 2017, he was chosen as the liaison officer (LO) for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, a spiritual odyssey demanding both physical rigour and administrative acumen. He completed the treacherous journey with characteristic calm.

In 2022, amid a charged atmosphere during the General Assembly elections in UP, Prashant's coordination of multiple law enforcement agencies ensured not just order but also dignity, safety and fairness. The Election Commission of India acknowledged his leadership with the Annual State Award for Best Electoral Practices and a rare letter of appreciation from

the union home secretary. He had not merely policed an election, he had also protected democracy.

The India News Shaurya Samman, conferred by the chief minister (CM) of UP, and the FSAI Bravery Award, are more than trophies – they are also public affirmations of his strategic brilliance in the darkest of times. In operations like the encounter of Chitrakoot's dreaded brigand Udaybhan Yadav alias Gauri Yadav, Prashant didn't just oversee tactics, he also embodied resolve. The reward that followed – ₹3 lakh, a service pistol and a letter of commendation from the CM – was less a prize, more a testament to the impact he had.

Over the years, Prashant has quietly amassed over 113 commendations and appreciation letters from senior officers across postings, each one a ripple from the deep well of trust he built within the system. These weren't casual endorsements. They were battle-hardened acknowledgments from those who witnessed his commitment firsthand.

And perhaps, most significantly, he never sought applause. Even the largest of his awards – like the Ati Utkrisht Seva Padak from the union home minister – were earned in silence and received with humility. He wore the medals but never let them wear him.

In the heart of every citation, there was no singular story. There were hundreds. Stories of floods averted, riots controlled, terrorists killed, institutions restored and, above all, a standard raised.

Because, for Prashant Kumar, greatness was never a destination. It was a responsibility. One lived, day by day, without compromise.

PART 1

Rooting Out Gangsters

1

The Night of the Ambush

In the early hours of 3 July 2020, the convoy of police vehicles sliced through the darkness, sirens off, headlights dimmed. The air was heavy with monsoon humidity as fifty heavily armed officers, drawn from three police stations in Kanpur district, made their way to Bikru village, a remote settlement 150 km from Lucknow. Their target? Vikas Dubey, one of the most feared gangsters in Uttar Pradesh (UP).

For three decades, Dubey had ruled Kanpur's world of crime with bloodied hands, his name whispered in fear through political corridors and police stations alike. Sixty criminal cases – murder, extortion, dacoity, kidnapping, rioting – but never a conviction that stuck. He had always walked free. Until now.

This time, it was different. Unlike in the past, the present government of UP was determined to bring him down. The political will had shifted, and there would be no escape route paved with influence and corruption. Acting on a new arrest warrant, the police were finally closing in. No political rescue, no corrupt officials pulling strings, no last-minute court stays. Or so they thought.

Because Dubey already knew they were coming.

Hours earlier, in the dead of night, a phone call changed everything. It was a whisper through the ranks, a mole inside the police force itself. Station House Officer (SHO) Vinay Tiwari of Chaubeypur Police Station – the very jurisdiction that controlled Bikru village – had tipped off Dubey. It wasn't the first time. For years, this was how Dubey had stayed one step ahead.

'The raid is happening tonight. Be ready.'

Dubey wasted no time. He had been preparing for this moment for years.

Electricity to the entire village was cut off, throwing Bikru into complete darkness. His men, already stationed on rooftops, gripped their INSAS rifles, pistols and shotguns – some purchased, others gifted by corrupt allies. By the time the first police vehicle rolled in, Bikru was no longer a village. The police expected resistance, but nothing had prepared them for what happened next. It was a battlefield.

A single gunshot cracked through the air. Then another. And another.

Suddenly, gunfire rained down from every direction. It was an ambush. Bullets ripped through the night, shattering windshields, splintering wooden doors, punching holes into bulletproof vests. The first officers fell instantly, collapsing before they could fire back.

At the heart of the bloodbath was Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Devendra Mishra. He was one of the few officers who knew the full extent of Dubey's corruption network – and he had been vocal about it. Mishra had even written a letter to his seniors months ago, warning them about Dubey's deep ties with the Chaubeypur Police Station. The letter was ignored, and the DSP paid the price.

Mishra went down fighting, but the brutality didn't stop with bullets. Dubey's men rushed forward, axes in hand, hacking away at his body. His head was severed, his feet mutilated, his corpse defiled beyond recognition. Revenge wasn't enough for Dubey. He wanted to send a message. Maybe that's why his men's actions included snatching of an AK-47 and INSAS rifles from the police.

Nearby, other officers scrambled for cover, but there was none. Seven more policemen were shot dead.

Seven others lay bleeding in the mud, barely alive. Some tried to fire back, but their weapons had been snatched, their training no match for Dubey's ruthless planning.

As the smoke settled, the survivors saw something even more terrifying – SHO Vinay Tiwari, the officer in charge of the raid, fleeing the scene. He was one of Dubey's men, but he had never been on their side.

By the time reinforcements arrived, Dubey and his men were gone. The police had come to arrest a criminal. Instead, they had walked into a massacre. The morning of that fateful Friday was chaotic. Eight policemen dead, seven critically injured, and Dubey was still at large.



When news of the ambush broke, Prashant Kumar – the additional director general (ADG) of law and order – was already preparing to move. He had just been briefed by the superintendent of police (SP) from the district. Around the same time, a call came from Lucknow asking about his whereabouts. His response was immediate: he was on his way to the scene. It was clear that the state government wanted him to take charge

directly from the ground and also to manage the media storm that was brewing. This was no longer a routine arrest. It had escalated into a full-scale crisis. What followed was a manhunt unlike anything UP had ever witnessed: roadblocks, raids and a relentless, state-wide pursuit.

By nightfall, the special task force (STF) had launched raids across Kanpur, storming Dubey's house in Lucknow's Krishnanagar area. But Dubey wasn't there.

Vikas Dubey had slipped through the cracks of a system he had manipulated for years. But this time, the game had changed. This time, he wasn't just another wanted man. He was the most hunted fugitive in India.

His safe houses were being raided one by one, his network scrutinized, his men hunted. For the first time, the system that had always protected Vikas Dubey had turned against him. But Dubey wasn't done yet. He had spent a lifetime outmanoeuvring the law. Everywhere the police went, they found nothing but empty rooms, erased footprints and silence. And Dubey still had one last escape plan.

By Friday afternoon, the weight of the Bikru massacre had sent shockwaves through UP and beyond. A gang of criminals had slaughtered eight policemen in cold blood, mutilated their bodies and vanished into the night with looted police weapons. The sheer audacity of the ambush was unlike anything seen before, shaking the entire law enforcement apparatus to its core. It wasn't just an attack on the police – it was also an attack on the authority of the state itself.

Realizing the magnitude of the crisis, UP Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath rushed to Kanpur on Friday, meeting the grieving families of the slain officers. Grim-faced, his voice steeled with resolve, he announced financial assistance of ₹1 crore for each bereaved family. But money alone wasn't justice.

He promised government jobs to one member from each victim's family and an extraordinary pension to secure their future.

'The government stands with you,' Adityanath assured the families. 'Justice will be done, and those responsible will be punished as per the law.'³

The ambush had left the administration humiliated. A gangster had outmanoeuvred and massacred the police on their own turf, exposing the deep-rooted nexus between crime and law enforcement. This wasn't just a case of one fugitive on the run – it was also a full-blown institutional crisis. Yogi Adityanath made it clear: this wouldn't go unanswered.

But inside the police force, there was no time for speeches. For Prashant Kumar and his team, words meant nothing without action. The hunt for Vikas Dubey had begun.



By the time 4 July rolled around, thirty-six hours had passed since the Bikru massacre, but Vikas Dubey was still missing. The scale of his escape was an insult to law enforcement. Fifty officers had gone to arrest him, and now, twenty-five police teams from forty stations across seventy-five districts were hunting him down. Every second he remained free was another blow to the system.

The police already had their suspicions – someone on the inside had betrayed them. By Saturday morning, those fears gained ground. Vinay Tiwari, the Station Officer of Chaubeypur Police Station, was suspended and arrested on charges of tipping off Vikas Dubey about the impending police raid. Investigators alleged that one phone call from him gave Dubey just enough time to orchestrate the ambush that claimed eight policemen. While the investigation was ongoing, the arrest sent a clear signal that internal complicity was no longer going to be ignored.⁴

Investigators grilled Tiwari and other suspected insiders at the STF headquarters. The evidence was damning. Call records placed Dubey in contact with twenty-four policemen, some of whom had conveniently vanished after the ambush. He wasn't protected – he was embedded in the system.

The interrogation of one of Dubey's aides, Dayashankar Agnihotri, revealed a chilling sequence of events. Dubey had received a call – likely from the police station itself – just minutes before the officers reached Bikru village. With military precision, he had summoned twenty-five to thirty of his men, positioning them near a garden on the outskirts of the village. The police never stood a chance.

As the bodies of the slain officers were given a tearful farewell, the Kanpur administration sent its own message. When the police stormed Dubey's house in Kanpur, they weren't expecting to find a fortress straight out of a war zone. But inside, buried beneath the concrete, was a fully stocked underground bunker.

Kanpur Inspector General (IG) Mohit Agarwal described the site as less of a home and more of a war zone – piles of weapons, explosives and ammunition stacked like a private armoury braced for siege. This wasn't a hideout built for escape. It was a battlefield command post. Forensic teams found evidence that between 200 and 300 rounds had been fired during the Bikru ambush, a scale of firepower rarely seen in civilian confrontations. Dubey, it was now clear, hadn't envisioned himself as just another gangster. He had cast himself as a warlord, prepared not to flee but to fight.

The illusion of that warlord began to collapse when Shashikant, a close aide of Dubey and one of the twenty-one accused in the 3 July ambush, was arrested. Acting on his confession, police recovered two looted service weapons from Bikru village – an AK-47 rifle hidden inside Dubey's house, and an INSAS rifle from Shashikant's home nearby. At a press briefing, ADG,

Law and Order, Prashant Kumar confirmed the breakthrough. 'The weapons were recovered based on information given by Shashikant during interrogation,' he told reporters. 'He admitted to his role in the attack on our policemen in Bikru.' The cache didn't just mark the recovery of arms, it also marked the beginning of justice, one weapon at a time.

On Saturday morning, bulldozers rolled into Bikru village. What had once been Dubey's fortress-like mansion – a symbol of unchecked power and impunity – was reduced to rubble. But this was no act of retaliation; it was a calculated move rooted in hard intelligence. Forensic teams had uncovered weapons, explosives and looted police firearms concealed within the structure and buried in walls, basements and underground cavities. The house had functioned not as a residence but as a fortified command centre – stockpiled, barricaded and battle-ready. With every room designed to aid resistance and every layer hiding instruments of terror, the demolition wasn't symbolic – it was strategic. Dubey had built a war machine. The state had come to dismantle it, brick by brick.

Even as the state went after Dubey, his own mother had already given up on him. Seated in her house in Lucknow, the don's mother, Sarla Devi, faced the media, her voice carrying none of the defiance that had once surrounded her son's name. There was no denial, no excuse – only resignation. 'He has done a terrible thing. He has killed innocent policemen.' Her voice wavered, but her words were firm. 'If the police find him, they should kill him. If he is caught, they should still kill him. My son should be punished.'⁵

It was a mother's curse, a final condemnation of a son who had become a monster.

She revealed the truth behind his rise – how politics had turned him into a criminal, how his obsession with power led

him into the underworld. He had once dreamt of becoming an MLA, she said. But his real path had been written in blood.

‘I haven’t met him in four months. I live with my younger son now,’ she added. ‘He has brought nothing but shame to this family.’⁶

As 4 July came to an end, the search for Dubey had intensified. Some reports suggested he was planning to surrender in court, but there was no confirmation. Others feared he had fled to Nepal. The only certainty was that his time was running out.



The hunt for Vikas Dubey was now a war on multiple fronts – against his men, his informants and the corrupt officers who had shielded him for years. Every new piece of evidence pointed to the deep rot inside the system, revealing how Dubey had turned the police force itself into his safety net.

In the early hours of Sunday, 5 July, Dayashankar Agnihotri, one of Dubey’s closest aides, was cornered and arrested in a pre-dawn raid in Kanpur. Under intense interrogation, he spilled the truth everyone had suspected but couldn’t prove – Dubey had received a tip-off minutes before the police arrived in Bikru.

And then came the confirmation. ‘It was Vinay Tiwari, the station officer.’⁷ He warned Dubey about the raid,’ Agnihotri admitted. The man who was supposed to lead the operation had sold them out. The betrayal had cost eight officers their lives. Now, the police were finally turning their guns on their own.

The fallout of the Bikru massacre was now visible in the streets and in the very soil of Vikas Dubey’s empire. The same earthmover that had been used by his gang to block the police raid on 3 July was now being used to wipe out his existence.