

Gelatin sticks

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In new: Recently, the recovery of gelatin sticks near the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani has sparked off a major political upheaval in Maharashtra

About gelatin sticks

- They are cheap explosive materials **used by industries for the purpose of mining and construction related work**, like building structures, roads, rails and tunnels etc. They cannot be used without a detonator.

Detonator

Detonators are devices used to initiate high explosives. A detonator is a complete explosive initiation device that includes the active part of the assembly (usually enclosed in a metal shell) and the attached initiation signal transmitter

- Blasting Gelatin, also known as Gelignite or simply jelly is a kind of explosive that is made up of collodion-cotton and dissolved in wood pulp and saltpetre. Alternatively, it can also be dissolved in nitroglycol.
- This is one of the cheaper explosives and burns slowly. Since it cannot be burned without a detonator, these explosives can also be stored properly.
- It was invented by Alfred Nobel in the year 1875, who also invented dynamite

Who can manufacture them?

Only licensed explosive manufacturers can make gelatin sticks

Who regulates the manufacturing of gelatin sticks?

The manufacture is regulated by Petroleum and Explosives

Safety Organization (PESO), formerly known as Department of Explosives.

Why did the police not able to trace its sale?

- Because, loose sticks are not bar coded yet. However the government has recently introduced a rule that individual explosives should also be barcoded but the implementation of the same has been delayed
- Another reason for not tracing it is blackmarketing behind these sticks
- The customers may be small time contractors who use it in construction work or private individuals who mainly use it to blast wells.

It previous usage in terror attacks

From 2002 till 2003, gelatin sticks were used in attacks by a terror organisation called the Gujarat Muslim Revenge Force in Mumbai. In one of these attacks, the gelatin sticks had been sourced from a quarry on the outskirts of Hyderabad

Prevention of misuse of these sticks

- Even if the gelatin sticks are barcoded, once the blast takes place this measure is of no use.
- In order to avoid any such incident, very close monitoring of manufactures and sellers is required.
- Every year, before an important event like Republic Day or Ganpati festival, the local police, as one of the preventive measures, keeps a tab to find out all explosive materials bought in the city being used for construction work and ensure it is accounted for.
- The buyer and the seller have to maintain records of the explosives and these records need to be checked periodically without fail by the government authorities

About PESO

- Since its inception on September 5, 1898, it has been the nodal agency for regulating safety of hazardous substances such as explosives, compressed gas and petroleum. These substances include gelatin sticks.
- It looks after the approval, grant, amendment and renewal etc. of various licenses and permits regarding manufacture, testing, authorisation, storage, transportation, use, import, and export of explosives.
- PESO's major work is to administer the responsibilities delegated under the Explosives Act 1884 and Petroleum Act 1934 and the Rules made there under with the motto "Safety First" and Explosives Rules 2008 etc.
- The PESO comes under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- PESO has its Headquarters at Nagpur in Maharashtra and serves through five Circle Offices viz Agra, Chennai, Faridabad, Kolkata & Mumbai and their subordinate Sub-Circle offices across the country.