

NCP neta wakes from coma, recovers after brutal attack

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A Solapur politician who suffered a brutal attack that left him in a coma for nearly a month walked out of Bandra's Lilavati Hospital on Saturday after making a remarkable recovery.

Ten men armed with swords battered 74-year-old Manohar Dongare of the NCP in Solapur on April 11, leaving him with horrific injuries that doctors initially feared would kill him. Dongare's nose was partially cut off; his jaw was broken; his left temporal bone was smashed with some fragments becoming lodged in his brain; his face had a nearly four-inch-deep gash; and a bone that formed the eye socket was also broken.

On April 12, he was airlifted to Mumbai and admitted to Lilavati Hospital, where a team of top doctors operated upon him for 12 hours, removing blood clots and bone fragments from his brain, and reconstructing his face.

"When Dongare was brought to the hospital, we thought he won't survive because of the severe cut on his brain. He was comatose and we immediately began the repair surgery," neurologist Dr Nitin Dange.

The team also included a plastic surgeon, a general physician, and an ENT surgeon.

Removing pieces of bone was particularly challenging because they were lodged in the area of the brain which is associated with brain and memory functions. "We had to be extremely careful as there was a risk that he could lose memory and speech permanently. The operation was successful," Dr Dange said.

Dr Shirang Purohit and his team reconstructed Dongare's face, fixing fractured facial bones.

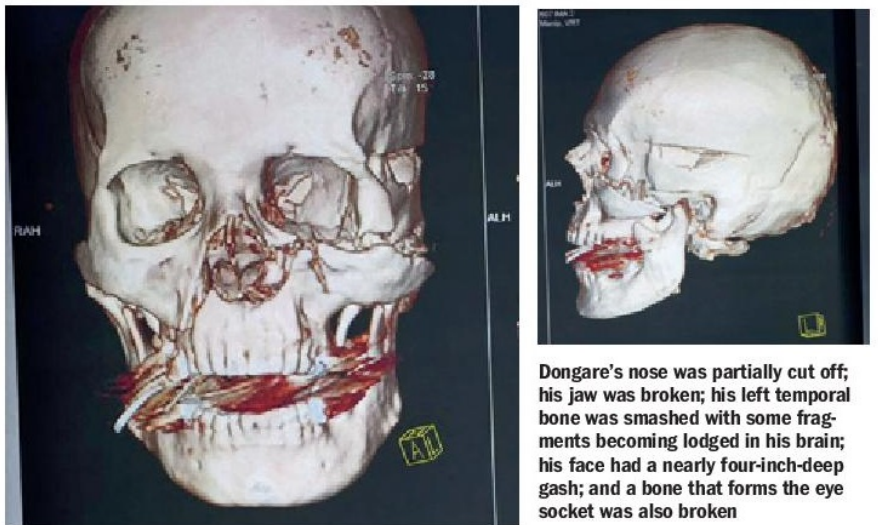
The NCP leader was in the intensive care unit and on life support for nearly a month. He regained consciousness only 15 days ago. "My father survived because of the efforts of Lilavati doctors. Experts in Solapur had told us after the attack that my father would not make it," said Dongare's son, Vijay.

Dongare was the NCP district president for Solapur for 16 years. Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar were among senior politicians who checked on his condition in the hospital.

The Solapur police had made arrests after the April 11 attack, but the motive behind the assault is still not known.



Manohar Dongare (left) with Dr Nitin Dange at Lilavati Hospital



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