



By **Priyal Sanghavi**

The Mumbai mafia is an integral part of Mumbai culture. It started in 1940 when Afghan gang lords opened warehouses exclusively for the ruling British. Soon their activities included smuggling, extortion and contract killing. The mafia kept up with the changing city, rapidly establishing a hold over it with much blood spilt in the process.

The 1980s and 1990s were particularly marked by increased gangland activity. One of the biggest dons, Dawood Ibrahim, was allegedly behind the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts which claimed 150 lives, while the subsequent riots, fanned by the mafia, claimed a further 257 lives.

The mafia life has been chronicled extensively by Bollywood, but the treatment meted out to the gangs has varied at different times. The dons, their lives and the functioning of the mafia is showcased frequently in popular culture either as part of a larger setting, or as the topic of the entire film.



