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**SANDEEP UNNITHAN** NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 29, 2008 | UPDATED 20:13 IST

# 'Our boys were watching cricket, else would have stopped terrorists'



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In yet another indication of the high level of planning and reconnaissance that went into planning the terror strikes on Mumbai, residents of the fishing village revealed that the suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists landed at Machimar Nagar exactly when a cricket match was on.

"Normally at least 40-50 boys sit on the jetty each at night taking in the cool sea breeze, but on that night they were all indoors watching the one day international between India and England," Damodar Tandel, a resident of the fishing village told *India Today*.



A group of eight terrorists landed on the fishing village jetty in a rubber Gemini boat with an outboard motor on Wednesday night, lugging heavy rucksacks. "The bags were so heavy that they had trouble

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A group of eight terrorists landed on the fishing village jetty in a rubber Gemini boat with an outboard motor.

carrying them," Tandel says. The boats then sped in the direction of Nariman Point, where they abandoned the boat and entered the Oberoi towers.

The six terrorists who got off at Machimar Nagar were first spotted by Bharat Tamore, a Koli (from the fishing community) who works as an assistant supervisor at the Taj. Tamore was on the jetty en-route to walking down to his duty station at the Taj Mahal hotel just 2 km away. As Tamore challenged them, the six youth, all of whom were clean shaven and appeared to be in their early 20s, did not even bother stopping. They said they were college students on a picnic before running away towards Colaba Causeway.

That wasn't all. Evidently, the terrorists knew of the new sloping seven-foot-wide boat jetty which had been constructed just a month earlier. The residents of Machchimar Nagar are still in a state of shock that terrorists used their new jetty to spread mayhem in the city.

"If only we had stopped them," Tandel says ruefully. "We would've died, but we could have prevented the slaughter," he says.

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