

'Terrorists gave up on Day 3, killed hostages'

Vicky Nanjappa & Krishnakumar P | November 29, 2008 | 18:02 IST

The 60-hour [terror showdown](#) finally came to an end at the Taj Mahal Palace on Saturday.

[Salute Our Heroes in Uniform!](#)

As the entire world watched the drama unfold, National Security Guard commandos braved all odds to fight terrorists for nearly 60 hours in the Taj hotel.

One of the commandos, who was part of the action, described to *rediff.com* how the drama unfolded and the ordeal they underwent to flush out the terrorists who had held the entire city ransom.

The commando, who did not wish to be named, said the battle was over at 3 PM on Friday itself. The terrorists had started to lose motivation at 3 PM on Friday. In his own words, the NSG commando says *woh log toh bore ho gaye*.

'On day one, when we began the combat, these men were extremely aggressive. We had just entered the hotel and realised that they were in a very strong position. On the second day, it looked like they were losing ground. However, they did not seem to be giving up.

'The exchange was fierce between both parties and they resorted to hurling grenades several times in order to block the route for us. It was actually the third day that made the difference. The exchange of fire escalated and we decided to engage in the fire and not let up. This gun battle in fact broke them and we took the upper hand in the battle.'

The mindset of the terrorist:

'As I had pointed out earlier, these terrorists were aggressive by nature. They were running about and most of the time they were cursing us in Hindi. They looked determined to fight till the very end. However, on day three we saw their attitude sagging.

'We continued to fire at them and they retorted only with a single shot. That is how low their morale was. Unlike the first day when they were coming on to us and firing back, day three saw them taking cover most of the time. They kept hurling grenades at us. However, that too came down when we retaliated.

'The terrorists hardly spoke and we could never hear their conversation. On day three, when they realised that they were losing the battle they began screaming and cursing us in bad language. I think they were speaking in Hindi.

The final assault:

'After we realised that their position had weakened, our next aim was to step in save the remaining hostages. But we realised that we had approached the end game and so did they. As the night wore on they began killing the rest of the hostages, who they had kept in a room. There was nothing we could do about it.

'When we realised that they had no more hostages left to use as a shield, we began increasing the pressure and began pushing them to a corner and got ready for an all out assault. By 6 AM on Saturday, we had them totally cornered. They were all killed in the ensuing exchange.

'During the last few minutes, both hurled grenades at each other and due to this a part of the building caught fire. The last of the terrorists was caught in the fire and he fell off the window and lost his life.

The numbers:

'A total of 180 commandos were involved in the operation. Some of us took a break from time to time. Some of us briefly even went to the Nariman House to finish off the operation.

'During the operation at the Taj, we saw there were more than 8 terrorists. However, we do not know how many civilians were trapped in the building.

Tactics and weapons:

'The idea of the terrorists was to continue fighting for as long as possible. They too were aware that their battle could be on only until they had hostages as human shields. They had with them AK-47s and hand grenades and it looked like they had a lot of ammunition on them.

'All through the battle they tried to keep us away from them. We also do not rule out that they were even trying to bring the building down by starting fires all over. We had at our disposal a host of automatic weapons and stun grenades, which we used with great effect to scare and disorient the terrorists.

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