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“Cops and commandos did well”

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We were rescued by the fire brigade. They had positioned a ladder that enabled the Unilever group to come out. Our only direct contact (with the outside world) was the fire brigade, so it would be incorrect for me to assess the commandos or the police. The commandos have said that saving lives was their primary concern. I don't think I can find fault with their approach. The police should certainly have better equipment and training. But given their current state, it would be unfair to find fault with them. One has to be realistic.

M K Sharma | former vice chairman of Hindustan Unilever ltd, who was present at an board meeting at the Taj

`Cops and commandos did well'

Fr Frazer Mascarenhas, principal, St Xavier's College: From what I know, it seems as if the cops and commandos did a very good job. It's very clear that all our security arrangements need to be revamped completely, something the Maharashtra government itself said it will work on.

Indu Shahani, Mumbai sherrif: There was definitely a lack of leadership and coordination. However, the police were doing their best under the circumstances. This is an incident that just hit the city by storm. When the commandos did enter the scene, they did a brilliant job. It's time we think about fire drills, disaster management and public-private partnership.

N Hiranandani, builder: There are two sides to the coin. We have seen how a cop took five bullets from an AK-47 but would not let go of Kasab. He gave his life so that Kasab could be caught. I also understand Ratan Tata's point, as his hotel has been completely damaged. A lot of lessons need to be learnt.

We were waiting to get sorted into teams after we landed in Mumbai near Mantralaya for about an hour. When my team reached the Taj, there was no help whatsoever from the local government and police. We were just told that there were three terrorists holed up inside the hotel. There were no plans or reference papers to help us. While the terrorists knew everything, we had to constantly change our plans until we found them holed up in Room 473. We had to improvise all the time and this took up valuable time. We did the best we could. Our team captain, Sandeep Unnikrishnan, died in front of us. If we had more intel, perhaps things would have turned out differently.

Rajbir Singh Lamba | Nsg commando who was injured in the Taj operation I don't agree with Tata Group chairman Ratan Tata. In fact, after the attack on a five-star hotel in Pakistan, when the state government received warnings from the Centre, a series of meetings were held with the managements of all five-star hotels in the metropolis. Subsequently, senior IPS officials had personally visited these hotels to check the present status of security

arrangements made by them. Our IPS officials had then given them specific instructions on the measures to be taken. Accordingly, several meetings were held with the management of the Taj too. They were also told to initiate certain measures following the warning. No doubt, the Taj management had taken measures, but they appear to have been inadequate. In my opinion, we had given them instructions on security aspects. Under such circumstances, it is wrong to squarely blame the government. Vilasrao Deshmukh | who was chief minister during the attacks

`Hotel didn't want too much security'

The state had done its best to warn Taj and Oberoi hotels immediately after an RDX-laden truck ripped apart the J W Marriott hotel in Islamabad in September. DCP Vishwas Nangre-Patil held two detailed meetings with the Taj management to suggest measures on tightening security. The last meeting was held on September 29. At one point, the Taj management said too much security and frisking was against their hospitality business. Similarly, the Marine Drive police station had given enough instructions to the Oberoi hotel management.

Jayant Patil | newly appointed state home minister`Tata is right. When it started, there was no help'

Ratan Tata is right. I was among those trapped in the first-floor kitchen for an entire day. The commandos came in only after 3pm on Thursday. On Wednesday night, when it all started, there was no help. I escaped to the ground floor on hearing the commotion. But since I knew the first floor well, as I had worked there for three years, I went up to rescue some of the trapped guests. We asked them to leave through the backdoor when a terrorist came up and started firing at the 100-odd guests. There were people lying on the floor shouting for help. "We are shot, but alive," they screamed, but no one came forward. When we finally opened the door and rushed out, commandos who were hiding told us to go back in. I lost two of my best friends, with whom I was studying in Sophia Polytechnic.

Pratika Pradip Patil, 20 | apprentice in the Taj kitchen

`I'm desperate for things to improve'