

Terrorists Were As Good As Army Regulars: NSG

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NEW DELHI: The terrorists who struck Mumbai on Wednesday were as professional as army regulars, said NSG commandos who participated in the 60-hour-long Operation Black Tornados to neutralise them.

Over 400 NSG commandos participated in the operation that kicked off in the wee hours of Thursday and went on till Friday. Eight terrorists were killed and two NSG black cats laid down their lives. A huge cache of ammunition and two GPS devices were seized.

The operation brought out some startling facts about the changing tactics terrorists employ. NSG officials claim that the terrorist plan was crystal clear. They were highly motivated and knew every trick of high-voltage military warfare, from engaging trained commandos in prolonged gun-battle to causing maximum collateral damage without wasting ammunition.

They knew the exact layout of both hotels. "Like, at the Taj hotel, they knew that a spiral staircase on the rear side goes to all floors. So they took position on one end of the staircase to block the entry of NSG commandos," NSG chief JK Dutta told a press conference in New Delhi.

Dutta had flown to Mumbai in a special aircraft to supervise the entire operation.

At the hotels, the terrorists went on killing sprees wherever they went, be it the lobby or the restaurants. Even the style and technique they employed surprised the commandos.

"It was not like that of terrorists hurriedly trained at some secret camp. Their level of preparedness comes from long army training, specifically in carrying out strikes on high-rises and in army warfare," said a senior NSG official who took part in the action.

The terrorists knew that the commandos would storm the hotels next day. "In both hotels, they employed the same method. They started firing from the front. They never came out of windows to lob grenades, but bombed the corridor and rooms," said the official.

Also, "the terrorists killed maximum number of people, mostly guests, on the first night, before the NSG came. After that they changed tactics. But they kept killing innocents whenever they found any," said Dutta.

They had a good stock of ammunition, including grenades. "Each of them was

carrying at least 7-8 kg of bombs and ammunition apart from pistols, bullets and AK-47. No terrorist keeps so much of live ammunition all the time.”

Another of their strategies, typical of commando operations, was to turn on the taps.

“Once the corridor had water all around, it became difficult to move as any movement would alert the terrorists about the position of the commandos. Dutta thanked the media for its support during the operation.

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