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CNN International Simulcast:
Terror in Mumbai

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BECKY ANDERSON, CNN ANCHOR: Chilling details of terror attacks in Mumbai. Reports emerge of meticulous planning months in advance. Soldiers and troops are still battling it out to free hostages trapped in two hotels. Some have been released, and with them come firsthand accounts of the terror of being held at gunpoint.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ALEX CHAMBERLAIN, WITNESS: A gunman came into the restaurant, and we were ushered or some of us were ushered into the kitchen. And I think some of the others got out.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ANDERSON: Live from CNN in London, I'm Becky Anderson, and we welcome our viewers around the world.

A very good evening. New details are emerging about the scope of the terror attacks in Mumbai in India. Here is the very latest for you.

Indian state media reports terrorists involved in multiple attacks on the Indian city have been planning those attacks for months. The report quotes a cabinet minister who says they set up, quote, "control rooms" inside the two targeted hotels, the Taj Mahal and the Oberoi.

He says they were dropped off by a mother ship and traveled by rubber boats to Mumbai. The situation at the two hotels remains fluid this hour. At last check, a gunman remained holed up in the Taj and two remain inside the Oberoi.

Well, an undetermined amount of hostages may be inside. France says between 15 and 20 French nationals are trapped inside the Oberoi complex, including Air France flight attendants.

Well, several gunmen and undetermined number of hostages also remain inside a Jewish center. Our sister network, CNN-IBN reported a loud explosion there within the last hour.

Well, the death toll is now 125, with more than 300 wounded. 9 suspects are in custody. India's prime minister says he believes the terrorists are from another country, but won't reveal where right now. He is vowing to bring the attackers to justice.

Let's get the very latest now on the situation on the ground. Sara Sidner is outside the Taj Mahal hotel, and she joins us live from there. Sara? SARA SIDNER, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Becky, basically what we've found out is that there is still a -- basically a gunman inside this hotel, a terrorist who has been there for quite some time now. So he's still there.

Police are trying to figure out now what to do and whether -- what kind of action to take at this hour, but this is still very much an active scene, although it has been quite quiet for the last couple of hours.

We do understand, though, that there's still one person who police believe is wounded and is getting quite tired now as this has gone on now for more than 24 hours.

For those who are still holed up in the hotel, we understand that there are people still holed up in the hotel. We don't want to call them necessarily hostages yet, because we're not quite sure of their status, but we do know some people may be locked in their rooms.

We should say this: this seems like a night of terror that just won't end, Becky.

ANDERSON: Right. Let's hear your report at this point, shall we, Sara?

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

SIDNER (voice over): For more than 24 hours, Mumbai's business district has echoed the sound of explosions and gunfire. This is not the first time India's largest city is the target of terrorism, but it is different this time.

It began late Wednesday evening with a series of coordinated attacks on several locations across Mumbai -- a cafe popular with westerners, the main railroad station, a Jewish center and a hospital. But the terrorists' prime targets were two prestigious hotels, the Taj Mahal and Oberoi.

They singled out British and American citizens according to witnesses.

CHAMBERLAIN: So we're walking up each flight of stairs and then he stopped us after two or three flights and told everyone to put their hands up, and said, where are you from? You know? Are there any British and Americans here? Show us your IDs and all this.

SIDNER: Witnesses said the attackers were young, well armed with grenades and

automatic weapons. Hotel guests and locals dived for cover and scrambled to escape. Mumbai police were outgunned.

Throughout the night explosions and fires raged in the upper stories of the historic Taj Mahal. Hotel guests hiding in their rooms waiting for a chance to escape, trying to avoid becoming hostages.

At daybreak a fire still raged at the Taj. And throughout Thursday, Indian Special Forces tightened their cordon around the hotel. Guests at the Oberoi appeared briefly at windows in a silent plea for help. One man was fatally injured after jumping from the fifth floor of the Taj.

Eventually, Indian commandos were deployed many hours after the siege began. They advanced, floor by floor, wary of explosive booby traps. Late Thursday afternoon, several hostages or guests were seen leaving the Oberoi, many hours after the attacks began.

In this mixed city of Hindus and Muslims, feelings ran high among local people briefly forcing me off the air.

(On camera): I've got to get out of here.

(CROSSTALK)

SIDNER: Stop it!

(Voice over): Above all, there was a feeling of shock that such an audacious attack could be launched on India's commercial and banking hub.

VIJAY MALLYA, CHAIRMAN, KINGFISHER: This is India's 9/11. And, you know, as much as we never thought it could never happen to us, it has actually happened.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You know, it's really sort of surreal to see all of this happening. Not only at these two, you know, the oldest and most historic hotels in Bombay, but, you know, they are places that my friends and I went all of the time. And I jog by the Oberoi every morning.

SIDNER: Well after nightfall Thursday, as fires at the Taj were still being fought, a new blaze at the Oberoi erupted and still several of the terrorists were holding out possibly with hostages.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

SIDNER: We are not seeing the fire at this point here at the Taj that we showed you a bit earlier, which is basically the third fire that has broken out here at the hotel. But, again, let me bring you back to the situation at hand right now here at the Taj.

We do understand that there is one terrorist, one suspected terrorist, who is still inside the hotel. And we do understand that this is still an active scene. We have

not seen streams of people coming out, possible people that were inside as guests. We have not seen them streaming out.

We do see that there are army commanders who are in the lobby of the hotel, standing around in the lobby of the hotel. So, certainly still an active scene, though it has died down as the number of people standing outside and waiting to see what happens.

And there aren't as many personnel that are outside, security personnel, that seem to be outside. Not as many ambulances either, Becky.

ANDERSON: Yes. All right, Sara Sidner there outside the Taj Mahal. Extraordinary stuff.

And stick with CNN over the next few hours as the situation there unfolds.

So the terrorists struck at a number of landmarks, familiar to just about anybody who has visited Mumbai. And with such a well-known area turned into a battlefield, it is not surprising that many tourists found themselves caught up in the violence.

Here's one who recounts a tale that many visitors to Mumbai in the last 24 hours would no doubt find familiar.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: They just kept saying, be quiet, stay calm, you know, it will be OK. But nobody actually had any information. But we could just hear it, we could hear it. We knew when the army were in because we could hear the army running through the hotel. And we, we just heard all the gunfire. And we heard all the blasts.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ANDERSON: An Australian film director Anthony Rose was among the visitors to the city who were caught up in the chaos. He witnessed the attacks firsthand in the Oberoi Hotel but was able to flee. He talked to CNN about the terrifying ordeal.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANTHONY ROSE, WITNESSED FIRST ATTACK: Last night, I checked in to my hotel, and basically -- after I walked out to go to the third floor and no sooner had I stepped into a restaurant to have a meeting, then gun shots just started erupting all in the lobby, and apparently they were shooting people there. Very much execution style.

One Australian guy was executed. Shot in the leg first and then shot in the head. We heard the gunshots as they came closer to us. Started barricading the doors. Gunshots shattered part of the door, and then we were kind of moving all our -- all our crew back through various ballrooms to try to barricade ourselves in.

They were using hand grenades to try and blow in doors. And then they seemed to retreat from that, and (INAUDIBLE) other area of the hotel. We could hear people it seemed like being dragged up to the roof of the hotel.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ANDERSON: Just another eyewitness there, recounting his terrifying ordeal.

Police believe more than two dozen gunmen took part in the attacks. Their identity, at this point, remains a mystery. These images, though, show armed men at a railway station that came under attack earlier in the day.

It's unclear, though, if they are terror suspects or undercover police. Nine suspects have been arrested in connection with the attacks so far.

One group has claimed responsibility, but terrorism experts aren't sure about that. Instead, they suspect another group, one that says it had nothing to do with the violence.

Phil Black sorts out all the (INAUDIBLE) claims and the counterclaims.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

PHIL BLACK, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice over): The Indian government clearly has its own ideas about who was responsible for this.

MANMOHAN SINGH, INDIAN PRIME MINISTER: It is evident that the group which carried out these attacks (INAUDIBLE) of the country have come with single-minded determination to create havoc in the commercial capital of the country.

BLACK: Experts on Indian security support the prime minister's theory. They believe the attackers were not exclusively homegrown.

SAJJAN GOHEL, TERRORISM EXPERT: What you're seeing is that these type of attacks are established. There's a network and well-planned reconnaissance and logistics and financial support. It can only be from a group that is receiving international support obviously with a domestic dimension.

BLACK: And analysts say Mumbai and westerners were specifically targeted because of the operation's ambitious goals.

GOHEL: This time there was a multi-pronged approach. It wasn't just about targeting Indians. It was aimed but it wasn't the only one. They also wanted to go after westerners as well. They wanted to create a lack of confidence in people traveling to India, hit at the economy, hit at the tourism industry.

BLACK: One group has claimed responsibility, the little-known Deccan Mujahideen. But security experts don't believe it.

WILL GEDDES, SECURITY ANALYST: Deccan Mujahideen seem to be this amazing group that has come out of nowhere, that has been operating under the

radar for all this time, yet able to mount such a sophisticated and well-coordinated attack.

BLACK: Analysts believe this is more likely the work of another well-established outfit like Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based Islamic militants who oppose Indian control in the disputed territory of Kashmir.

A spokesman for Lashkar-e-Taiba says the group wasn't involved in the attacks in Mumbai and condemn them. But the Indian authorities have blamed Lakshar the previous attacks like the 2001 assault on India's parliament which brought the two countries to the verge of war and the bombing of this Mumbai train which killed more than 190 people in 2006.

Terror strikes have become a regular part of life across India, but whoever did this wanted a strong reaction and they succeeded.

VIJAY DUTT, HINDUSTAN TIMES JOURNALIST: This attack in India has created a backlash which is equal to that of America after 9/11.

BLACK: The investigation may have only just begun, but already fingers are pointing across the border, to militants in Pakistan.

Phil Black, CNN, London.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ANDERSON: Well, it's been just a little over 24 hours since the attacks in Mumbai began, but already funeral services are starting for some of the 125 victims of the violence.

Grief-stricken family members screamed in anguish, as one of the police officers killed in the fighting with the armed militants was laid to rest just hours after his death.

We are continuing to follow the rapidly changing developments in Mumbai. People in India's financial capital are sharing their stories with the world any way they can. We're going to bring you that and the latest on the deadly attacks that have caused international dismay and horror.

You're watching CNN Live from London. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ANDERSON: Well, the latest on the Mumbai attacks, now from the White House and this from the White House press secretary, Dana Perino.

She says that in addition to the president's call to the Indian prime minister, the national Security Council, the State Department counterterrorism and the intelligence community officials in the U.S. have gathered again this morning to review the situation and actions that are under way and can be taken to address the series of terrorist attacks.

She says Secretary Rice arrived at Camp David today for Thanksgiving and she has been providing updates to President Bush. U.S. officials, she says, will continue to operate and work together with Indian officials to focus on this ongoing situation.

The line there -- the statement from the White House at this point.

Now a curfew in parts of Mumbai has kept some people indoors, but it hasn't prevented citizen journalists from relaying what's happening there to the rest of the world.

Dina Mehta has been updating her blog with information to help families and victims, and she says she's not the only one doing that online. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DINA MEHTA, BLOGGER: People want to do something. They're feeling helpless. They're stuck. They can't get out. They want to do something. They want to help in some way. And what -- what these tools online like Twitter and blogs are being -- you know, are allowing us to do is just mobilize in self-organizing kind of ways. Bottom-up ways.

There's no leader, there's no one sort of leading the whole effort or anything of that sort. It's just everyone pouring in and doing their bit. So, when we get -- you know, what some of us said, it was important to actually set up a little space where we try and help people, because there are so many Indians all over the world, so many people who have actually relatives here, even from countries like, you know, Russia and Israel, and they've been calling us. And we put our cell phone numbers up on the blog. And we said that we'll try and help you locate your people.

We've managed to pass, for example, some lists from hospitals of injured and the deceased and we're just asked for help, you know, from people who helped us track these lists. We put these requests up online. And you have no idea how many people just come in and, you know, try and help.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ANDERSON: Dina Mehta also said that the Internet has helped many people vent their anger over the attacks on the Mumbai landmarks.

Mehta is far from the only person using the Internet to get the word out about the developments in Mumbai. One of the things that CNN is looking at is how so many people are turning to new media to learn about the latest developments or find out, indeed, if their friends are OK.

Adrian Finighan has that part of the story for you.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ANDRIAN FINIGHAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT: The involvement of citizen journalists, they're blogging, they're using Twitter and they're updating news on

social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace.

A friend of mine got in touch via my Facebook page to tell me that he was in the reception of one of the hotels that was hit. He was in the elevator. Someone next to him got shot. He managed to close the lift doors before a gunman got in. He alerted me. We were able to get him on the air a little later.

I want to show you the work of one Mumbai resident, Vinu Ranganathan, who was one of the first people -- by the way, this is Twitter you're seeing here, which is updating by the second. 55 more results have come in the 30 seconds or so since I last updated it. This is up-to-the-second news. Let me show you what I was talking about here. The work of one Mumbai resident, Vinu Ranganathan, who took pictures of the scene of the blasts last night in the heat of the action. I spoke to him earlier today on CNN. He joins us now on the line once again to bring us an update.

Vinu, thanks for being with us once again on CNN. We're looking at the pictures again that you took last night. Today has been a little frustrating for you, I understand, in that you've been unable to get outside to take more pictures.

VINU RANGANATHAN, WITNESSED FIRST BLAST: Yes, Adrian. It's been very frustrating and what's the worst part is you can hear all the action. You can hear all the gunshots, the grenades exploding and all the choppers flying on top of the buildings, and even all the army shouting and everything. But because the curfew has been announced, no one has really stepped out.

FINIGHAN: OK, but last night it was completely different. You were among the first people, if not the first, to get some high-quality images of what was going on, uploaded to what -- to Flickr. Tell us what it was like out on the streets.

RANGANATHAN: So I kind of went out immediately within the first five minutes as soon as I heard the blast. And I took out my bike, and then I realized that this is just two minutes walking distance from my place.

And once I landed there, people were just watching it -- watching the whole scene, I guess, and debris were all over the place. I just parked my bike and took out the camera, and I started continuous clicking. Took close to around 200 snaps, and then decided to upload the pictures after I came back home after spending around 100-odd minutes at the scene. So that's what happened.

FINIGHAN: And how would you describe the mood on the streets while you were out there documenting all of this? I mean, did you feel in danger yourself? Was there a sense of panic?

RANGANATHAN: Personally, I didn't feel a sense of danger. But people were all anxious. Some of them are angry. Some of them were worried about some of their families were inside, their close friends who were caught in the buildings, because the terrorists had kind of taken some people hostages. And they're all wondering what's going to happen.

FINIGHAN: All right, Vinu, listen, we really appreciate you talking to us, and thank you for sharing the photographs that you uploaded last night.

As Vinu said it's been a bit frustrating to him today. He's been unable to get out on the streets. But as we said, people on Twitter, another 66 results have come in since we last updated it. People are giving us one-line descriptions of what's going where they are in Mumbai and right around the world.

And of course, CNN.com, covering it from every angle. The new media really taking on a major role in the coverage of the events in Mumbai. This is our site. If you want to know what's going on in Mumbai, then take a look, CNN.com/international.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ANDERSON: Adrian Finighan there.

We've seen the horrifying pictures of the attacks in Mumbai. What was it like to be in the middle of the chaos? We're going to hear from more eyewitnesses after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ANDERSON: You're watching CNN Live from London. We welcome our viewers around the world. A look at some of the other stories that we are following this hour.

Thailand's prime minister has declared a state of emergency at Bangkok's two main airports. They are reportedly overrun with anti- government protesters and have been closed for two days. Thousands of passengers are stranded there. The demonstrators belong to the People's Alliance for Democracy and they've been leading protests since May.

The Iraqi parliament has voted to approve a new sweeping security pact with the United States. The deal includes a firm timetable for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq by December the 31st, 2011.

Well, the assembly was forced to postpone the vote on Wednesday due to last-minute negotiations among Shiite and Sunni factions.

And off the coast of France, a jetliner has crashed into the Mediterranean Sea with seven people on board. Rescue efforts are under way, but so far no reports of survivors. The Airbus A320 reportedly belongs to a New Zealander and was making a test flight when it went down.

Well, blasts, confusion, and then hotel guests were held at gunpoint. Survivors of the assault on Mumbai are sharing their stories.

Mallika Kapur has dramatic eyewitness accounts now of the night-and- day horror.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

MALLIKA KAPUR, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice over): It was a night they would rather forget.

SONALI CHATTERJEE, WITNESS: One explosion practically knocked me off my feet, the first big one, and that's when I saw the (INAUDIBLE). There's explosion on the roof. That was - I'm just on a phone call, and I just -- I was standing and everything shook. That was very, very scary.

KAPUR: As gunmen attacks nine locations across Mumbai, Alex Chamberlain found himself held at gunpoint in the restaurant of the Oberoi Hotel.

CHAMBERLAIN: A gunman came into the restaurant, and we were ushered, or some of us were ushered into the kitchen. I think some of the others got out the backdoor. And then the gunmen told us to go up the stairs, up the fire escape stairs, about 30 of us altogether.

So we were walking up each flight of stairs, and then he stopped us after two or three flights and told everyone to put their hands up and said, where are you from? Are there any British or Americans here? Show us your ID and all this. But people started getting out their business cards or ID cards or whatever.

And my friend said, you know, tell them you're Italian or something if they come up to you, you know? So I was there with my hands up just thinking -- basically, I was in, you know, in serious trouble.

KAPUR: Yasmin Wong was nearby in her hotel in the Taj Hotel when she started hearing gunshots. She turned off the lights and hid in her room.

YASMIN WINDOW, CNN INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEE: All I saw was like a lot of smoke and I saw a guy out my window, above my window, who basically had smashed through the window and was hanging out of the window.

KAPUR: As the extent of the attack sank in, anger grew, not only at the terrorists, but also the Indian government for failing to see it coming.

MALLYA: This is India's 9/11. And, you know, as much as we never thought it could ever happen to us, it has actually happened. And I think that the government needs to really start acting tough.

KAPUR: Even before the hostage crisis was over, funerals were being planned across Mumbai. For police, for ordinary people, for all those that did not survive Mumbai's horror.

Mallika Kapur, CNN, Mumbai.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ANDERSON: Well, we will be back in a moment with our continuing coverage of these Mumbai attacks. Do stay with us. You're watching CNN.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)