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Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation lost Taj hotel files before 26/11

Linah Baliga, TNN | Jul 16, 2013, 01:15 AM IST

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Among the missing documents are building files, design plans and blueprints of several vital buildings, including the Taj Mahal hotel and an oil company's installation.

MUMBAI: The issue of the disappearance of files from municipal offices has grown murkier with a fresh revelation that among the [missing](#) documents are building files, [design plans](#) and blueprints of several [vital buildings](#), including the [Taj Mahal](#) hotel and an oil company's installation.

The BMC, by its own admission, cannot trace more than 6,000 files related to as many buildings in Mumbai, a city repeatedly rocked by terrorism. The majority of these records vanished from the building proposals department, which sanctions construction plans and stores the associated documents.

A Right to Information query revealed that files of 279 buildings in the island city, 3,474 in the western suburbs and 2,147 in [the eastern](#)

[suburbs](#) are nowhere to be found.

RTI activist Sharad Yadav, whose query brought to light [the fresh information](#), said it gives a new complexion to the whole issue: the disclosure shows the major security threat posed by critical information going missing.

These include those of the Taj Mahal hotel, a [Bharat Petroleum](#) installation at Princess Dock, the traffic police training institute at Byculla, the [Royal Opera House](#), several BEST sub-stations, a government building, as well as buildings used by some leading banks and [mobile service providers](#).

"It is widely known that the 10 Pakistani terrorists who entered India for the November 2008 attacks were familiar with their targets because they were provided blueprints, including of the Taj Mahal hotel. The revelation that design plans of vital buildings are missing makes one uncomfortable," he said. "This matter clearly goes beyond corruption and the nexus between builder and municipal officials."

According to the documents gained through the RTI, the civic body approved plans for modifications to the Taj Mahal hotel on December 23, 2005. "The plans went missing in 2006 and the Taj was attacked by terrorists in 2008. This is a cause for serious concern," said Yadav.

TOI was the first to report on June 2 that files of 3,474 buildings from Bandra to Jogeshwari have gone missing from municipal offices.

A senior civic official refused to comment on Monday on the disappearance of plans of important buildings, arguing that the subject of missing files was being discussed in the BMC assembly.

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A spokesperson for the Taj Mahal hotel just said, "All documents that were in our possession are still with us." A Bharat Petroleum spokesperson said the company was not aware of its plant's files being untraceable, "but we do have a lubricant blending plant and an office at Wadi Bunder on Princess Dock".

Conservation architect Abha Narain Lambah, who is carrying out the restoration of the Royal Opera House, said, "The Mumbai Heritage Conservation Committee's nod came after 17 months. The owners were now waiting to get the building proposals department's permission to start the interior restoration. It is very distressing to hear that the files have gone missing. The owners were trying hard to restore the Grade II A building with no government funding."

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