



High drama on final day of siege at Nariman House

Friday, 28 November 2008 - 8:22pm IST | Agency: IANS

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High drama was witnessed at the Jewish centre of Nariman House all through Friday - beginning with crack commandos slithering down a rope.

MUMBAI: High drama was witnessed at the Jewish centre of Nariman House all through Friday - beginning with crack commandos slithering down a rope from a chopper to the centre's terrace, loud grenade explosions and gunfire exchanges, to the blasting off of a section of the wall. And finally, the jubilant commandos going off amid much cheer from crowds on another mission - to free the Nariman house of terrorists.

With the operation codenamed 'Black Tornado', the commandos managed to put an end to the terrorist strike 48 hours after the militant group entered the five-storeyed Jewish centre on Wednesday night and took an Israeli rabbi, his wife and others hostage. Early on Friday night, the NSG commandos killed two terrorists they found in the building, but discovered the rabbi, his wife and four other hostages killed a long while back.

"Five dead bodies have been found," NSG Director General JK Dutt said. Nariman House, also known as Chabad House, is located in Colaba in south Mumbai.

Smoke billowed out of Nariman House complex after the commandos blew off a section of the wall on the fourth floor in a controlled explosion.

After that the fighting got fiercer, and finally ended later in the night. A few explosions were still heard after the operation ended as the commandos were defusing any explosives found in the building.

The standoff with the hiding terrorists intensified after the NSG men were dropped by helicopter onto the roof of the house.

The commandos cleared the centre run by the ultra-orthodox Jewish outreach group Chabad Lubavitch floor by floor, reporters at the scene said. The commandos got full control of the two top floors by afternoon.

As the NSG commandos closed in on Nariman House for the final assault, two explosions

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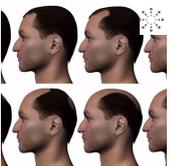
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within a span of 10 to 15 minutes slowed down their operation. A third explosion was heard at 4.47 p.m.

When the commandos moved to the second floor, they found the bodies of three hostages, who had been killed much earlier. Then one of the terrorists lobbed a grenade at the commandos as they continued to move forward. The forces moved to the fourth floor, where they killed the two terrorists and found the bodies of two more hostages.

"The hostages were victims of the terrorists," said Dutt.

He said commando Havaldar Gajendra Singh was killed in the gunbattle at Nariman House.

"Gajendra Singh came in the line of fire. He received bullet injuries, but did not retreat. He continued going forward, and made the supreme sacrifice," Dutt said.

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