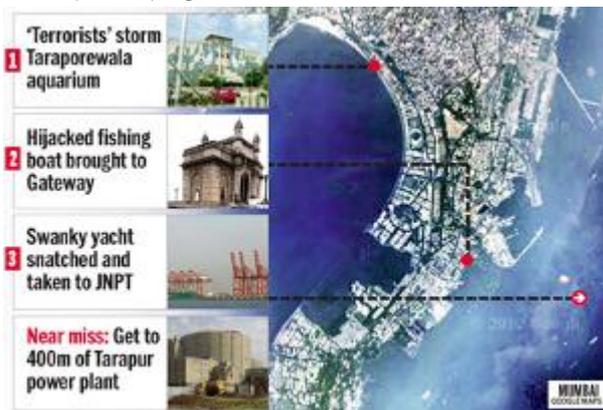


## CITY BREACHED AT THREE SPOTS IN ANTI-TERROR DRILL

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Terrorists' on Friday managed to breach coastal security cover in and around Mumbai thrice and managed to enter the city at two sensitive landing points during the bi-annual Sagar Kavach exercise, a two-day mock drill that tests the preparedness of various agencies responsible for the city's security.

Sources said the Gateway of India, near where Pakistani terrorists landed during the 26/11 terror strike that killed 166 people, witnessed two

chilling breaches.

The attacking 'red' team managed to hijack a fishing vessel, land near the Gateway monument, before disappearing in the crowd without being challenged by the defending 'blue' team, just like the 10 terrorists had done on November 26, 2008.

In another instance, the red team hijacked a private yacht berthed off Gateway and set sail towards the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, one of the city's most vital installations, and demanded the release of convicted terrorist Ajmal Qasab and \$50,000 in ransom.

The final breach was along the iconic Marine Drive, as an intruding team landed at the promenade and made its way into the Taraporewala Aquarium.

There was also a scare at the Tarapur Atomic Power Station in Thane district, where an attack party was caught just in time barely 400 metres away from the plant.

The blue team, however, was not without its moments of success as it managed to neutralise intruders on five occasions, including at the Sassoon Docks, Ferry Wharf off P D'Mello Road, and the Bandra-Worli Sea Link.

"We witnessed eight intrusions in the city during the exercise, of which we succeeded in foiling five," DCP Port Zone, Tanaji Ghadge told Mumbai Mirror. He did not specify further and said the results of the exercise will be jointly analysed by all security agencies.

Sources said a bunch of 'terrorists' took control of a yacht belonging to Ambuja Cements Limited that was berthed off the Gateway of India. The hijacking caught the attention of a team of costal police patrolling the region.

"But the 'terrorists' quickly sailed away and our patrolling boat could not match the yacht's speed,"

said a senior police officer who did not wish to be named. "The terrorists held the crew and passengers for ransom and demanded \$50,000 and the release of convicted terrorist Ajmal Qasab in return for the safe release of those on board."

Once the hijacking was successful, the command control of the operation informed the Mumbai police of this successful intrusion and the yacht was eventually returned to its berth.

Meanwhile, a small boat carrying a few 'terrorists' reached Gateway and managed to sneak into the city. Their abandoned boat was recovered much later by a police patrol party.

In Tarapur, the blue team managed to nab the red team in the nick of time. "We realised there was a breach after the red team landed on the shore," said a senior Thane police officer, who did not want to be named.

Ravindranath, site director, Tarapur Atomic Power Station, said, "I was present till 7 pm on Friday and I am not aware of any such incident. But I will check this. We have the CISF guarding us."

Among the blue team's other successes was the interception and arrest of a team of 14 'terrorists' who attempted to sneak into the city at Sassoon Docks posing as fishermen returning from a long fishing trip.

In places outside Mumbai, the red team was successfully repelled at Alibaug, Murud and Shrivardhan, the Raigad police said. The Thane rural police succeeded in nabbing the intruders at Uttan, Vasai, Palghar and Boisar.

SPS Basra, commander, Coast Guard (West), was the coordinating officer for the exercise, the debriefing session for which is likely to be held at Mantralaya on Saturday.

The operation involved about 5,000 security personnel from various agencies like the Indian Navy, Mumbai police, Coast Guard, coastal police, customs department, Central Industrial Security Force, Maharashtra Maritime Board, Mumbai Port Trust and the fisheries department.

The defending security agencies are merely alerted that the exercise is on, and have to maintain tight vigil in their jurisdiction to thwart intrusions.

Both the 'terrorists' and the security forces are fully armed, but rules prohibit use of firepower. Intrusions are not limited to the coast and vessels. On one occasion in the past, 'terrorists' attempted to sneak into a luxury hotel in a western suburb and some monumental buildings in south Mumbai.

In case the enemy teams are caught with weapons, they immediately share a secret code to confirm their identity and avoid an armed confrontation. Enemy teams are not restricted to breaching coastal security. They can also cultivate sleeper cells in the city and take their support to capture vital installations once they manage to gain entry by sea.

The Sagar Kavach operation, initially held only along Mumbai's coast, has since expanded to include the coastal areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Chandra Iyengar, who was the additional chief secretary (home) when the first such exercise was held post-26/11, said the operation has helped strengthen coordination between various agencies

and identify their deficiencies.

“It has helped them reduce internal hassles also,” said Iyengar. “Coastal security is not compromised. The preparedness of every agency is tested and people learn from their mistakes.”

