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For Pak ultras, Indian Muslims are 'gaddar'

Mumbai, Sep 12, DH News Service:

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The terrorists wanted to set the Taj Hotel on fire, says witness

The Pakistani terrorists who carried out the 26/11 attacks would not spare even their co-religionists whom they called 'gaddar Musalman', and abused them in other choicest words.

A steward at Mumbai's Taj Mahal hotel, which was one of the five targets of the ultras, got a taste of their tongue-lashing after he disclosed his religion to them. Adil Irani, 31, was the second hostage from the Taj to depose before the special court hearing the 26/11 attacks case on Friday. He was working with the hotel as a steward and was captured by the Pakistani terrorists.

During his deposition, Adil said the terrorists asked him his religion. When he told them he was a Muslim, they snapped: "Ghanta Musalman hai, jahed ke naam par kalank hai, gaddar Musalman hai (What type of Muslim are you? You are a blot on the Islamic holy war, you are a traitor Muslim)."

When Adil told his captors he was a steward, they said, "Chal Allah ko kurban ho ja (Come on, now get ready to sacrifice your life for Allah)."

Attitude

Although Adil survived the ordeal, the attitude of the terrorists explains why two militants, one of them Mohammed Ajmal Amir Kasab who is on trial in the special court, gunned down over two dozen Muslim passengers at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, and more elsewhere during the Mumbai carnage.

Adil said he was serving in a restaurant at the Taj on November 26, 2008 night when he heard gunshots. He was frightened and took a lift to the sixth floor. There he met his colleague Swapnil in room No. 639 and they locked from inside.

At 1.15 am, someone knocked at the door twice, but they did not open it. Suddenly, the door flung open and two armed persons entered the room. One with a grey shirt was limping, while the other, a tall man with a golden shirt, was holding a gun. "We were hiding behind a table. They asked us to come out and took us to a passage outside the room where we were made to lie down on the ground with other hostages. Two more terrorists joined them thereafter," Adil told the designated judge M L Tahilyani.


Abusive


Irani recalled that the four terrorists who had entered the hotel wanted to set it on fire and destroy one of the finest edifices in the country. "Throw grenades and set the hotel on fire'.... These words uttered by a terrorist on the 26/11 night are still ringing in my ears," Irani told the court. Adil recalled that the terrorists were "very abusive" and had assaulted some hostages very badly. He said a terrorist was telling his companions that they must throw hand-grenades and torch the hotel at once. "This frightened me, but I kept quiet," Adil added. The witness said a terrorist was talking to someone on the mobile phone and told the person on the other side: Panch murge pakde hain, ek bada murga hai (we have captured five people, one of them is a big man)."

"My mobile phone, which the terrorists had kept with them, rang and my wife inquired about me. A terrorist who picked up the cell phone got furious and told her, 'Operation hatao, nahin to tabahi macha denge' (stop the operation, or else we would create havoc)," he said. The terrorist was referring to the operation launched by the marine commandos to flush them out of the Taj.

The witness said some more hostages were brought to the same place and they were shifted to room No. 632. "After sometime, the terrorists left us saying, 'Inko chod do, apni jaan bachao' (leave them, let us save our lives)," he said, adding that he escaped through a window and was rescued by the fire brigade.

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