



'Oberoi waiter was shot because he didn't set fire to restaurant'

Assistant steward Pradeep Banglorkar says he had to set fire to Kandahar restaurant after terrorists killed his colleague

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Hotel Oberoi on the night of November 26, 2008 The two Pakistani terrorists who attacked Hotel Oberoi on November 26, 2008, shot a waiter because he was unable to set fire to a restaurant, a witness told the court on Wednesday.

Pradeep Banglorkar, 52, an assistant steward at Kandahar, said, at around 10 pm he heard a loud noise in the hotel that sounded like crackers. He then saw two terrorists opening fire in the Tiffin restaurant, on the ground floor.

He said 10 staff members, including him, helped Kandahar's 50-60 guests escape from the rear door. Banglorkar added that some guests hid under the tables and had to be coaxed into leaving.

Shortly, the terrorists climbed to the mezzanine floor, where Kandahar is located. He told the court, "The gunmen saw liquor at the restaurant's bar and asked Jordon Perreira (another waiter) to pour it on the table. Perreira was then asked to set the tables and linen on fire with a plastic lighter that one of the gunmen gave him.

"His hands were shivering. He told them that the lighter wasn't working. The gunmen then asked for a matchbox which Jordon handed over. They then said 'jaldi karo, bahut kaam hai'.

"A nervous Perreira said his fingers were burnt. Then, on the instructions of one of the gunmen, the other shot Perreira.

"After Perreira's death, the gunmen asked me to set the tables on fire. After I followed their instructions, they told me to direct them to where the VIPs stayed," Banglorkar said.

He added that the terrorists dragged him to the lobby in front of the elevators. "Though they wanted to go to the top floors, I pressed the button that led to the ground floor. The terrorists, in the meanwhile, lobbed two grenades at our guests and ducked into a corner.

"I entered the lift as soon as it arrived and pressed the button for the ground floor. The gunmen fired at the lift, but I escaped as I was already descending," he said.

Banglorkar later identified the bodies of the two terrorists at J J Hospital.

Another witness, Edwin Saldanha, who conducted the inquest panchnama on the bodies of the two gunmen also deposed in the court on Wednesday. He said that one of the terrorists had no fingers, except a thumb on this right hand.

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