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## 'Only two things crossed my mind: Do or die!'

Prasanna D Zore | December 02, 2008 15:15 IST

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National Security Guard Commando Sunil Kumar Yadav fondly remembers his first visit to Mumbai (Bombay then) 10 years ago. He had heard about the Taj Hotel [[Images](#)] in Mumbai from his friends and neighbours in Haryana's Pataudi district.

All of 19 then, Yadav and his family, were amazed to see the Taj's beauty when they visited the city in 1998.

"I was seeing the Taj for the first time then and wondered who must have created such an awe-inspiring monument," says Yadav.

2008, however, was different. From a lad with dreams in his eyes in 1998, Yadav had become a well-trained NSG commando. At around 10 pm on November 26, he got a call from his "high command" that he would have to fly to Mumbai for a dangerous assignment. His unit was posted to "rescue and eliminate" the terrorists at the Taj.

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"The lobby on the ground floor of Taj Hotel, which is like a crossroad, made our task a tad difficult. The terrorists would come into the lobby, either fire or throw grenades at us, and would disappear. Nobody knew from where the enemy was firing at us," says 29-year-old Yadav from his bed in Bombay Hospital.

He was hit by a bullet that passed through both his legs on the morning of November 27. He fell down with blood oozing through his left leg. With great effort, he stood up and moved forward to evacuate a few guests trapped on the fourth floor.

"We started from the fifth floor and moved downwards to the ground floor trying to secure as much area as possible," he recounts the action scene. There were some 100 to 125 guests inside the Taj then and their job was to evacuate as many as them without any harm.

Yadav was deputed to the NSG after serving nine years fighting terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir. And in this long service, he has never suffered any harm or injury. "This is my first visit to any hospital as a patient," he smiles.

Yadav was married four years ago and has a son Kartik who's almost three now.

His parents just couldn't believe that their son was injured and was talking to them from a hospital bed, says Yadav, revealing how his parents reacted when he informed them about his injury. On the evening of December 1, Yadav spoke to his wife for the first time since he was admitted. "She's thanking God for keeping me safe," he says about his wife's reaction to his hospitalisation.

Speaking about the action inside the Taj, Yadav recounts that there were more than three terrorists and they wore blue and red T-shirts.

"There were only two things that crossed my mind that day. *Marna ya maarna* (kill or die)," he says without batting an eyelid. "When you take a vow to protect the pride of Bharat Mata (Mother India), death doesn't scare you," he says even as the hospital staff brings in a stretcher to move him to another room.

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