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Final operation on at Taj hotel, hostages rescued

Agencies | Nov 27, 2008, 08.11PM IST

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MUMBAI: Security forces have launched a final operation to flush out terrorists from Taj hotel. According to sources, seven terrorists have been killed till now.

Gunshots and explosions have been heard from inside the old building of Taj, according to sources.

A little earlier, Maharashtra police chief A N Roy said all hostages at Taj hotel here have been rescued, but there could be some still trapped at Trident hotel and Nariman House where operations were on to flush out terrorists, said today, ruling out any negotiations with the ultras. ([Watch](#))



An employee of Taj Hotel comforts foreign guests in Mumbai following terror strikes. (Reuters Photo)

All people trapped in Taj Hotel in Mumbai rescued. No hostage-like situation there right now, said Director General of Police (DGP) A N Roy. "There are still guests in the rooms, but we won't be able to give you a number," he said. ([Watch](#))

More bodies have been found inside the hotel, reports suggest.

Four suicide bombers have reportedly been killed in the Taj hotel. ([Watch](#))

Giving details of the terror attacks which began last night, Roy said terrorists struck in quick succession and in all there was shooting in 12 places.

The Director General of Police made it clear that there would be no negotiations with the terrorists, and "we will very soon get them either alive or dead"

So far five terrorists and 14 police personnel, including officers, have been killed in the operations, Roy said, adding the attacks were "well-planned and executed and unprecedented".

At the moment, the police chief said he could not say which terror outfit is responsible for the attack.

"Our priority now is to take it to logical conclusion by nabbing the terrorists and rescuing the hostages and people trapped in the three areas where the operations are on," he said.

The entire action has now been taken over by NSG personnel who were flown from Delhi and they were being assisted by naval commandos and Maharashtra Police.

At Taj Hotel, systematical floor-to-floor cleaning up is being carried out, Roy said.

"It was very sad that we have lost ATS Chief Hemant Karkare who was a very close friend. We have lost 14 of our personnel in fighting the terrorists and we will carry on our fight," he said

Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotels, where security operations against terrorists are still on, has set up a helpline for its guests. Assuring to work towards speedy normalisation of operations, the hotel said, "We will rebuild every inch that has been damaged in this attack and bring back the Taj to its full glory."

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It said it is working towards safety and security of its guests and staff. Its helpline numbers are 022-66574322, 022-66574372 and 1800111825.

Security forces had launched an assault to flush out terrorists from two luxury hotels - Taj and Trident (Oberoi) - where a couple of 100 people were believed to be either held hostage or trapped in the most audacious terror attacks that have claimed over 100 lives and left over 300 injured in India's financial capital Mumbai.

Earlier in the day, a senior army officer said at least four terrorists are holed up in the Taj Hotel where 40 to 50 guests were still trapped.

"In this area there are four to five terrorists," Major R K Hooda, General Officer Commanding of Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat said. There are an estimated 40 to 50 guests still trapped in the hotel, he said.

There can be 10 to 12 terrorists involved in the terror attack at a hotel in Mumbai, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister R R Patil said today. Five of them have been killed and one of them arrested, he told reporters outside the hotel as security forces prepared to launch an assault to end the terror.

Patil said he was not sure about the exact number of hostages in the hotel where commandos of NSG and Mumbai Police were involved in the operation.

He said they have not received any demands from militants and hoped that a breakthrough will be achieved soon. Patil said the operation was delicate in view of the safety of the hostages. He claimed police have got some leads but declined to elaborate.

Meanwhile, two bodies have been brought out of terror-struck Taj Hotel in Mumbai and taken away in an ambulance.

Fresh firing has also been reported at Oberoi and Army has entered the hotel to flush out the terrorists.

"At least six foreigners have been killed and the death figure has gone up to 101 now," Ramesh Tayde, a senior police officer said from Mumbai's control room earlier today.

An unspecified number of foreigners including Americans, Israelis and Canadians are also believed to be among those trapped in the two hotels and in Nariman House, a residential complex with an old Jewish prayer hall, where also a hostage situation prevailed.

As the day broke, gunbattles raged between terrorists, believed to have come in a boat to the Gateway of India, opposite Taj hotel, and commandoes and fresh explosions rocked the two hotels after the night of terror targeting ten places.

One terrorist was shot dead in Nariman House, police said suspecting the presence of six more in the complex. Heavy exchange of fire was on between the two sides a little past noon.

There were unconfirmed reports of a hostage-like situation in Cama hospital from where two terrorists in the wee hours tried to escape but were gunned down after a hot chase by the police near the Chowpatty-Girgaum crossing.

Terrorists used heavy machine guns, including AK-47s, and grenades to strike at the city's most high-profile targets -- the hyper-busy CST (formerly VT) rail terminus; the landmark Taj Hotel at the Gateway and the luxury Oberoi Trident at Nariman Point; the domestic airport at Santa Cruz; the Cama and GT hospitals near CST; the Metro Adlabs multiplex and Mazgaon Dockyard -- killing at least 101 and sending hundreds of injured to hospital.

Sharp shooters of army, NSG and other security forces moved into Mumbai's landmark hotels to overwhelm an unspecified number of terrorists still holed out there after several residents were rescued in the wee hours. About 800 personnel from armed forces and NSG were deployed from outside Mumbai and from Delhi

Raging fire and plumes of black smoke were seen billowing from the central dome of the century-old heritage Taj hotel opposite the Gateway of India this morning as firemen struggled to douse them. A guest stranded in one of the rooms said two explosions shook the building.

Smoke was also seen billowing from the new building of the Taj Hotel -- which stands next to the old building where terrorists are holed up. While NSG operation was on in the old building, fire brigade personnel were trying to douse fire in the new wing. The top portion of the old Taj building was engulfed in fire after the blasts last night.

Luxury hotel Trident Oberoi was under siege with some terrorists holding some foreigners

hostage. A tourist guide was worried about the fate of five Canadians he had put up in that hotel. Earlier in the night, explosions were heard in the hotel.

As last night's terror incidents spread a sense of panic and fear in the metropolis, schools and colleges were ordered closed and the Bombay Stock Exchange will not function today.

Suburban trains and city buses operated normally but without usual rush. Except for cancellation of three international flights, domestic air services to Mumbai were maintained.

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