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## Tragic last texts of Mumbai victim

Friday 5 December 2008 / News

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A SLOUGH man exchanged emotional calls and texts with his brother in India shortly before he was blown up by terrorists in the Mumbai massacre.

Slough's Hindu priest Naresh Saraswat spoke to Rajiv as he was trapped in his room inside Taj Hotel where gunman unleashed their reign of terror. The 50-year-old was shot in the hand after he mistakenly opened the door to a terrorist in the atrocities which began on Wednesday, last week, killing 174 people and wounding hundreds. He managed to slam the door shut before urged his family in Keel Drive, Chalvey, to only text him to avoid attracting attention.

Son Abhijat, 22, used his degree in forensic and neuroscience to text tips on how to treat his wound - not realising that his uncle had been killed when a grenade was thrown into the room. He said: "We had tried to keep calm and thought maybe his phone battery had died.

"When my dad was talking to my uncle he was keeping positive even though he was in a lot of pain.

"Naturally we were scared but we tried to keep strong. At that time we only thought his

hand was shot and kept praying he'd survive.

" Hours went by and we heard nothing. I stayed up all night, searching every website for an update." The family kept reassuring Rajiv's wife Sunita and teenage daughters Kriti, and Saumaya who were in India.

Panicking for his brother's whereabouts, Naresh, 55, jetted off to India with wife, Renu, on Saturday. Their worst fears were confirmed when his badly-burned body was identified through dental records.

A further tragedy is that Mr Saraswat, an officer of Indian Languages for Hindustan Petroleum, may have survived if circumstances were different. He was staying at the hotel to attend for a conference with MPs who escaped because they had gone downstairs to eat before terrorists stormed the hotel. He was trapped on the fourth floor because he had not been hungry.

Naresh, a priest at Slough's Hindu Temple in Keel Drive, Chalvey and worshippers held special prayers on Tuesday night for victims. Abhijat said: "This is the Indian 9/11. But instead of mourning his life I want to celebrate it. He was such a great man, always making us laugh."

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