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Online edition of India's National Newspaper

Sunday, Jan 04, 2009

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National



A word with a killer at Nariman House

Lyla Bavadam

Kamal Singh shouted at the gunman and asked him to come down

MUMBAI: Kamal Singh is possibly the only person to have had a direct encounter and a conversation (albeit brief) with one of the terrorists who struck Mumbai on November 26 and lived to relate it.

The Shiv Sainik, who is a close aide of shakha pramukh Vijay Surve at the Colaba shakha, recalls the moment at Nariman House.

"We were all in the shakha office planning a Mumbai bandh for November 30 when some boys rushed in saying there was a problem outside. Just before this, we had heard explosions and firing.

"Later we knew it was from Leopold Café, but at that point we had no idea what was happening.

"We went out and there was complete confusion. I ran into a gully with another man. Boys were throwing stones in the direction of the Nariman House. There were sounds of firing inside.

"I ran inside the building and up to the first floor. I saw this man standing on the landing of the next floor. He was wearing jeans and an ash coloured T-shirt. He had his back to me and I angrily shouted, "What are you doing? Come down."

"He turned around and that is when I saw that he was carrying a gun. It was an automatic weapon. I stopped when I saw the weapon. He said to me 'Kaafar, aao. [Come, kafir].'"

Mr. Singh turned and ran. "A few seconds later a grenade exploded where I had been standing. I now know what people mean when they say that if your time is not up, you will not die."

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Identifies terrorist

After the siege was over and the bodies of the terrorists were brought out, Mr. Singh was asked by the police if he recognised any of them. He identified one of them as the man he had had a brief encounter with. It was the terrorist who has been identified as Nasir.

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