

# Sikh snipers still holding out as toll from temple raid rises

NEW DELHI (AP) — Sikh snipers were still hiding yesterday in the vast Golden Temple compound in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar, where as many as 500 people are believed to have died in savage hand-to-hand fighting on Wednesday.

Snipers wounded at least seven soldiers, Maj.-Gen. R. K. Gour said.

"It now appears that the Golden

Temple area is still not free from terrorists," M. K. Wali of the Home Affairs Ministry told reporters in New Delhi.

According to unconfirmed reports, 200 more bodies and 100 more wounded had been found in the temple. Initial reports after Wednesday's battle indicated about 250 Sikh militants and 59 soldiers died when troops backed by tank and rocket fire stormed the shrine.

Mr. Wali confirmed that more bodies had been found in cellars of the compound's many buildings, but when asked about the figure of 200 he replied: "No, it probably won't be that much."

Mr. Wali said 15 extremists who had been firing from the management building of the fortified Golden Temple compound later surrendered. But he said some militants were still firing "pot shots" at security forces from buildings adjacent to the temple compound, which covers an area of 12 city blocks.

Mr. Wali said the body of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the radical leader accused of masterminding Sikh terrorism in Punjab, was cremated "with full religious rites." The bodies of other victims of the two-day battle were also cremated, he said.

Meanwhile, President Zail Singh, under pressure from Sikh agitators

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### ● From Page One

to resign after the attack, flew to Amritsar yesterday to inspect damage to the temple. Supporters of the Sikhs' Akali Dal party have demanded that Mr. Singh resign to save the honor of India's 13 million Sikhs because he had failed to stop the army from attacking the holiest of Sikh shrines.

Leaders of the Akali Dal in New Delhi asked members to exercise restraint in expressing their anguish over the assault and called for a non-violent protest. An estimated 30 people were reported to have died in Sikh rioting to protest against the assault on the seventeenth-century temple, which Sikh extremists used as a haven and arms warehouse.

Two Sikhs were captured in Amritsar after they exchanged fire with army troops, Mr. Wali said, and shots were fired at a paramilitary patrol from a mob of 100 people in the Amritsar area. The crowd dispersed when the patrol fired back.

In her first public comment on the assault, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, a Hindu, expressed "anguish and profound sorrow" about the action and said it is time to "heal the wounds."

Before Mr. Singh became President in July, 1982, he had groomed Mr. Bhindranwale as a counterforce for the nationally governing Congress Party against the Akali Dal, which then ruled Punjab. About two years ago, when Mr. Bhindranwale began advocating violence as a way to achieve Sikh autonomy, Mr. Singh ended the association. But the President was regularly criticized by Sikhs, who accused him of siding with Hindus.

Mr. Bhindranwale and his lieutenants were found dead in a bunker in the basement of the temple when soldiers broke through the fortified gates Thursday.

Few details on the battle were available from Punjab, which the Government sealed off last weekend, and it was not clear whether Mr. Bhindranwale had been killed by the soldiers or had committed suicide as he had vowed.

His supporters in New Delhi claimed his body was riddled with 72 bullets.

SIKH — Page 2