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Thousands of pilgrims surge to the Golden Temple after it was opened yesterday for second time since army attack.

Sikh shrine reopened to pilgrims in Amritsar

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian troops reopened the battle-scarred Golden Temple complex in Amritsar to more than 5,000 Sikhs yesterday, one day after it was abruptly closed to thousands of pilgrims.

The seventeenth-century temple, holiest shrine in the Sikh religion, was opened for two hours in the morning, police officials in Amritsar said. They said pilgrims wishing to enter the complex outside the designated visiting period would need special passes.

On Monday, the temple was opened to 10,000 pilgrims for the first time since the army stormed the temple three weeks ago to clear out Sikh extremists. But it was closed on Tuesday after 300 people had entered, leaving more than 5,000 people outside.

No reason for closing the temple was given, but authorities were reported to have expressed concern about crowd control while soldiers continued efforts to recover weapons from the complex.

Government-controlled All-India Radio said ammunition and four hand grenades were recovered yesterday near the Akal Takht building where militants made their last stand. The army has reportedly recovered a vast arsenal of sophisticated weapons from the temple complex.

Sikh militants based in the shrine had been waging a campaign for greater political and religious autonomy in the northern state of Punjab. India's 13 million Sikhs are only 2 per cent of the population, but are a small majority in Punjab, where Amritsar is located.

The United News of India reported that troops shot a suspected Sikh terrorist and arrested 57 suspected militants in Punjab on Monday and Tuesday as they continued efforts to root out militants.

Meanwhile, arrests continued in Bombay as police swept slums in a bid to head off a fresh outbreak of Hindu-Moslem violence. Police sources said at least 10 people have died and 47 have been injured in the city in the past week.

Yesterday, troops were moved into three industrial towns on the city's outskirts where fierce Hindu-Moslem clashes last month touched off violence that claimed at least 268 lives.

Sources said 1,072 people had been arrested, including several supporters of a militant Hindu organization, the Shiv Sena.

In Washington, the U.S. State Department said there is "absolutely no truth" to reports in the Press Trust of India that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency had trained Indian Sikh separatists.