

Police end Kashmir mosque siege

by UPI

NEW DELHI -- A 24-hour standoff between police and hostage-taking militants in Kashmir ended Monday night when authorities killed the three gunmen and freed their captives. Police initiated the end to the ordeal in Jammu by tossing tear gas shells into the mosque, The Hindu reported. Two of the militants were killed in the ensuing firefight, while the third took refuge in one of the mosque's minarets. The third gunman was killed about an hour later, the newspaper reported online. Police said all five hostages, including three who had escaped their captors earlier when they were allowed out to pick up food, were unharmed and the mosque sustained no damage. One police official told the Press Trust of India the three militants, believed to be associated with the terror group Hizbul Mujahedin, had demanded safe passage as a condition for releasing the hostages. The BBC reported the militants apparently took refuge in the mosque to escape a security search of the area. The report said violence in Kashmir has subsided with India and Pakistan involved in their peace process.

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