

TERROR TRACKER

Newsletter by Counter Terrorism Centre



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान



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4 TAJIK MEMBERS OF ISIS HELD, BUT PUTIN BLAMES UKRAINE

US WARNED RUSSIA ABOUT EXACT PLACE OF ATTACK: CROCUS CITY HALL



On 22 March 2024, Russia witnessed the deadliest attack on its soil since the Beslan school siege in 2004. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack on the Crocus City Hall which was at its full capacity of 6,200 people.

Picnic, a Soviet-era band was due to perform there. Four ISIS gunmen fired at the concert attendees using automatic weapons.

The sudden firing caused the crowd to flee their seats in panic as the terrorists targeted groups of people heading for the exit points. One of the witnesses recalled that ‘‘Suddenly there were bangs behind us - shots. A burst of firing - I do not know what...A stampede began. Everyone ran to the escalator...Everyone was screaming; everyone was running.’

Over 130 people were killed and at least 100 others were reportedly wounded in this deadly attack. An operation to rescue the missing persons is underway.

A Russian court has charged the perpetrators - Dalerdzhon Mirzoyev, Saidakrami Murodali Rachabalizoda, Shamsidin Fariduni and Muhammadsobir Fayzov – with committing an act of terrorism. They are Tajik citizens.

The Tajik state security service has recently detained at least nine people in connection with Crocus City Hall attack. As per RIA Novosti, the Russian security forces were involved in this operation to detain those tied to the terrorist act. – [AP News](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#)

ISIS’ ISSUES THREATS AFTER MOSCOW ATTACK



ISIS-affiliated media outlets — Al-Azaim Foundation and Al Battar Media — has released threatening new messages following the Crocus City Hall attack. One of the posters warned the Western countries of subsequent terrorist attacks. London, Rome, Madrid, and Paris were depicted as the next sites of attack in the released propaganda. Furthermore, another poster, titled ‘Battle of Moscow,’ called on war to be declared on those deemed as ‘infidels’ by ISIS – ‘One battle, one enemy, from the far south in Mozambique to the far north in Russia, a world war, fighting against all the Mushrikeen and Murtaddeen, as they fight us all.’ – [TracTerrorism](#)

IIT STUDENT ARRESTED FOR HAVING ISIS AFFILIATION



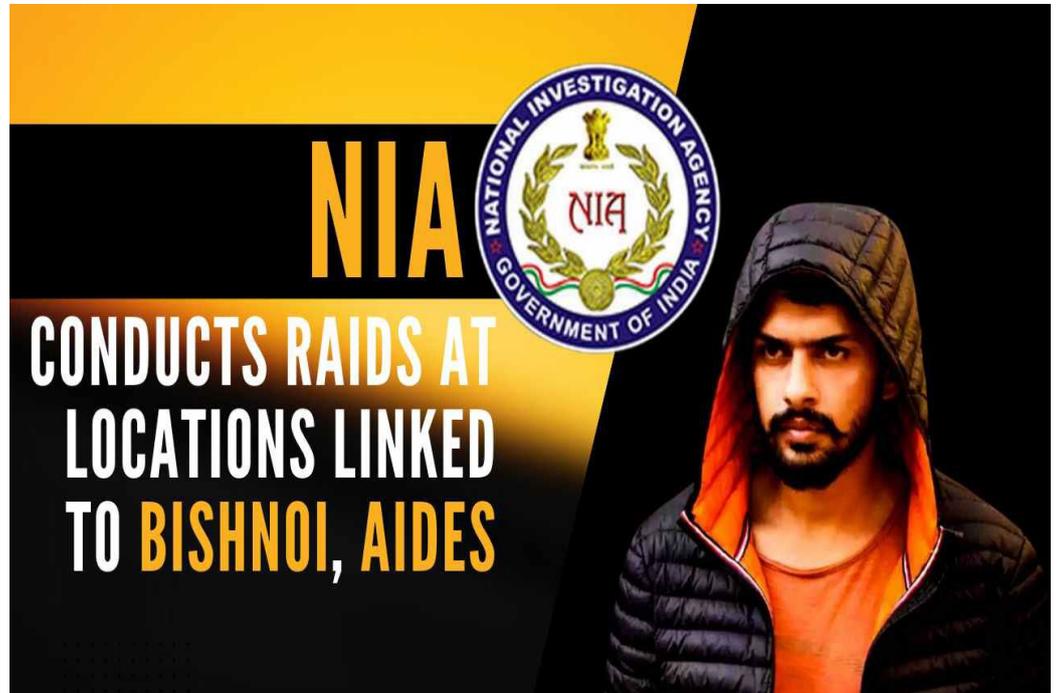
TOUSEEF KHAN

On 24 March 2024, Touseef Ali Farooqui, a student pursuing his BTech course in IIT Guwahati's Bioscience Department, was arrested by the Assamese police from the Hajo area. He has been charged under UAPA. Farooqui was arrested for attempting to join ISIS. A black flag similar to ISIS was discovered in his hostel room and has been sent for verification.

He had emailed his university a day before his arrest, expressing his intentions to join the terrorist group. The police authorities were immediately notified about this and they initiated their search soon after. Farooqui was arrested three days after Haris Farooqi alias Harish Ajmal Farukhi (Head of ISIS India) and his associate Anurag Singh alias Rehan were nabbed by the police-
[Deccan Herald](#)

PLOT THICKENS AS NIA PROBES TERRORIST-GANGSTER NEXUS

SEARCHES IN 30 LOCATIONS ACROSS 4 STATES, ONE UNION TERRITORY



On 11 March 2024, the National Investigation Agency or NIA conducted searches across 30 locations based in four states – Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh – and one Union Territory – Chandigarh – as part of its investigations into the terrorist-gangster nexus.

The NIA conducted joint operations, working in tandem with state police, to dismantle such criminal and terrorist operations based on specific inputs it received leading up to these searches.

Such networks are responsible for carrying out major high-profile crimes. They include the targeted killings of Pardeep Kumar (a social leader) and Sidhu Singh Moosewala (a Punjabi singer).

Furthermore, the terrorist-gangster nexus has been involved in several extortion schemes targeting professionals and entrepreneurs.

Earlier this year in January, the agency had carried out raids across thirty-two locations throughout North India, uncovering illegal arms and ammunition, cash, digital devices, and incriminating documents.

They were tied to three cases involving the proscribed Babbar Khalsa International organisation and the Lawrence Bishnoi gang.

The NIA released some key information after the January 2024 raids, detailing this nexus' role in trafficking of IEDs, arms, and ammunition across borders.

According to the anti-terror agency, the trafficked products have been used to carry out terror financing activities, extortions, bomb blasts, and targeted killings. – [NDTV](#), [Hindustan Times](#)

SUICIDE BOMBING KILLS FIVE CHINESE ENGINEERS

SITE OF THE BLAST - DASU HYDROPOWER PROJECT IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA



On 26 March 2024, at least five Chinese engineers were killed in a suicide bombing attack while working on the Dasu Hydropower Project in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The 4,320 MW project, situated 300 kilometres north of Islamabad, has been undertaken by China Gezhouba Group Company Limited and is being funded by the World Bank.

These fatalities were the result of an explosive-laden vehicle ramming into the engineers' bus in the Bisham District. The first attack involving Chinese personnel occurred in July 2021 when nine Chinese engineers died in a terrorist attack a few kilometres away from where the dam is being constructed. Following this attack, Power Construction Corporation of China, suspended its operations at the Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project based in the restive province's Swabi District. Moreover, it laid off more than 2,000 employees until further notice.

At the moment, thousands of Chinese-origin workers have been employed to work on several projects under the umbrella of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Shahbaz Sharif, Pakistan's Prime Minister, has ordered a joint investigation to be carried out into the March 2024 attack as Chinese officials have applied pressure on Pakistani authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure the safety of Chinese citizens residing in the country. He also expressed his condolences for the lives lost. – [NDTV](#), [The Indian Express](#)

GWADAR PORT COMES UNDER THE FIRE FROM BALOCH INSURGENTS



On 20 March 2024, Baloch insurgents targeted the Gwadar Port Authority Complex (Balochistan) and opened fire. The complex is located in the centre of Gwadar city and is home to Gwadar Port Authority, law enforcement agencies, and staff houses.

Armed insurgents affiliated with the Baloch Liberation Organisation's Majeed Brigade have claimed responsibility for the attack. Approximately seven attackers were killed by the security forces in an exchange of fire. No other casualties were reported. As per the United Nations Department for Safety and Security, 'several explosions' and 'continuous firing' were heard during the attack. – [Business Standard](#)

PAKISTAN WORST-HIT BY TERROR LAST YEAR: GTI 2024

According to the eleventh edition of the Global Terrorism Index Report for 2024, Pakistan has been the worst-affected by terrorism-related events in 2023. At least 490 attacks occurred in Pakistan last year. The latest edition of the report saw Pakistan moving up the rank by three places. It witnessed the most lethal terrorist attack in January 2023 when a suicide bombing injured at least 200 and killing around 80 others in Peshawar. Most of the attacks were carried out by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

Although deaths occurring due to terrorism surged by 22 per cent, terrorism-related incidents decreased by 22 per cent. The report also claimed that the October 7 attack was the 'single-largest terrorist attack' last year, while ISIS remained the deadliest terrorist group for the 9th consecutive year. Finally, West Asia, South Asia, Sub-Saharan and North Africa account for 94 percent of all terror attacks in 2023. – [India TV](#)

New Definition of Extremism

Prevent, the United Kingdom's foremost de-radicalisation initiative, has introduced a revamped definition of extremism. As per a document related to Prevent, socialism, communism, anti-abortion, and anti-fascism will feature as some of the additional ideologies considered extremist. Islamism and right-wing ideologies remain as the two most prominent threats facing the country.

The updated definition of extremism has been criticised by a former police head of the counter-terrorism unit and human rights activists. – [The Guardian](#)

CBI, EUROPOL Sign Agreement

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) signed a working arrangement on 21 March 2024 to counter and combat terrorism and serious crime.

This arrangement will bring together authorities based in India with their counterparts in the regional organisation and third parties affiliated with EUROPOL. – [Hindustan Times](#)

Lashkar Operative Declared Terrorist

On 7 March 2024, India's Union Ministry of Home affairs designated Mohammad Qasim Gujjar alias Salman alias Suleman as a terrorist for his involvement in arms trafficking and terror financing under UAPA.

He is a Lashkar-e-Taiba operative and currently resides in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Furthermore, his involvement in terrorism-related events have resulted in several deaths and injuries in the past. – [Hindustan Times](#)

70 Children Missing after ISIS Attack

Over 70 children are now considered missing from Mozambique's Cabo Delgado after ISIS carried out a series of attacks on the country's northernmost province.

As per the authorities, the terrorists might have kidnapped the children after they were separated from their families after attempting to flee to neighbouring provinces.

This is one of the latest crises facing the country since the Islamist insurgency began in 2017. – [Firstpost](#)

20th Anniversary of Madrid Train Bombing

The date 11 March 2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the Madrid Train Bombing.

It was the second-deadliest terrorist attack on European soil after the takedown of the Pam Am Flight 103 over Scotland in 1988.

More than 1,800 people were wounded and at least 191 died because of the deadly train bombing during the morning rush hour.

Al-Qaeda was responsible for carrying out this attack. – [NBC News](#)

Foreign Espionage Bigger Threat than Terror

As per the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and Australia's domestic security agency, foreign interference and foreign espionage have replaced terrorism as the greatest security threat facing the country.

The agency's annual report has emphasised that 'In 2024, threats to our way of life have surpassed terrorism as Australia's principle security concern.'

The threat level is 'certain' as per the agency. – [The Conversation](#)