

Gujarat Counter-Terrorism Busts AI-Qaeda Module Using Auto-Delete Apps



In a significant counter-terrorism operation, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has apprehended four alleged AI-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) operatives who reportedly used self-deleting communication applications to obscure their digital footprints. The arrests, spanning across Gujarat, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh, mark a crucial blow against extremist elements seeking to radicalize youth and incite violence within India.

The suspects, identified as Fardeen Shaikh from Ahmedabad, Mohd Faiq from Delhi, Zeeshan Ali from Noida, and Saifullah Qureshi from Modasa, were apprehended following extensive surveillance and intelligence gathering. According to officials, these individuals were actively involved in propagating the ideology of AQIS, a proscribed terrorist organization, and promoting content aimed at radicalization and recruitment through various social media platforms, particularly Instagram.

A key aspect of their operational security involved the use of auto-delete applications, allowing them to automatically erase messages and communication logs, thus making it challenging for law enforcement to trace their activities. Despite these efforts, the Gujarat ATS, working in coordination with central agencies and local police, successfully monitored their digital and physical movements, leading to their apprehension.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Gujarat ATS, Sunil Joshi, confirmed the arrests and highlighted the recovery of incriminating materials, including a sword and literature related to AI-Qaeda, from Fardeen Shaikh. Investigations also revealed discussions surrounding a suspected plot referred to as "Operation Sindoor," with content that was reportedly anti-Indian

government and pro-Pakistani. Mohd Faiq was found to be in contact with several Pakistani Instagram accounts, which allegedly supplied him with jihadist material.

The group's primary objective, as stated by DIG Joshi, was to "attract youth towards AQIS ideology and incite them to uproot democracy in India to establish Sharia through violence." The busting of this module underscores the continuous threat posed by online radicalization and the sophisticated methods employed by terrorist groups to evade detection.

The arrested individuals have been charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). This operation serves as a stark reminder of the vigilance required to counter such threats and the ongoing commitment of Indian security agencies to safeguard national security. Further interrogation and digital forensics are underway to uncover the full extent of their network and potential wider conspiracies.