

NIA nabs 2 members of ISIS sleeper cell module from Mumbai airport

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Immigration officials at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on Friday arrested two wanted members of a sleeper module of ISIS after they arrived in India from Indonesia.

The two suspects — Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh alias Diaperwala and Talha Khan — were wanted in a 2023 case related to assembling and testing of IEDs in Pune, said the police. Both are from Kondhwa region in Pune. The case later became known as the "Pune ISIS module case".

The NIA, which later took them into custody, said the terror suspects were in hiding in Indonesia. The NIA produced them in the NIA special court, which remanded them in the agency's custody for 10 days.

Shaikh and Khan, on whom the NIA had announced cash rewards of `3 lakh each, were on the run for over two years and had NBWs issued against them by NIA special court in Mumbai.

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Sharing information on the two arrests, the anti-terror probe agency said they were named in the 2023 case along with eight other ISIS Pune sleeper module members, who have been arrested and are in judicial custody. Those previously arrested are Mohammed Imran Khan, Mohammed Yunus Saki, Abdul Kadir Pathan, Simab Nasiruddin Kazi, Zulfikar Ali Barodawala, Shamil Nachan, Akif Nachan and Shahnawaz Alam.

"They conspired to commit terrorist acts with the aim to disturb India's peace and communal harmony by waging war against India in furtherance of the ISIS agenda to establish Islamic rule in the country," the NIA said.

Shaikh and Khan were allegedly engaged in assembling IEDs at a house rented by Shaikh in Kondhwa.

During 2022-23, they allegedly organised and participated in a bomb-making workshop, besides carrying out a controlled explosion in the jungles of Pune to test an IED fabricated by them, the agency said.