

INS PROBED IN SALE OF IDS TO ILLEGAL ALIENS

Daily News (New York)

February 14, 2003, Friday, SPORTS FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS;

Length: 203 words

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Body

The Justice Department is investigating how a Queens man allegedly obtained authentic Immigration and Naturalization Service documents and sold them to **illegal aliens**.

The possible security breach at INS was disclosed in court papers filed in the federal case against Mohammad Bhatti of Jackson Heights.

Bhatti, 45, who was born in Pakistan, pleaded not guilty yesterday in Brooklyn Federal Court to charges that he sold fake identification documents to at least four people from his homeland.

When federal agents, acting on tips, nabbed Bhatti and the four customers recently, they were alarmed to find genuine INS stamps and legitimate INS permanent resident **alien** cards.

The internal INS **probe** is being conducted by the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Catherine Youssef and Justice Department Special Agent Sunil Walia declined to comment.

According to court papers, Bhatti directed customers to the Pakistani Embassy in New York to obtain fraudulent passports for a fee of \$10,000. The cost for a green card was about \$25,000, the court papers stated.

Bhatti's lawyer said his client worked in the construction industry and denied the charges.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: PASSPORTS & VISAS (90%); IMMIGRATION (90%); **ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS** (90%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (90%); JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS (90%); INVESTIGATIONS (90%); LAW COURTS & TRIBUNALS (78%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (78%); LAWYERS (78%); SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE FORCES (73%); EMBASSIES & CONSULATES (68%)

Company: US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (94%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (94%)

Organization: US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (94%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (94%)

Industry: LAWYERS (78%); CONSTRUCTION (52%)

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Geographic: NEW YORK, NY, USA (79%); NEW YORK, USA (73%); PAKISTAN (79%); UNITED STATES (79%)

Load-Date: February 14, 2003

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