

Overview:

The Central Government recently appointed a former Special Protection Group (SPG) chief as the Chairman of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO).

About National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO):

It is a technical intelligence Agency under the National Security Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office, India.

It was formed in 2004 to strengthen the country's national security apparatus.

It is under the direct control of the Prime Minister's Office and operates as an autonomous organization.

Primary Objective: Gather technical intelligence, which involves intercepting and analyzing communications signals, imagery intelligence, and cyber intelligence.

Other Functions:

It also provides technical assistance to other intelligence agencies in the country, including the Intelligence Bureau and Research and Analysis Wing.

It is responsible for maintaining a database of information related to technology and developing advanced tools and techniques for intelligence gathering.

It also conducts research and development activities in the field of technical intelligence.

NTRO is headed by a Chairman who reports directly to the Prime Minister of India.

Its headquarters is located in New Delhi, and it has operational centres in various parts of the country.

History :

The National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), originally known as the National Technical Facilities Organisation (NTFO), is a highly specialised technical intelligence gathering agency. While the agency does not affect the working of technical wings of various intelligence agencies, including those of the Indian Armed Forces, it acts as a super-feeder agency for providing technical intelligence to other agencies on internal and external security. The Group of Ministers (GOM) headed by then Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani had recommended the constitution of the NTFO as a state-of-the-art technical wing of intelligence gathering. Due to security concerns, the recommendation along with such other matters were not made public when the GOM report was published. The organisation does hi-tech surveillance jobs, including satellite monitoring, terrestrial monitoring, internet monitoring, considered vital for the national security apparatus. The NTRO would require over to procure different hi-tech equipment from specialised agencies around the globe to become fully functional. The officials have identified countries from where such gadgets could be procured but refused to reveal them due to 'security and other implications'. The Government had been working in this direction after the Kargil war in 1999 when the Subrahmanyam committee report pointed out weaknesses in intelligence gathering in the national security set up. Sources said the road-map for constitution of the National Technical Facilities Organisation was prepared by Dr A P J Abdul Kalam in October 2001 when he was the Principal Scientific Adviser. It was subsequently mentioned in the Group of Ministers report on internal security.

In September 2013, Madhya Pradesh government allotted 180 hectares of land to set up the NTRO at Borda village near Bhopal.

NTRO has been one of the most proactive members of US NSA-led 10-member counter-terrorism platform called SIGINT Seniors Pacific (SSPAC) for the last 10 years, a recent tranche of classified documents recently released by whistleblower Edward Snowden to a website suggests.

Brief :

Agency Name: National Technical Research Organisation

Motto: IAST

āno bhadra krtavo yantu vishwatah English: Let noble thoughts come to me from all directions

Headquarters: New Delhi, India

Budget: Classified

Employees: 1,081

Chief1 Name: Arun Sinha

Chief1 Position: Chairman

Parent Agency: Cabinet Secretariat

Minister Name: Narendra Modi

Minister1 Pfo: Prime Minister of India

Type: Agency

Responsibilities :

Gathering and analysing data from various sources, such as satellites, radars, communications, cyberspace, and other technical means.

Provide technical assistance and expertise to other intelligence and security agencies in the country.

Provide timely and actionable intelligence inputs to the government and the armed forces on matters of national security and strategic interest.

NTRO works closely with other intelligence agencies, such as RAW, Intelligence Bureau (IB), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Investigation Agency (NIA), etc., as well as with friendly foreign agencies.

NTRO's activities include :

Monitoring and intercepting foreign communications and signals.

Conducting cyber operations and counter-cyber activities.

Developing and operating state-of-the-art technical systems and platforms.

Providing geospatial intelligence and imagery analysis.

Conducting scientific and technical research and development.

Training and capacity building of personnel in technical intelligence.

Workforce :

NTRO workforce is drawn from various services and organisations, such as the Indian Armed Forces, Indian Police Service, Indian Revenue Service, Indian Telecom Service, Indian Engineering Service, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), etc.

NTRO also recruits technical experts and specialists from the private sector and academia.

Key Facts about Special Protection Group (SPG):

It is entrusted with the task of providing proximate security to the Prime Minister of India, the former Prime Minister and their immediate family members.

It was formed in 1985 after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as an executive body on the recommendation of the Birbal Nath committee.

Later on, it became a statutory body under Special Protection Group Act 1988.

Governance:

It is governed by the Cabinet secretariat of India.

SPG chief is an officer of the rank of inspector-general.

Conclusion :

NTRO is constantly evolving and adapting to the changing security environment and technological trends. NTRO strives to maintain its edge over its rivals and adversaries by investing in research and development, acquiring cutting-edge technologies, upgrading its infrastructure and systems, expanding its network and reach, strengthening its human resources, and fostering a culture of excellence and professionalism.