

# Khalistani militant nabbed in UP

**PUNJAB POLICE OPERATION** Pak-based ultra held on leads provided by other militants

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**CHANDIGARH:** In a major anti-terror operation, the Punjab police on Thursday claimed to have arrested a wanted militant from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, 15 years after he had reportedly escaped from Haryana police custody.

Allegedly trained in Pakistan by the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and made head of a revived Khalistani group, Rattandeep Singh hails from Rohar in Jind district of Haryana, and was wanted in connection with the 1999 bomb blasts at Chandigarh Passport Office and a railway bridge at Panipat. Arrested on Wednesday, he also faces charges of involvement in planting an IED (improvised explosive device) on the railway track on the Shahabad-Markanda bridge, and was wanted in a case of recovery of arms and explosives in Jind. He had escaped from police custody in 1999 after firing at Haryana cops, officials said.

Rattandeep was produced in an Amritsar court on Thursday and it remanded him to 10-day police custody.

Following leads gathered from militants nabbed in the past year, this is being seen as yet another operation planned by Punjab director general of police (DGP) Smedh Singh Saini and additional director general of police (ADGP), intelligence, HS Dhillon. A central agency was also part of the execution. "Peace in the state is our first priority," DGP Saini told HT after the arrest. The arrest comes after the Punjab police in February last year nabbed top militant Narain Singh alias Chaura following an eight-month opera-

## RATTANDEEP WAS PRODUCED IN AN AMRITSAR COURT ON THURSDAY AND IT REMANDED HIM TO 10-DAY POLICE CUSTODY

tion. The ISI had sent Chaura to attempt revival of terrorism, it is alleged.

Police said that in July 2014 the ISI planned to revive the Bhindranwale Tiger Force of Khalistan (BTFK). "Colonel Sahbaz Minhas of the ISI held joint meetings with Wadhawa Singh (of Babbar Khalsa International) and Rattandeep Singh to put in place the new arrangement, and the ISI hand-picked Rattandeep to head the BTFK," police said. As the new head of the revived BTFK, Rattandeep sneaked into India ostensibly to carry out terrorist strikes particularly during the festive season, police officials said.

## 'BASED NEAR LAHORE, TRAINED BY ISI NEAR ISLAMABAD'

**CHANDIGARH:** Rattandeep Singh, the alleged militant arrested by the Punjab police from UP, is a top operative of the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) and subsequently joined hands with the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), becoming the "operational head" of the outfit, according to a Punjab police dossier.

Based near Lahore and wanted in several offences in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh, Rattandeep had been living in Pakistan since

## DOSSIER ON RATTANDEEP

**What the police claim about the arrested 'militant'**

- In 1992-93, Rattandeep reached Pakistan via Thailand and then Germany on forged passport
- Arrested on May 9, 1996, while sneaking into India through Samba sector in J&K
- In 1999, he escaped custody of Haryana police
- Masterminded June 30, 1999, bomb blast at Sector 34, Chandigarh, and escaped to Pak
- Again came to India via Nepal in April 2010 for strikes in Punjab



■ Rattandeep Singh

- In May 2010, planted a bomb in a car near Circuit House, Amritsar, and escaped to Pak

## 'PAK PASSPORT RECOVERED'

A 19-member team of the State Special Operations Cell (SSOC) of the Punjab police arrested Rattandeep from the outskirts of Gorakhpur. The team was headed by inspectors Harvinderpal Singh and Balbir Singh of SSOC, Amritsar, and had been camping at Gorakhpur since September 15. Police claimed to have recovered a Pakistani passport and a Pak identity card in the name of 'Hussain Sheikh Zahid, son of Sheikh Nasiruddin' from Rattandeep along with 300 Pakistani rupees and ₹11,000 Indian currency.

1993, police said. "He had been coming to India to carry out strikes. He recently re-entered to carry out a major strike," police said.

He was allegedly the kingpin of a group of militants who had planted explosives in a vehicle at Amritsar near the Circuit House in May 2010; and for that purpose he had smuggled in a consignment of weapons and explosives from across the border. In that case, Pal Singh of France, Gurmukh Singh alias Ganna

and Makhan Singh alias Amla have been sentenced to 27 years, 17 years and 10 years in jail, respectively, while Narain Singh Chaura, six others and Pak national Mohd Isfaq are undergoing trial. Rattandeep and Chaura had absconded. Chaura was arrested in February 2013. With the arrest of Rattandeep, all operatives from the gang are in jail.

Before Rattandeep's escape to Pakistan, police said, in March 1992 he

went to Thailand, and then to Germany in May 1992. He shifted to Belgium in September 1992 and to Pakistan in March 1993 on a forged passport issued in the name of 'Harjinder Singh, son of Laxman Singh, resident of Bholath (Kapurthala)'.

Police said he underwent arms training twice, in August 1993 and June 1994, in a camp located in a hilly terrain about 45km from Islamabad under supervision of 'Pandey Khan of the ISI'. **HTC**

# Rajpura to get BSA bicycle plant; Apollo hospital in Amritsar soon

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**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab deputy chief minister Sukhbir Singh Badal on Thursday claimed to have achieved two major breakthroughs on the first day of his investment promotion visit to Chennai with the country's second biggest bicycle manufacturer BSA and Apollo hospitals announcing their decision to expand their operations in Punjab.

While the Murugappa group that owns the BSA brand has committed to establish a bicycle manufacturing plant in Rajpura, Apollo hospitals will establish a state-of-the-art hospital at Amritsar, according to Jangveer Singh, media adviser to the deputy CM.

On Thursday morning, Murugappa group chairman L Ramkumar told the deputy CM that the group had a tube manufacturing facility at SAS Nagar and now wanted to put up a world-class bicycle and tube manufacturing plant at Rajpura.

Ramkumar said the company had already earmarked an investment of ₹200 crore for the project and informed Sukhbir Badal that it was now looking for a land parcel of 60-70 acres for the project.

"Our experience in Punjab which has a congenial working atmosphere with zero labour issues has been very good. We



■ Apollo hospitals chairman Prathap C Reddy honouring deputy CM Sukhbir Singh Badal at a function in Chennai on Thursday. **HT PHOTO**

now want to take advantage of the concessions being offered by the state," Ramkumar said, according to the government's release.

The deputy CM also visited the Apollo hospital and was the guest of honour at the 31st anniversary celebrations of the hospital chain. The occasion also witnessed Apollo hospitals chairman Prathap C Reddy announcing that the chain would establish a state-of-the-art hospital in Amritsar. Reddy announced that a team from Apollo hospitals would visit Punjab in the forthcoming fortnight and that he would also visit Punjab to ensure speedy establishment of the project. Reddy said the hospital chain was keen to develop the skill sets of the medical fraternity following which the deputy

CM announced that Punjab was ready to give clearance to the hospital group to establish its own university for the purpose.

Sukhbir also visited Sankar Nethralaya and held discussions with its vice-chairman Dr T S Surendran. The deputy CM invited Sankar Nethralaya to help in establishment of a similar charitable hospital in Punjab.

In another meeting in the evening, TAFF group chairman and CEO Mallika Srinivasan also met the deputy CM during the course of which Sukhbir briefed her about the single window clearance system initiated by Punjab. Rane group chairman Harish Laxman also held a meeting with Sukhbir and discussed ways and means to increase the presence of the group, which makes auto components.

# Daduwal granted bail in Arms Act case, but will remain in jail

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**MANS:** Sikh preacher and Haryana Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee member Baljit Singh Daduwal, who is facing four cases in four police stations of Punjab, got bail on Thursday in one of the cases -- registered under the Arms Act by the Mansa police.

The Mansa police had filed the case on August 27, claiming that they had recovered a vehicle with cartridges and a fake registration certificate.

Mansa additional sessions judge Rajkumar Garg granted the bail to the radical Sikh

leader and preacher.

Daduwal's lawyer Harinder Pal Singh Tiwana said, "The police have deliberately filed false cases and all of them are politically motivated. We argued in the court that if we are to go by the claims made by the police, even then the offences don't fall under the grave crimes category. The court was convinced and granted bail to Daduwal."

He said that as Daduwal had got bail in one case, bail applications in other cases would also be moved soon.

On August 11, Daduwal and two of his followers had got bail in a case registered by the Jaitu police in Faridkot district under

the Arms Act.

However, Daduwal will not be released as he still faces two cases of attempt to murder at Jaitu and Bhikhi in Mansa. These cases relate to clashes with Sirsa-based Dera Sacha Sauda followers registered in 2009 and 2011.

Earlier, replying to the allegations that the police were victimising Daduwal by reopening the old cases, the SSP said, "We are not indulging in vendetta against Daduwal. We are following all legal procedure while filing the cases. On being asked, we will produce the supporting documents before the court."

# Panel on wetlands reconstituted

**CHANDIGARH:** The Punjab government has reconstituted the steering committee for the conservation and management of wetlands in Punjab under the chairmanship of the chief secretary.

The state's principal secretary, science and technology and environment, would be the committee's vice-chairman, a spokesman here said. The state is already coordinating with various agencies engaged in revamping the wetland projects, he added.

Punjab is home to three internationally acclaimed wetlands — Harikie, Kanjli and Rupnagar — besides other areas.

Other members of the committee would be the additional secretary, union ministry of environment and forests, a representative of the army, Punjab's financial commissioner (development) and the principal secretaries of departments of forests and wildlife and irrigation; chief wildlife warden; chief conservator of

soils; executive director of the Punjab State Council for Science and Technology; member secretary of Punjab Pollution Control Board; member secretary of the Punjab Biodiversity Board; deputy commissioners of Kapurthala, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur, Rupnagar and Pathankot; the Khadoor Sahib MP; Guru Nanak Dev University vice-chancellor; a representative of the Zoological Survey of India, Dehradun; and environmentalist Balbir Singh Seechewal. **HTC**

# CM sanctions ₹70 lakh for Qila Sultanpur Lodhi

**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal on Thursday sanctioned ₹70 lakh for the restoration and conservation of the historic Lahori Gate and Delhi Gate of the famous Qila Sultanpur Lodhi in Kapurthala district.

Badal had recently deputed a team of cultural affairs led by the secretary, cultural affairs,

Raji P Srivastva to visit the site for assessing the damage caused to these monuments due to recent heavy rain. The team sought ₹45 lakh for the conservation of the crumbled Lahori Gate and ₹25 lakh for the preservation of Delhi Gate, which too was in a dilapidated condition and needed immediate repair, a spokesman said. **HTC**

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