Sikh Disinformation Lab

MISLEADING

Millennium Post report on Nikhil Gupta sentencing labels target a "Sikh extremist" without basis

A Millennium Post article on the 235-month US sentence handed to Nikhil Gupta accurately reports the court proceedings but describes the intended victim, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, as a "Khalistani Terrorist" and "Sikh extremist". The Lab assesses that characterization as Misleading.

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20 November 2026

NARRATIVES
Labelling Sikh Individuals as Terrorists Without Evidence · Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism

OUR ASSESSMENT

Press Trust of India's reporting on Nikhil Gupta's November 20, 2026 sentencing documents his 235-month prison term, guilty plea and the proceedings concerning the assassination conspiracy targeting Sikh political activist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

However, the report introduces the intended assassination victim as a “Sikh extremist” without establishing the legal or evidentiary basis for that characterization. The US Department of Justice identifies Pannun as an attorney and political activist targeted in connection with his advocacy for Khalistan.

The report provides important courtroom information, including Gupta's apology and Pannun's account of how the assassination threat affected his legal practice. The official prosecution record additionally identifies an Indian government employee as directing the conspiracy and documents communications referring to Hardeep Singh Nijjar's assassination.

The principal potential information-integrity concern is the use of an unqualified criminalizing description of the intended victim alongside an otherwise substantially accurate account of the criminal proceedings.

THE CLAIM

Indian man gets over 19 Years in US jail over plot to kill Khalistani Terrorist Gurpatwant Pannun

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On 20 November 2026, the Indian outlet Millennium Post published a report headlined "Indian man gets over 19 Years in US jail over plot to kill Khalistani Terrorist Gurpatwant Pannun". The article, carried from Press Trust of India reporting, states that Indian national Nikhil Gupta "was sentenced to 235 months in jail by a US court on Friday for his involvement in a murder-for-hire plot against a Sikh extremist on American soil".

The verdict

The Lab assesses the item as Misleading. The core reporting of the criminal proceedings is substantially accurate. The problem is the unqualified criminalizing description applied to the intended victim of the plot.

Claim by claim

1. That a US court sentenced Nikhil Gupta to 235 months in jail: True. PTI's reporting on the 20 November 2026 sentencing documents the 235-month prison term.

2. That the sentence related to a murder-for-hire plot: True. The proceedings concerned a murder-for-hire conspiracy.

3. That the plot targeted Gurpatwant Pannun: True. The proceedings concerned an assassination conspiracy targeting Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

4. That Pannun is a "Khalistani terrorist" and a "Sikh extremist": Misleading. The report applies these descriptions without establishing any legal or evidentiary basis for them. The US Department of Justice identifies Pannun as an attorney and political activist who was targeted in connection with his advocacy for Khalistan. Presenting an unqualified criminalizing label for the intended victim of an assassination plot, in the headline and opening line of an otherwise accurate court report, is the principal information-integrity concern in the item.

5. That the plot took place on American soil: True. The conspiracy targeted Pannun in the United States. The Lab notes the analyst's observation that this accurate element sits alongside the misleading characterization of the target.

6. That the conspiracy involved an Indian government employee: True. The official prosecution record identifies an Indian government employee as directing the conspiracy. The same record documents communications referring to the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

7. That Gupta's criminal responsibility was established by his guilty plea: True. The reporting documents Gupta's guilty plea.

Context

The report contains material courtroom detail, including Gupta's apology and Pannun's account of how the assassination threat affected his legal practice. That detail is not in dispute. The issue is narrower and specific: a factual account of a criminal case is framed around a description of the victim that the reporting itself does not substantiate, and which is inconsistent with how the prosecuting authority describes him.

Readers encountering this report should treat the sentencing facts (the term, the plea, the target, the location of the plot, the involvement of an Indian government employee) as accurately reported, and should treat the "Khalistani terrorist" and "Sikh extremist" descriptions as characterizations advanced by the publication rather than established fact.

CLAIMS ASSESSED

01	A US court sentenced Nikhil Gupta to 235 months in jail.	TRUE
02	Gupta was sentenced for his involvement in a murder-for-hire plot.	TRUE
03	The murder-for-hire plot targeted Gurpatwant Pannun.	TRUE
04	Gurpatwant Pannun is a Khalistani terrorist and a Sikh extremist.	MISLEADING
05	The murder-for-hire plot took place on American soil.	TRUE
06	The conspiracy involved an Indian government employee.	TRUE
07	Gupta's criminal responsibility was established by his guilty plea.	TRUE

SOURCES

01 https://www.millenniumpost.in/big-stories/us-court-sentences-indian-national-nikhil-gupta-to-235-months-in-jail-in-murder-for-hire-p

02 Press Trust of India reporting on the 20 November 2026 sentencing of Nikhil Gupta

03 United States Department of Justice prosecution record in the murder-for-hire conspiracy against Gurpatwant Singh Pannun

Sikh Disinformation Lab

About Sikh Disinformation Lab

Sikh Disinformation Lab is an independent, evidence-based programme founded and hosted by the World Sikh Organization of Canada. It monitors, analyses and publicly documents disinformation affecting Sikhs.

The Lab examines claims against evidence, publishes assessments with that evidence attached, and tracks coordinated campaigns over time. Every published assessment names what was claimed, where it appeared, what the review found, and what that assessment rests on. Where an item makes several distinct claims, each is assessed separately.

Assessments are made against the methodology framework in force at the time of publication. That framework is public, versioned, and reviewed at each phase gate; a material change produces a new version rather than a silent edit. The full method is published at sikhdisinfolab.ca/method.

Corrections are dated entries, never silent edits. Where a published assessment is found to be wrong or incomplete, the correction is recorded against it and listed at sikhdisinfolab.ca/corrections. If you believe something published here is inaccurate, write to the programme and it will be reviewed.

Assessments are the responsibility of Sikh Disinformation Lab.

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