Sikh Disinformation Lab

MISLEADING

Navbharat Times video on FBI warning to Pannun rated misleading by Sikh Disinformation Lab review

A 16 October video from navbharattimes.indiatimes.com reports Gurpatwant Singh Pannun's claim that the FBI warned him of a threat to his life, but frames it dismissively and omits the documented record of threats against him. The Lab's review records a verdict of disinformation, misleading in nature, severity 3 of 5.

PUBLISHED
19 October 2026

SOURCE POSTED
16 October 2026

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

OUR ASSESSMENT

The October 16 Navbharat Times video reports Gurpatwant Singh Pannun's claim that FBI agents warned him of an imminent threat to his life ahead of his planned travel to Canada for the Edmonton Khalistan referendum. The central statement is accurately attributed to Pannun's October 15 interview with CBS News. However, the video's published headline and description frame the development through dismissive references to Pannun's fear and repeated use of the term terrorist, without adequately explaining the documented history of threats against him.

The reported warning cannot be independently confirmed solely from Pannun's account, and CBS stated that the FBI had not responded to its request for comment. Nevertheless, it is inaccurate to treat the wider assassination concern as merely speculative. In 2023, U.S. authorities disrupted a murder-for-hire conspiracy targeting Pannun. In February 2026, Nikhil Gupta pleaded guilty in federal court to conspiracy charges arising from that plot. U.S. prosecutors have also charged former Indian intelligence officer Vikash Yadav with directing the operation; those allegations against Yadav remain subject to judicial determination. India has denied involvement.

Pannun additionally reported receiving FBI and RCMP warnings in August 2026. Canada's October 2024 RCMP statement documented multiple credible threats to life involving members of the pro-Khalistan community and alleged connections between Indian government agents and serious criminal activity.

Navbharat Times repeatedly identifies Pannun as a terrorist without consistently explaining that this designation originates under Indian law. His designation is an established legal fact in India, but it does not negate his entitlement to personal security or determine the credibility of a reported threat under American or Canadian law.

THE CLAIM

Khalistani Terrorist Pannu: [illegible]BI (2[illegible]M

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On 16 October 2026, the Hindi-language outlet Navbharat Times (navbharattimes.indiatimes.com) published a video item headlined "Khalistani Terrorist Pannu: [illegible]BI (2[illegible]M translation, that "terrorist Pannun" is gripped by fear for his life and that the FBI has issued an alert.

The accompanying description states that Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, described as a "Khalistani terrorist" who "spews venom against India while sitting in America," has "once again" begun to fear for his life.

What it claimed

The item reports Pannun's claim that FBI agents warned him of an imminent threat to his life ahead of his planned travel to Canada for the Edmonton Khalistan referendum.

What the review found

The Lab's analyst records the item as disinformation, with the nuance that it is misleading rather than wholly fabricated, and assigns a severity of 3 out of 5.

The central factual statement in the video is accurately attributed. Pannun made the claim in an interview with CBS News on 15 October, and the Navbharat Times item reports it as his claim.

The problem identified in the review is one of framing and omission. The headline and description present the development through dismissive references to Pannun's fear and through repeated use of the term "terrorist," without adequately explaining the documented history of threats against him.

The analyst notes that the reported FBI warning cannot be independently confirmed on the basis of Pannun's account alone, and that CBS stated the FBI had not responded to its request for comment. That caveat, however, does not extend to the broader assassination concern, which the review finds it inaccurate to treat as merely speculative.

In 2023, U.S. authorities disrupted a murder-for-hire conspiracy targeting Pannun. In February 2026, Nikhil Gupta pleaded guilty in U.S. federal court to conspiracy charges arising from that plot. U.S. prosecutors have also charged former Indian intelligence officer Vikash Yadav with directing the operation; those allegations against Yadav remain subject to judicial determination. India has denied involvement.

Pannun has additionally reported receiving warnings from the FBI and the RCMP in August 2026. In October 2024, the RCMP publicly documented multiple credible threats to life involving members of the pro-Khalistan community in Canada, and alleged connections between agents of the Indian government and serious criminal activity.

On the "terrorist" label

The review also addresses the item's repeated identification of Pannun as a terrorist without consistently explaining that the designation originates under Indian law. The analyst treats that designation as an established legal fact within India. It does not, however, negate his entitlement to personal security, nor does it determine the credibility of a reported threat as assessed under American or Canadian law.

The effect of the framing is to invite audiences to dismiss a reported security warning on the basis of the subject's legal status in one jurisdiction, rather than on the available evidence in the jurisdictions where the threat was reported.

Context

The Lab has logged the item under the Labelling Sikh Individuals as Terrorists Without Evidence narrative. The outlet is based in India, and the item was captured in English-language monitoring with Hindi-language content.

The Lab's assessment is directed at the content of the published item — specifically its headline framing and the omission of relevant documented context — and not at any assertion regarding the intent of those who produced it. The review records no finding on motive or coordination.

SOURCES

01 https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/video/news/terrorist-pannun-fears-for-his-life-claims-the-fbi-has-alerted-him/videoshow/1349

02 The Lab's analyst review record (the Labelling Sikh Individuals as Terrorists Without Evidence narrative), verdict: Disinformation / Misleading, severity 3

03 CBS News interview with Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, 15 October 2026 (as cited in the Lab's review)

04 U.S. federal proceedings: guilty plea of Nikhil Gupta, February 2026; charges against Vikash Yadav (as cited in the Lab's review)

05 RCMP public statement on threats to members of the pro-Khalistan community, October 2024 (as cited in the Lab's review)

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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