Sikh Disinformation Lab

MISLEADING

New India Abroad opinion piece on Punjab's diaspora politics assessed as Misleading

An opinion article published by New India Abroad on 6 November 2026 argues that overseas Sikh political advocacy is a source of division in Punjab ahead of the 2027 Assembly election. The Sikh Disinformation Lab finds the piece Misleading: it blends lawful political expression with extremism, presents Canadian intelligence findings selectively, and stretches an opinion poll beyond what it measured.

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10 November 2026

SOURCE POSTED
6 November 2026

NARRATIVES
Labelling Sikhs as “Good” or “Bad” Sikhs · Portraying Foreign Governments as Safe Havens for Sikh Activists · Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism · Portraying Sikh Protests as Extremist Activity

OUR ASSESSMENT

What was published

On November 6, 2026, New India Abroad published an opinion piece by Rashi Randev titled "The Power of Diaspora Politics in Punjab." The article examines the influence of overseas Punjabis on the state's upcoming 2027 Assembly election, discussing remittances, political fundraising, diaspora engagement and the growing role of Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De).

While acknowledging the diaspora's economic and cultural contributions, the author argues that radical overseas voices are attempting to influence Punjab's political direction. The article associates Khalistan-related activism in Canada with separatist networks, foreign funding and threats to democratic stability. It also suggests that Canada's renewed diplomatic engagement with India reflects greater recognition of the extremist threat and uses polling data to argue that voters in Punjab have rejected separatist politics.

The Lab's assessment

The Sikh Disinformation Lab (SDL) identifies a significant framing concern in the article's portrayal of Sikh diaspora political participation. The piece draws a distinction between overseas Punjabis contributing to India's economic development and those advocating for Khalistan, whose political activity is presented as a possible source of division and instability.

The central issue is the article's tendency to associate Sikh political self-determination with extremism without consistently distinguishing lawful advocacy from violent activity. While the existence of extremist networks is documented, that does not establish that diaspora political participation, support for Khalistan or non-binding referendums are inherently extremist.

The article's presentation of Canadian intelligence findings is particularly incomplete. It cites Canada's recognition of Khalistani extremism as evidence that India's concerns have been vindicated, but omits CSIS's explicit distinction between peaceful Khalistan advocacy and violent extremism. It also leaves out Canada's findings concerning Indian foreign interference and threats targeting members of the Sikh community.

The article further suggests that improving Canada–India relations demonstrates a shift in Canada's position toward Sikh separatist activism. However, diplomatic cooperation does not establish that Canada has withdrawn its earlier security findings or changed its position on lawful political expression.

Another important concern is the use of Punjab's electoral polling. The cited SCORE survey measures support for political parties ahead of the 2027 election. It does not measure public attitudes toward Khalistan or Sikh self-determination. Using these figures to suggest that Punjabis have collectively rejected the movement gives the poll a meaning it cannot independently support.

The article also portrays the diaspora's influence as lacking accountability, despite acknowledging that established Punjab political parties actively engage overseas supporters. No specific evidence is presented demonstrating that the Sikh diaspora's lawful political activity has manipulated the electoral process.

The broader concern is how the article defines legitimate diaspora involvement. Financial contributions, investment and support for India's development are presented positively, while political advocacy challenging India's territorial position is associated with radicalism and foreign interference.

The Lab's concern is the selective presentation of evidence and the failure to distinguish criminal conduct from political expression. These omissions can encourage readers to interpret Sikh diaspora activism through a security framework even where the activity being discussed is lawful.

THE CLAIM

The Power of Diaspora Politics in Punjab

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On 6 November 2026, New India Abroad published an opinion piece by Rashi Randev titled "The Power of Diaspora Politics in Punjab." The article examines the influence of overseas Punjabis on Punjab's upcoming 2027 Assembly election, discussing remittances, political fundraising, diaspora engagement and the growing role of Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De), launched in January 2025, which has named jailed MP Amritpal Singh among its figures.

The piece opens with the framing that "India welcomes its diaspora's love for Punjab. It cannot accept that love being used as a delivery system for division."

What it claimed

While acknowledging the diaspora's economic and cultural contributions, the author argues that radical overseas voices are attempting to shape Punjab's political direction. The article associates Khalistan-related activism in Canada with separatist networks, foreign funding and threats to democratic stability. It also suggests that Canada's renewed diplomatic engagement with India reflects greater recognition of an extremist threat, and uses polling data to argue that voters in Punjab have rejected separatist politics.

The Lab's assessment

The Lab assesses the article as Misleading, with a severity rating of 3.

The central issue is the article's tendency to associate Sikh political self-determination with extremism without consistently distinguishing lawful advocacy from violent activity. The existence of extremist networks is documented. That does not establish that diaspora political participation, support for Khalistan or non-binding referendums are inherently extremist.

The Lab reviewed seven claims.

Claim 1: Diaspora funding and messaging operate without local accountability. Unsupported. This is an interpretive assertion. The author provides no systematic evidence of unregulated funding, electoral manipulation or unlawful activity by the particular diaspora actors discussed. The article also portrays diaspora influence as lacking accountability while acknowledging that established Punjab political parties actively engage overseas supporters.

Claim 2: Overseas Sikh identity and historical narratives are pushed into Punjab without fact-checking. Unsupported. The article identifies platforms such as WhatsApp and YouTube, but offers no specific misleading content, accounts, reach data or dissemination chain.

Claim 3: CSIS identifies Canada-based Khalistani extremism as a security concern. Misleading. CSIS identifies a limited violent-extremist threat while explicitly distinguishing peaceful Khalistan advocacy from extremism. The article omits that distinction.

Claim 4: Canada's intelligence assessment proves India's warnings were correct. Misleading. The article excludes Canadian intelligence findings concerning Indian foreign interference and transnational repression directed at Sikh communities.

Claim 5: Canada's diplomatic reset signifies that Ottawa is no longer tolerating separatist activism. Misleading. Renewed bilateral engagement is documented, but no cited Canadian policy change establishes the author's broader conclusion. Diplomatic cooperation does not establish that Canada has withdrawn its earlier security findings or altered its position on lawful political expression.

Claim 6: A poll places Waris Punjab De at 8.5 per cent support and projects two to six seats, proving Punjabis have rejected Khalistan. Unsupported. The cited SCORE survey measures support for political parties ahead of the 2027 election. It does not measure public attitudes toward Khalistan or Sikh self-determination. Voting intentions toward one party cannot measure a separate political or constitutional question the poll did not ask.

Claim 7: Punjab's voters have repeatedly rejected separatist politics. Unsupported, and overgeneralized. Electoral history is more complex: Amritpal Singh and Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa were elected as independent MPs in 2024. Neither result constitutes a referendum on Khalistan.

Context

The broader concern is how the article defines legitimate diaspora involvement. Financial contributions, investment and support for India's development are presented positively, while political advocacy that challenges India's territorial position is associated with radicalism and foreign interference.

The Lab's concern is the selective presentation of evidence and the failure to distinguish criminal conduct from political expression. These omissions can encourage readers to interpret Sikh diaspora activism through a security framework even where the activity being discussed is lawful.

CLAIMS ASSESSED

01	Diaspora funding and messaging operate without local accountability.	UNSUPPORTED
02	Overseas Sikh identity and historical narratives are pushed into Punjab without fact-checking.	UNSUPPORTED
03	CSIS identifies Canada-based Khalistani extremism as a security concern.	MISLEADING
04	Canada's intelligence assessment proves India's warnings were correct.	MISLEADING
05	Canada's diplomatic reset signifies that Ottawa is no longer tolerating separatist activism.	MISLEADING
06	A poll places Waris Punjab De at 8.5% support and projects 2–6 seats. The poll proves Punjabis have rejected Khalistan.	UNSUPPORTED
07	Punjab's voters have repeatedly rejected separatist politics.	UNSUPPORTED

SOURCES

01 https://www.newindiaabroad.com/english/opinion/the-power-of-diaspora-politics-in-punjab

02 CSIS Public report: distinguishes non-violent Khalistan advocacy from violent extremism and addresses Indian foreign interference. *Archive snapshot · Retrieved 2026-11-10.*

03 Khadoor Sahib Election Result for Amirtpal Singh *Other · Retrieved 2026-11-10.*

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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