Sikh Disinformation Lab

MISLEADING

Swarajya trade report presents India's terrorist designation of Nijjar as established fact

A 22 September 2026 Swarajya article on India–Canada CEPA talks describes Hardeep Singh Nijjar as a "Khalistani terrorist" without attributing the designation to the Indian government. The Lab assesses the item as misleading, with a severity rating of 3 of 5.

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SOURCE POSTED
22 September 2026

NARRATIVES
Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism · Portraying Foreign Governments as Safe Havens for Sikh Activists · Labelling Sikh Individuals as Terrorists Without Evidence

OUR ASSESSMENT

India designated Nijjar as an individual terrorist under its UAPA framework in July 2020 and alleged his involvement with the Khalistan Tiger Force. However, the article does not qualify the description as an Indian government designation. Nijjar was a Canadian citizen and was not convicted of terrorism in Canada. Canadian official reporting does not refer to him simply as a terrorist and instead identifies him as a Canadian citizen and Sikh community leader. Presenting the Indian designation without attribution converts a disputed foreign-state designation into an apparently established fact. He was never charged or convicted of any offence in Canada. Four people face first-degree murder charges for killing him, and the Government of Canada has stated agents of the Indian state were involved. The paragraph that follows compounds it: Trudeau "made allegations," India "denied involvement and accused Canada of harbouring Sikh separatists." The allegation and the denial are given equal weight. The four murder charges are not mentioned anywhere. Tha article also focuses on the point how the trade relations The killing was obviously the underlying event, but bilateral relations did not simply collapse because Nijjar was killed. Relations deteriorated after Canadian authorities began investigating possible Indian state involvement and Trudeau publicly disclosed that Canadian security agencies were pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between Indian government agents and Nijjar's killing. Swarajya describes Hardeep Singh Nijjar as a “Khalistani terrorist” without qualifying the designation. Nijjar was designated an individual terrorist by the Government of India under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in 2020, which alleged his involvement with the Khalistan Tiger Force. However, he was a Canadian citizen and was not convicted of terrorism in Canada. Canadian government and security-agency records refer to Nijjar as a Canadian citizen and Sikh community leader rather than treating India's designation as a Canadian legal finding.

The article also reduces the later Canada–India dispute to allegations made by former prime minister Justin Trudeau. While Canada's initial public statement referred to credible allegations, subsequent RCMP investigations publicly reported links between agents of the Government of India and homicides and violent activity in Canada. CSIS has likewise described links between the Government of India and Nijjar's murder in its public reporting.

THE CLAIM

India-Canada Trade Push Accelerates As Both Sides Aim To Conclude CEPA Negotiations By December G20 Summit

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On 22 September 2026, the Indian outlet Swarajya (swarajyamag.com) published "India-Canada Trade Push Accelerates As Both Sides Aim To Conclude CEPA Negotiations By December G20 Summit." The article reports that Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney confirmed India and Canada are aiming to conclude trade negotiations by the G20 summit.

In describing the bilateral backdrop, the article refers to relations "which collapsed following the 2023 killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia."

The verdict

The Lab assesses the item as disinformation, misleading in character, containing inaccuracies. Two claims were reviewed and rated false: the characterisation of Hardeep Singh Nijjar as a "Khalistani terrorist," and the framing that relations collapsed following his killing.

The finding concerns the framing and omissions in the article's background passage. It is not a finding about the trade reporting itself.

An unattributed foreign designation

The Government of India designated Nijjar as an individual terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in July 2020, alleging his involvement with the Khalistan Tiger Force. The Swarajya article does not identify the description as an Indian government designation.

Nijjar was a Canadian citizen. He was never charged with or convicted of any offence in Canada, and was not convicted of terrorism in Canada. Canadian government and security-agency records refer to him as a Canadian citizen and Sikh community leader; they do not treat India's designation as a Canadian legal finding.

Presenting the designation without attribution converts a disputed foreign-state designation into an apparently established fact. That is the basis of the misleading rating.

Omission of the criminal proceedings

Four people face first-degree murder charges in connection with Nijjar's killing. The Government of Canada has stated that agents of the Indian state were involved.

The murder charges are not mentioned anywhere in the article.



The article describes Hardeep Singh Nijjar as a “Khalistani terrorist” without qualifying that this was an Indian government designation, while characterizing Canadian concerns over possible Indian government involvement in his killing as allegations made by former prime minister Justin Trudeau. — Source: Swarajya

Equal weight to allegation and denial

The passage that follows compounds the problem. It records that former prime minister Justin Trudeau "made allegations" and that India "denied involvement and accused Canada of harbouring Sikh separatists." The allegation and the denial are presented with equal weight.

The article also reduces the subsequent Canada–India dispute to allegations made by a former prime minister. Canada's initial public statement did refer to credible allegations. Subsequent RCMP investigations, however, publicly reported links between agents of the Government of India and homicides and violent activity in Canada. CSIS has likewise described links between the Government of India and Nijjar's murder in its public reporting.

What actually deteriorated, and when

The article's causal framing — that relations collapsed following the killing — is imprecise. The killing was the underlying event, but relations did not deteriorate simply because Nijjar was killed.

Relations deteriorated after Canadian authorities began investigating possible Indian state involvement, and after Trudeau publicly disclosed that Canadian security agencies were pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Indian government and the killing.

The distinction matters. As written, the passage attributes the diplomatic rupture to a homicide rather than to the allegation of foreign state involvement in that homicide on Canadian soil.

Context

The Lab records this item under the Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism narrative. The severity rating of 3 of 5 reflects that the inaccuracies appear in background framing within an otherwise routine trade report, rather than as the central assertion of the piece — and that the framing nonetheless presents a contested Indian designation to readers as settled fact while omitting the Canadian criminal proceedings.

The Lab's assessment addresses the content as published. It makes no finding as to intent.

CLAIMS ASSESSED

01	Hardeep Singh Nijjar was a Khalistani terrorist.	FALSE
02	the relations collapsed following the 2023 killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar…	FALSE

SOURCES

01 https://swarajyamag.com/economy/india-canada-trade-push-accelerates-as-both-sides-aim-to-conclude-cepa-negotiations-by-decem

02 The Lab's analyst review record (verdict: Disinformation / Misleading; severity 3; the Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism narrative)

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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