Sikh Disinformation Lab

MISLEADING

Udayavani headline on Doval summons is Misleading: service had already been ordered

A November 20, 2026 report by Udayavani stated that a US court was "likely to issue summons" to NSA Ajit Doval and former RAW chief Samant Goel. The Lab's review finds the framing Misleading: the Southern District of New York had already authorized and directed service through Indian courts.

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

OUR ASSESSMENT

Udayavani's November 20, 2026 report describes US judicial proceedings involving National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and former RAW chief Samant Goel in connection with a civil lawsuit filed by Sikh political activist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

Although the article acknowledges that the US court directed service through a Delhi court, its headline incorrectly suggests that the issuance of summons remained a future possibility. The Southern District of New York had already authorized and directed service through Indian courts.

A further concern is the article's unqualified description of Pannun as a “Khalistani terrorist.” This designation originates from India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and is not a finding made by the US court hearing his civil lawsuit.

The report reflects a recurring framing pattern in which Indian domestic security designations are incorporated into reporting about Sikh political activists without clear attribution. Its principal concerns are misleading terminology, insufficient procedural precision and limited contextual information concerning the assassination-plot proceedings.

THE CLAIM

US court likely to issue summons to NSA Ajit Doval soon

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On November 20, 2026, the Indian outlet Udayavani published a report headlined "US court likely to issue summons to NSA Ajit Doval soon." The report states that a US court is likely to issue summons to National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and former Research and Analysis Wing chief Samant Goel "soon" in connection with a lawsuit filed by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, whom the article describes as a "Khalistani terrorist." The report also notes that the US court directed service through a Delhi court.

The Lab's assessment

The Lab assesses the item as Misleading, with a severity rating of 3. The underlying subject matter is real, but the report contains inaccuracies in its characterisation of the procedural posture and in its unattributed terminology.

Claim by claim

Claim 1: A US court was likely to issue summons to Ajit Doval and Samant Goel soon. Verdict: Misleading. The headline presents the issuance of summons as a future possibility. The Southern District of New York had already authorized and directed service through Indian courts. The article itself acknowledges that the US court directed

service through a Delhi court, which sits uneasily with the headline's framing of the step as still pending. The effect is to misstate where the proceedings stand.

Claim 2: Gurpatwant Singh Pannun filed a lawsuit concerning an alleged assassination conspiracy. Verdict: True. The civil lawsuit exists and is the subject of the proceedings the report describes.

Claim 3: Pannun is a "Khalistani terrorist." Verdict: Misleading. The report applies the label without qualification or attribution. The designation originates from India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. It is not a finding made by the US court hearing Pannun's civil lawsuit. Presenting a domestic Indian security designation as an unattributed descriptor, in a report about proceedings before a US court, conveys to readers that the characterisation carries judicial weight in the forum being described. It does not.

Claim 4: The US court directed service of summons through a Delhi court. Verdict: not yet assessed. The Lab has not ruled on this claim. The analyst records that the account is incomplete, because the order specifies three Delhi district courts rather than one. No verdict is issued here.

Context

Pannun is a Sikh political activist. The proceedings referred to in the report are civil proceedings in the United States arising from an alleged assassination conspiracy.

The report reflects a recurring framing pattern in which Indian domestic security designations are carried into reporting about Sikh political activists without clear attribution. Where a label derives from one jurisdiction's statutory process, readers need that provenance stated in order to weigh it, particularly when the story concerns litigation in a different jurisdiction that has made no such determination.

The principal concerns identified in this assessment are misleading terminology, insufficient procedural precision and limited contextual information about the assassination-plot proceedings. The Lab's assessment addresses the content of the report, not the intentions of those who produced it.

##The significance of the terminology

One of the most consequential features of the report is its use of India's terrorism designation when introducing the person seeking judicial protection and accountability.

This framing places the plaintiff's political identity at the centre of a story about allegations of an assassination conspiracy.

The distinction is important because a foreign government's designation of a political activist does not determine the legality of violence directed against that individual.

The United States pursued criminal charges against Gupta based on his participation in an assassination conspiracy, irrespective of India's position on Pannun's advocacy.

Accurate coverage should therefore identify the plaintiff, explain any relevant foreign designation and distinguish those matters from the allegations against the defendants.

Without that distinction, readers may interpret an Indian domestic security classification as an internationally established finding about the intended victim.

##Recurring narrative patterns

The article illustrates a recurring pattern in which Indian domestic security terminology is incorporated into international legal reporting concerning Sikh political activists.

-Adoption of Indian security designations without attribution

The report describes Pannun through India's terrorism-related classification without explaining its legal origin. This can blur the distinction between a designation made under Indian legislation and findings established in foreign judicial proceedings.

-Shifting attention toward the political identity of the intended victim

The article introduces the plaintiff through a security-related label before presenting the allegations concerning an attempt on his life. The resulting framing emphasizes the identity assigned to the plaintiff rather than the nature of the alleged criminal conduct.

-Imprecise presentation of legal accountability proceedings

The headline describes summons as a future possibility despite the existence of a court order authorizing and directing service. This can create uncertainty about the status of legal proceedings involving senior Indian officials.
These patterns are relevant to the lab's broader examination of media narratives concerning Sikh self-determination and transnational repression.

Verdict

Misleading. The headline misrepresents the stage of the US proceedings, and the unattributed "Khalistani terrorist" descriptor imports a designation that the US court hearing the civil lawsuit has not made.

CLAIMS ASSESSED

01	A US court was likely to issue summons to Ajit Doval and Samant Goel soon	MISLEADING
02	Gurpatwant Singh Pannun filed a lawsuit concerning an alleged assassination conspiracy.	TRUE
03	Pannun is a “Khalistani terrorist.”	MISLEADING
04	The US court directed service of summons through a Delhi court.	NOT ASSESSED

SOURCES

01 https://udayavani.com/national/us-court-likely-to-issue-summons-to-nsa-ajit-doval-soon-879642?lang=en

02 United States District Court, Southern District of New York — Order Directing Service Through Indian Courts, November 2026

03 Primary judicial document confirming authorization of service on Ajit Doval and Samant Goel through designated Delhi district courts.

04 https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/new-york/nysdce/1%3A2024cv07021/628431/48/0.pdf

05 United States District Court — Pannun v. Government of India, Civil Docket

06 Judicial docket documenting the September 2024 civil lawsuit and subsequent procedural developments.

07 https://dockets.justia.com/docket/new-york/nysdce/1%3A2024cv07021/628431

08 Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs — UAPA Terrorist Designations, July 1, 2020

09 Primary confirmation that India designated Gurpatwant Singh Pannun under its domestic anti-terrorism legislation.

10 https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1635710

11 Bar & Bench — US Court Seeks Assistance from Delhi Courts to Serve Summons

12 Independent legal reporting concerning the existing court order, the relevant Delhi courts and the attempted service of judicial documents.

13 https://www.barandbench.com/amp/story/news/litigation/us-court-seeks-help-from-delhi-courts-to-serve-summons-on-ajit-doval-ex-

14 Hindustan Times — US Court Directs Pannun Case Documents to Delhi Courts, November 18, 2026

15 Contemporaneous reporting confirming the court's decision before Udayavani's November 20 article.

16 https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/us-court-directs-gurpatwant-singh-pannun-case-documents-to-be-sent-to-delhi-courts-

17 United States Department of Justice — Charges Against Indian Government Employee Vikash Yadav, October 2024

18 Official US criminal prosecution record describing allegations concerning the role of an Indian government employee in the attempted assassination conspiracy.

19 https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-charges-against-indian-government-employee-connection-foi

20 United States Department of Justice — Nikhil Gupta Guilty Plea, February 13, 2026

21 Official confirmation of Gupta's guilty plea in the assassination conspiracy targeting Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

22 https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/indian-national-pleads-guilty-plotting-assassinate-us-citizen-new-york-city

23 United States Department of Justice — Nikhil Gupta Sentencing, November 20, 2026

24 Official confirmation that Gupta received a 235-month prison sentence. This is a subsequent development relative to Udayavani's publication.

25 https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/indian-national-sentenced-235-months-prison-plotting-assassinate-us-citizen-new-york

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.

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