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Gurpatwant Pannun assassination plot: Govt panel suggests legal action against 'individual' with 'criminal links and antecedents'

Khalistan Separatist Gurpatwant Pannun Assassination Plot: Does not name individual in question. Panel was set up after the US shared inputs with India on alleged involvement of a govt employee

Written by [Mahender Singh Manral](#)

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Pannun Assassination Plot News: The US Justice Department's revelation in November 2023 about the foiled Pannun plot came just months after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations about Indian officials' involvement in Hardeep Singh Nijjar's murder. (Express File)

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Gurpatwant Singh Pannun Assassination Plot News: A high-powered committee set up by the Union government to examine inputs provided by the United States on an alleged plot to kill Khalistan separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun has submitted its report and recommended "legal action against an individual", the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a press statement on Wednesday.

While the statement does not identify the individual in question, this is the first admission by the Centre of an Indian national being involved in the alleged plot.

The US authorities had earlier shared inputs with the Indian government on the alleged involvement of Vikash Yadav, a former Indian official who has been officially indicted by the public prosecutor in the US for "directing a foiled plot to assassinate a US citizen in New York City". A Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson had said in November last year that Yadav "is no longer an employee of the Government of India".

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The Indian government set up a high-level committee on November 18 to look into relevant aspects of the matter and inputs shared by the [US on the alleged plot](#). This committee, the MHA said on Wednesday, "conducted its own investigation, and also pursued leads provided by the US side".

"It received full cooperation from US authorities and the two sides also exchanged visits. The committee further examined a number of officials from different agencies and also scrutinised relevant documents in this connection," the MHA said.

The committee travelled to Washington [DC](#) on October 15 as part of its investigation to discuss the case with the US authorities, including information it had obtained, and to receive updates from the US regarding the case.

"After a long enquiry, the committee submitted its report to the government and recommended legal action against an individual, whose earlier criminal links and antecedents also came to notice during the enquiry. The enquiry committee has recommended that the legal action must be completed expeditiously," the MHA said in its statement.

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The committee further recommended "functional improvements in systems and procedures as well as initiation of steps that could strengthen India's response

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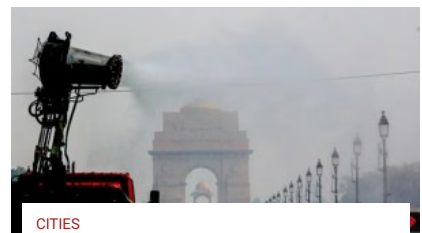
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capability, ensure systematic controls and coordinated action in dealing with matters like this," it said.

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The US Justice Department's revelation in November 2023 about the foiled Pannun plot came just months after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations about the involvement of Indian officials in the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The US indictment named Indian national Nikhil Gupta, who was first detained in Prague in June 2023 and later extradited to the US in June 2024.

According to US prosecutors, Gupta allegedly collaborated with Indian government employee Vikash Yadav, agreeing to pay an assassin \$100,000 to kill Pannun, a US-Canada dual citizen who heads the banned [Sikhs for Justice](#) organisation and is designated as a terrorist in India.

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While New Delhi dismissed Trudeau's allegations as "absurd and motivated", it took a more measured approach to the US indictment, saying it would "seriously" examine the inputs. The Centre subsequently formed a high-level committee to investigate "all the relevant aspects of the matter".

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As reported by [The Indian Express](#), less than three weeks after his name first figured in the US Department of Justice documents, Yadav was arrested in an extortion case by the Delhi Police Special Cell. After spending four months in Tihar, he was released on bail in April last year, records show.

In November, he moved an application before a Delhi court seeking exemption from attending his case hearing, claiming a threat to his life.

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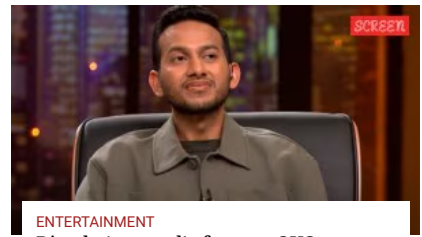


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Mahender Singh Manral is an Assistant Editor with the national bureau of The Indian Express. He is known for his impactful and breaking stories. He covers the Minist.

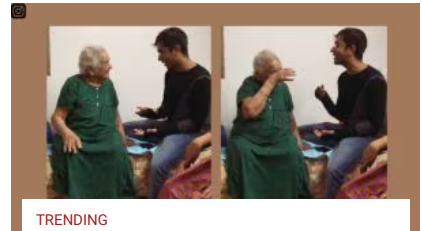
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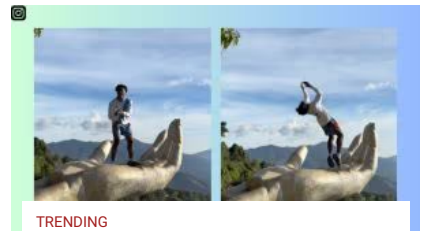
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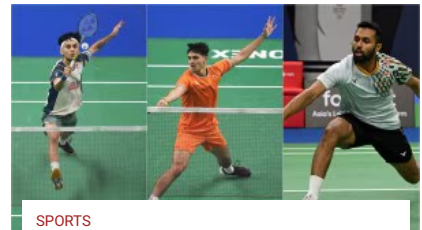
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