



KHALISTAN EXTREMISM MONITOR

NEWSLETTER



Spotlight

On March 15, the Punjab Government claimed that there had been a significant improvement in the law-and-order situation, after the completion of one year since the Government, led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, took office. According to the official data, from March 16, 2022, to March 15, 2023, the Punjab Police dismantled 26 terrorist modules with the arrest of 168 terrorists/radicals, and the recovery of 31 rifles, 201 revolvers/pistols, nine 'tiffin' Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), 8.72 kilograms of RDX and other explosives, 11 hand grenades, two sleeves of disposed rocket launchers, 30 drones, and one loaded rocket propelled grenade. Similarly, the Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF), since its formation on April 6, 2022, neutralized 162 gangster/organised crime modules, arresting 582 and killing five, while 586 weapons and 131 vehicles were recovered. The Punjab Police war against drugs resulted in the arrest 17,568 drug smugglers and the registration of 13,094 FIRs since March 16, 2022. 863.9 kilograms of heroin was recovered during this one-year period.

The month in review

In a dramatic turn of events, the Punjab Police chose to end their "silent mode" and initiated action against the self-proclaimed Khalistani preacher and chief of a faction of Waris Punjab De (WPD), Amritpal Singh, and his aides. On March 18, the Punjab Police launched a "massive state-wide cordon and search operation" against Amritpal Singh and WPD. Notably, the crackdown on Amritpal and his pro-Khalistan outfit began several weeks after the storming of the Police Complex at Anjala, Amritsar, by Amritpal Singh and his supporters on February 23, as well as his threat against Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

While Amritpal Singh successfully evaded the Police operation, approximately 360 individuals were apprehended by the authorities for allegedly disrupting peace, though most of them were subsequently released. In the ongoing operation, which has also been extended to neighboring states, the Police have also seized weapons, other incriminating materials and vehicles from various locations, and have imposed the National Security Act (NSA) on Amritpal and his associates.





The most significant outcome of the Police operation, however, is the degree to which Amritpal Singh's false posturing has been exposed. On his return to India on August 10, 2022, after a 10-year hiatus, Amritpal had sought to project himself a 'Bhindranwale 2.0', imitating the postures and costumes of slain terrorist Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, and presenting himself as a 'fearless crusader' for the Sikh cause.

While very little information regarding Amritpal Singh's activities abroad has been released officially, there has been a steady stream of plants, citing 'intelligence' and 'official' sources, claiming that he was recruited by the Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence in Dubai, and trained in Georgia, before he was returned to India; that he was being funded and supported by the terrorist-gangster-drug smuggling network and the ISI through Pakistan-based Pro-Khalistan Entities (PKEs); and, with the recovery of weapons, uniforms and bulletproof jackets marked with the abbreviation 'AKF', that he was attempting to establish an armed militia – the Anandpur Khalsa Fauj (AKF). On March 23, the Punjab Police claimed that they had found video evidence of members of AKF undergoing weapons training in a riverine area, possibly near Amritpal's hometown of Jallapur Khera in Amritsar.

On the other hand, the self-proclaimed preacher and his supporters have made every effort to portray him as a 'victim', who continued to defend the Sikh cause while attempting to evade the Police. In a video message released on March 29, Amritpal Singh asked the *Akal Takht* Jathedar to call for a 'Sarbat Khalsa' (a congregation of the Sikh faithful) on *Baisakhi* (April 14) to address concerns related to the Sikh community. Singh also declared that he was in high spirits (*Chardhi Kala*) and was not afraid of the Punjab Police.

Amritpal's plea for a *Sarbat Khalsa* appears to have been overwhelmingly rejected by the Sikh clergy and intelligentsia, who have, almost unanimously, urged him to surrender to 'stand by his own words', to protect those who were arrested for supporting him, and to restore the reputation of the Sikh community and Punjabis by acting in accordance with the dictates of the warrior faith. Baba Jasbir Singh Rode, a former *Akal Takht* Jathedar and nephew of the deceased Khalistani terrorist Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, stated that Amritpal had previously declared that he would not go into hiding and was not afraid of being arrested; "Then why is he running away now? He should offer himself for arrest. He should stand by whatever he has been saying."

Meanwhile, on March 29, the Bhagwant Mann Government released 348 out of the 360 who had been detained as part of a crackdown against Amritpal Singh, and promised to release the remaining 12 'shortly', in an attempt to reach out to the *Akal Takht*. On March 27, the *Akal Takht Jathedar* Giani Harpreet Singh served a 24-hour ultimatum on the state government for the release of 'innocents' who had been detained.

Pro-Khalistani elements in the western Diaspora escalated their anti-India activities in the guise of protesting against the Punjab Police action against Amritpal. The daughter of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who resides in the United States (US), complained that she and her brother had received online threats, phone calls, and even faced harassment during meetings concerning the current situation in Punjab, held at a Gurudwara.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Police's ongoing campaign against gangsters and terrorists recorded further successes. According to the partial data collated by the Khalistan Extremism Monitor (KEM), some 28 persons were arrested in connection with Khalistani terrorist or gang network, while another 20 were arrested in connection with narcotics seizures in Punjab.





TOP NEWS



"(Our) Ultimate goal is Khalistan. Khalistan is our destination," says WPD leader Amritpal Singh

In an interview on March 2, Waris Punjab De (WPD) leader Amritpal Singh, stated, "(Our) Ultimate goal is Khalistan. Khalistan is our destination, the struggle for it is our path ahead. Khalistan is the ultimate solution to every problem we have right now." Speaking out against the allegation of being labeled an 'ISI agent', he declared, "The propaganda to brand anyone who discusses the *Panth* or Punjab as an Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agent is not new... Someone who recognizes the issue and attempts to solve it is subjected to this type of blame game when others who should be repairing the societal system fail to do so. I am *Sikhi's* servant."

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Pro-Khalistan supporters vandalise Shree Laxmi Narayan Temple in Brisbane

According to reports, the wall of the Shree Laxmi Narayan Temple in Brisbane, Australia, was vandalized by unknown pro-Khalistan supporters on March 4. This was the fourth such incident of vandalism against Hindu temples in two months in Australia. Sarah Gates, the Director of Hindu Human Rights, noted, "This latest hate crime is a pattern of Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) globally, clearly attempting to terrorise Australian Hindus. Coupled with a barrage of propaganda, illegal signs, and cyberbullying, the organisation intends to present all-pervasive threats, fear, and intimidation."

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Sikhs For Justice issues threat ahead of G20 meet in Punjab

On March 6, Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) Chief Gurupatwant Singh Pannun released a video addressing the G20 representatives, in which he claimed that Punjab was not a part of India and threatened that railway services would be blocked at multiple locations in front of G20 representatives. In the video, the SFJ leader gave a call for "Rail Roko on March 15-16". "The Singhs fighting for the freedom of Punjab have installed flags at the Makhu Railway Station which state "G20 nations welcome to Khalistan". Punjab is not a part of India. The red flags put up at the Makhu station said that from March 15 to 16, all the rail services in Amritsar, Ferozepur, Bathinda, and Ludhiana will remain shut," Pannun said in the video. There was no response on the ground to these calls for disruption.

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“Khalistan Referendum is ISI conspiracy, nothing to Sikhs in India,” says former pro-Khalistan leader

Jaswant Singh Thekedar, the Dal Khalsa founder, during an interview on March 16, asserted that the ‘Khalistan referendum’ was a scheme orchestrated by Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and was an effort to deceive the public. He emphasized that the so-called referendum had no connection to the Sikh community in India. He said that Pakistan was the real enemy of Khalistan and “some Sikhs are working as tools” in hands of the Pakistan Government.

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SFJ threatens to storm the Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium in Ahmadabad

On March 8, thousands of people in Gujarat received bulk messages and pre-recorded calls, purportedly by the head of Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) Gurupatwant Singh Pannun, threatening to “storm into the Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium” in Ahmadabad in Gujarat. In the pre-recorded voice message, Pannun stated, “People of Gujarat, on 9th March, stay home and stay safe because pro-Khalistan Sikhs are going to storm Narendra Modi cricket stadium and install Khalistani flag. Do not become a victim between pro-Khalistan Sikhs and Indian police”.

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“Amritpal Singh trained by ISI in Georgia, linked to SFJ”, say Intelligence sources

On March 19, Indian counterterrorism officials claimed that Amritpal Singh, the leader of Waris Punjab De (WPD), was trained by Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Georgia before returning to India from Dubai, UAE. They further alleged that Amritpal maintained close connections with the pro-Khalistani outfit, Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), and received funding as part of a broader plan to revive militancy in Punjab. According to an official, “Amritpal Singh was given money as part of a well-orchestrated scheme to resurrect militancy in Punjab while he was living in Dubai, which is a hub for ISI agents. Before his flight to India, ISI sent him to Georgia for training.”

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Punjab Police launches massive manhunt to nab WPD leader Amritpal Singh and his aides

On March 18, the Punjab Police launched a “massive state-wide cordon and search operation” against Amritpal Singh, and arrested a total of 78 members of Waris Punjab De (WPD) from different locations in Punjab. Police also suspended Internet and SMS services across the state till March 19. However, Amritpal Singh managed to escape the police dragnet when his cavalcade was intercepted in the Jalandhar district.

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Indian flag pulled down by pro-Khalistan protesters at London mission

Khalistan supporters pulled down the Indian national flag flying atop the Indian High Commission building in London on March 19. While chanting pro-Khalistani slogans and holding Khalistani flags, the protesting group also caused damage to the High Commission building's window. However, no injuries were reported in the incident. Following the event, a man was taken into custody on suspicion of initiating the violence.

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Very few people turned up for Khalistan "Referendum" in Brisbane

Pro-Khalistan outfit, Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) reportedly organized a 'Khalistan Referendum 2020' in Brisbane, Australia, on March 19. However, the turnout for the event was reportedly low, with only about 100 attendees present. The editor of *Australia Today*, Jai Bharadwaj, stated that the organizers originally intended for the event to run from 9 am to 5 pm, but closed it down at 4 pm due to lack of attendance. Even, the majority of gurdwaras turned down the requests for assistance from the referendum organizers

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Amritpal Singh's militia Anandpur Khalsa Fauj (AKF) was taking arms training, says Punjab Police

On March 23, the Punjab Police claimed that they had found video evidence of members of the Anandpur Khalsa Fauj (AKF), a private militia formed by Waris Punjab De (WPD) leader Amritpal Singh, undergoing weapons training. The training was apparently taking place in a riverine area, possibly near Amritpal's hometown of Jallapur Khera in the Baba Bakala *tehsil* of Amritsar. Punjab Police spokesperson Inspector General Sukhchain Singh Gill disclosed that the footage was discovered on the phone of Amritpal's associate, Tejinder Singh alias Gorkha Baba, who had been arrested by the Police. The recovered footage included the firing of weapons, the AKF logo, and other 'sensitive videos' that the Police stated could not be shared at present.

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Three suspected members of Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) arrested in the Philippines

According to an official statement, three suspected members of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), identified as Manpreet Singh (23), Amritpal Singh (24), and Arshdeep Singh (26), were arrested in Iloilo in the Philippines, during a joint operation by Philippines government agencies in March. Alexander Ramos, the Executive Director of the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC), stated, on March 27, that heavily armed troops raided an apartment in an exclusive subdivision in the central Philippines city at dawn on March 7, and caught the militants off guard. The suspects, who are also on the Interpol Red Notice watchlist, are believed to have entered the country using fake passports.

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Amritpal Singh gives a call for *Sarbat Khalsa* on *Baisakhi* in new video

In the midst of a police crackdown on Amritpal Singh and his organization Waris Punjab De (WPD), the Khalistan sympathizer appeared in a video on March 29, calling for a *Sarbat Khalsa* (a congregation of the Sikh faithful) on *Baisakhi* (April 14) to address concerns related to the Sikh community. Singh also mentioned that he was in high spirits (*Chardhi Kala*). In the undated video, Amritpal Singh stated that if the Punjab Government's intention was solely to apprehend him, they could have come to his residence, and he would have surrendered himself. He claimed the police action against him was an "attack" on the Sikh community. "As far as my arrest is concerned, it is in the hands of God," he said in Punjabi

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HATE SPEECH TRACKER

| Date | Incidents |
|-------------|---|
| 07 March 23 | Perth's Swaminarayan Temple gets threatening call from Khalistanis |
| 08 March 23 | SFJ threatens to storm the Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium in Ahmadabad |
| 17 March 23 | Sikhs For Justice issues threat to big leaders of the country |
| 24 March 23 | TV reporter faces death threat in Canada from Khalistanis for anti-Amritpal show |
| 25 March 23 | Man receives threat messages from Khalistani supporters in Delhi |
| 30 March 23 | Sikhs For Justice threatens Indians abroad |
| 30 March 23 | Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann's daughter gets threats from Pro-Khalistan elements in US |

Click here to access the full list at www.khalistanextremismmonitor.org

COMPOSITE SEIZURES IN PUNJAB

| Date | No. of Incidents | No. of Arrests | Items |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 26 March 23 | 1 | 2 | 4 kgs heroin, 2 pistols, 18 live cartridges |
| 28 March 23 | 1 | 0 | 2 kg heroin, 1 Chinese-made pistol, 1 magazine and eight bullets |
| Total | 2 | 2 | Heroin – 6 kg, Pistols – 3, Cartridges – 18, Magazines – 1, Bullets – 8 |

ARMS & AMMUNITION SEIZURES IN PUNJAB

| Date | No. of Incidents | No. of Arrests | Items |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 03 March 23 | 1 | 1 | 1 illegal pistol & six live cartages |
| 04 March 23 | 1 | 2 | 2 country made pistols |
| 09 March 23 | 3 | 7 | 1 AK series rifle, 2 magazines, and 40 bullets, 1 illegal pistol, along with a magazine and six live cartridges. 13 weapons, 11 magazines, three live cartridges |
| 15 March 23 | 1 | 4 | Three .32 bore pistols, a revolver, and 23 live cartridges |





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|--------------|-----------|-----------|---|
| 19 March 23 | 2 | 1 | A 15-bore rifle, 57 rounds and a sword |
| 24 March 23 | 2 | 0 | 5 Glock 9 mm pistols and 91 rounds of ammunition, 5 Austria-made semi-automatic Glock Pistols, 10 Pistol magazines and ammunition of two different calibres viz. 9mm (71 rounds) and 20 cartridges of .311 bore |
| 29 March 23 | 1 | 2 | Three .32-bore country-made pistols, two .30-bore country-made pistols and 20 cartridges |
| Total | 11 | 17 | Pistols – 14, Cartridges – 7, Magazines – 23, Rifles – 2, Revolver – 1, Sword – 1, Ammunition (Rounds) – 279 |

DRUG SEIZURES IN PUNJAB

| Date | No. of Incidents | No. of Arrests | Items |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| 02 March 23 | 1 | 5 | No recovery |
| 03 March 23 | 1 | 1 | 110-gm heroin |
| 04 March 23 | 2 | 2 | 25 gm heroin |
| 09 March 23 | 5 | 6 | 1.024 kg heroin, 500 intoxicant tablets |
| 10 March 23 | 2 | 2 | 65 intoxicating capsules 120 tablets, 70-gm opium |
| 11 March 23 | 1 | 0 | 3.05 kg heroin |
| 13 March 23 | 1 | 2 | 6 kg opium |
| 22 March 23 | 1 | 0 | 3.040 kg heroin |
| 25 March 23 | 2 | 0 | 7 Kg heroin, 810 gm heroin |
| 27 March 23 | 3 | 2 | 7.22 kg of heroin |
| 28 March 23 | 6 | 1 | 400 kg poppy, 9.6 kg heroin |
| 29 March 23 | 2 | 1 | 880 gm of heroin |
| 31 March 23 | 2 | 0 | 1.7 kg heroin, 1 kg of heroin |
| Total | 29 | 22 | Heroin – 35.459 kg, Intoxicating Tablets – 620, Intoxicating Capsules – 65, Opium – 6.07 Kg, Poppy Husk- 400 kg. |

