

Fake Social Media Profiles Backed By China

Why In News

- **China is accused** of hosting a cluster of **fake Facebook and Instagram accounts** which targeted the Sikh community across the world to propagate pro-Khalistan sentiments. **Facebook and Instagram-owner Meta** said in its 'Adversarial Threat Report' that they removed 37 Facebook accounts, 13 pages, five groups and nine Instagram accounts for violating its policy against "coordinated inauthentic behaviour".



All You Need To Know

- **Adya Singh**, who portrayed herself as a Punjabi girl with a UK education, living in Delhi, and **deeply passionate about Sikh heritage**, language, and culture, was an outspoken critic of the Indian government.
- Her social media posts often called for the US to "**support Khalistan** to counter Indian hegemony". However, there was a significant twist- Adya Singh did not exist.
- This account was part of a network of **fake profiles linked to China**. What has long been suspected by the Indian intelligence community is now backed by concrete evidence.



- **Purported Sikh accounts** on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and X (formerly Twitter), which criticized the Indian government across at least seven countries, including India, were traced back to China.
- **Social media giant Meta** recently identified and dismantled over sixty such China-linked entities, including accounts, pages, and groups that disseminated and amplified coordinated inauthentic information in the lead-up to the major general election in 2024.



- "This **network originated in China** and targeted the global Sikh community, including in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, the UK, and Nigeria," Meta reported.
- The accounts were linked to a broader **China-originated network** previously found targeting India and Tibet, according to Meta. While Meta has removed these accounts, India Today was able to confirm the existence of some of these accounts on X, with certain profiles being withheld in India but still operational in other jurisdictions.

- The identified accounts **posted artificially manipulated media** to incite pro-Khalistan protests in several countries.
- These accounts also used Artificial Intelligence (AI), often posting in Hindi and English, urging Western action against the Indian government, especially following the killing of Canada-based **pro-Khalistan figure Hardeep Singh Nijjar**, who was a wanted fugitive in India.



- "They appeared to have created a fictitious activist movement called **Operation K**, which called for pro-Sikh protests, including in New Zealand and Australia," Meta disclosed.

