

Continuing Hostility in the Jadhav Case

Why in news?

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- Pakistan recently facilitated a meeting between Mr.Jadhav and his family.
- But the explicitly hostile setting of the event further dimmed mutual goodwill.

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How did the case evolve?

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- Mr.Kulbushan Jadhav is an ex-Indian Navy officer who was arrested by Pakistani authorities on the pretext of espionage activities.
- While Pakistan maintains that he was detained in Baluchistan, India holds that he was on a business trip in Iran, from where he was abducted.
- A military court in Pakistan had sentenced him to death but a subsequent appeal by India in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has stayed it.
- But his possession of a dual passport and his past career in the military does indeed make the case ahead difficult for India.
- After multiple requests, Pakistan facilitated a meeting between Mr.Jadhav and his immediate family (wife & mother) in jail, albeit with a glass partition.

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How did the meet go?

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- While the meeting should've given a positive spin for Indo-Pak relations, it

has done exactly the opposite due to the hostile environment for the meet.

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- Pakistan turned the humanitarian gesture into a media circus, with a gaggle of hostile journalists hurled undignified questions at the women.
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- Also, this frenzy was upened by releasing meeting photographs and a video statement by Mr. Jadhav, in which he thanks the Pakistani government.
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- Insted of rationally pointing out to the several procedural lapses and official insensitivity in the episode, India too took to sensasionalism on its part.
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- India objected to the frisking, change of attire and removal of the mangalsutra necklace, and bindi and lamated the “religious and cultural insensitivity”.
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- But, significantly, most prison manuals in India too mandate the removal of all metal objects and most accessories of visitors.
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- Also, the several prisoner-family meetings around the world take place across glass screens, especially when they involve terror suspects.

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What is the way forward?

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- India and Pakistan should ensure that their exchanges on sensitive cases like Mr. Jadhav’s are conducted through quiet diplomacy.
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- As the objective is to save Mr.Jadhav, India should employ soft diplomacy in the background to convince Pakistan with possible benefits.
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- As Pakistan is already in fix over terrorism charges from multiple fronts, it may see this episode as a face-saver to establish its humanitarian standards.

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Source: The Hindu

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