# Diplomatic Standoff between India and Pakistan

## What is the issue?

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- Recent events of harassing each-other's diplomats have further fuelled the bickering tensions between India and Pakistan.
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- This is even more troublesome as it comes in the backdrop increasing ceasefire violations across the Line-of-control (LoC) and cross border terror attacks.
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## What has precipitated the diplomatic crisis?

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- Pakistani state agents are said to have harassed construction workers headed for the Indian mission's new building site in Islamabad.
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- While Pakistan claims that security clearance wasn't sought, India saw it as an attempt to stop the work, and also added that power and water connections to the consulate were tampered with.
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- Subsequently, Pakistan High Commission in Delhi claimed that Indian security personnel warned repairmen against working in its premises.
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- Both missions said personnel were being targeted on the road, with cars stopped and drivers and family members intimidated (or stalked).
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- Other instances on both sides include obscene phone calls, stoppage of milk and newspaper delivery to diplomats, and even 3 a.m. doorbell rings.
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- While Pakistan's insensitivity in handing the issue is pathetic, it also doesn't behold India to have retaliated by resorting to similar actions.
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- Interestingly, only weeks ago, a detente (compromise) was reached when an

agreement to swap prisoners on humanitarian groups.
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- The situation is now rapidly morphing into the early 2000s scenario, which saw the peaking of Indo-Pak diplomatic tensions.
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## How has diplomatic relations spanned over the years?

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- In early 2000s, tensions were triggered by a terror attack on the India Parliament, which was thought to have been carried out with support from within Pakistan.
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- After multiple expulsions, the two sides effectively had only a very small diplomatic presence on the other side until 2004.
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- A subsequent Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting in Islamabad had paved the way for normalising ties and things were looking good till the 2008.
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- The Mumbai terror attack, which was carried out by Pakistani infiltrators, had initiated a downwards spiral that hasn't been stemmed yet.
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- The Line of Control (LoC) is now seeing intense shelling and firing from both sides, and the 2003 ceasefire agreement is effectively void.
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- Uri and Pathankot attacks further worsened the scenario, which saw India waging a literal diplomatic war on Pakistan in multiple international forums.
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- Presently, the High Commissioner of Pakistan has returned to Islamabad for "consultations" and is unlikely to return before a resolution is reached.
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- Pakistan will also not attend a WTO meeting that is scheduled shortly in New Delhi, and the risk of a full blown diplomatic standoff is very much alive.
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## How does the future look?

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- The timing of the escalation gives credence to a possible calculated escalation, for possible political and tactical gains.

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- The allegations of harassment are more serious than just shadow-boxing, and must be checked in order to avoid a further slippage in ties.
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- The incidences constitute technical violations of “Vienna Convention on Consular Relations” (1963), which accords protection to diplomats.
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- India and Pakistan may even take stronger measures, including sending back diplomats or scaling down their missions, which is least desired currently.
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- Notably, there have been no meaningful talks since 2008 and the need to re-engage is higher than ever to ease the mounting tensions.
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**Source: The Hindu**

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