

Pakistan rejects India's charges on Kulbhushan Jadhav-family meet as baseless

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The FO said that Pakistan does not wish to indulge in a "meaningless battle of words" and categorically rejects India's baseless "allegations and twists" about attitude of authorities.

The wife, right, and mother, center, of imprisoned Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav are escorted by an Indian diplomat

Islamabad: Pakistan today rejected as "baseless" India's contentions that Kulbhushan Jadhav's family was harassed and claimed that his wife's shoes were confiscated on security grounds as there was "something" in it.

The Foreign Office in a statement said that Pakistan does not wish to indulge in a "meaningless battle of words" and categorically rejects India's baseless "allegations and twists" about attitude of authorities during Jadhav's meeting with his wife and mother.

"The Indian baseless allegations and twists, that come 24 hrs later, about the visit of the wife and mother of Commander Jadhav, a convicted terrorist and spy, who has confessed to his crimes, are categorically rejected," the statement said.

"If Indian concerns were serious, the guests or the Indian DHC should have raised them during the visit, with the media, which was readily available, but at a safe distance, as requested by India," it said.

"We do not wish to indulge in a meaningless battle of words. Our openness and transparency belies these allegations," it said.

Responding to India's contentions that Jadhav's wife's shoes were not returned to her after the meeting, Foreign Office spokesman Muhammad Faisal told DawnNews that the shoes were confiscated on "security grounds".

"There was something in the shoe (of Jadhav's wife)," Faisal told the daily, adding that the shoe is being investigated.

He said Jadhav's wife had been provided replacement shoes and all her jewellery was returned to her.

The spokesman said that the fact is that Jadhav's mother "publicly thanked Pakistan for the humanitarian gesture, which was also recorded by the media."

"Nothing more needs to be said on the issue," he said.

India today accused Pakistan of violating mutual understandings on Jadhav's meeting with his family, and said the Indian national appeared coerced and under considerable stress during the tightly-controlled interaction.

India also accused Pakistan of disregarding cultural and religious sensibilities of family members under the pretext of security.

"This included removal of mangal sutra, bangles and bindi, as well as a change in attire that was not warranted by security," it said.

During yesterday's meeting, whose pictures were released by Pakistan, Jadhav was seen sitting behind a glass screen while his mother and wife sat on the other side. They spoke through intercom and the entire 40-minute proceedings appeared to have been recorded on video.

India said that "for some inexplicable reason, despite her repeated requests", Jadhav's wife's shoes were not returned to her after the meeting.

Jadhav, who was captured in March last year, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court for alleged spying, an accusation that India has dismissed as concocted.

New Delhi says Jadhav was kidnapped in Iran where he had legitimate business interests, and brought to Pakistan. To save Jadhav, India moved the International Court of Justice, which ordered Pakistan in May to stay his execution.

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