

Hafiz Saeed is off the Hook

Why in news?

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Pakistan government has recently withdrawn terror charges against Hafiz Saeed.

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Who is Saeed?

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- Hafiz Saeed, is the chief of the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, which is a frontal organisation for Lashkar-e-Toiba.

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- LeT has been designated a terror group by the UN Security Council since 2002.

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- Despite ample evidence detailing Saeed's role in acts of terror against India, Pakistan has done little to curtail his activities.

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- He is said to wield immense clout over Pakistan's deep state.

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- He is also believed to have masterminded the 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

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What is the case?

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- Pakistan's Punjab provincial government had initially detained him in January under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA).

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- This action was to avoid sanctions by the UN's 'Financial Action Task Force' (FATF) which was to review Pakistan.

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- It also came in the backdrop of immense US pressure.

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- Last week, terror charges against Sayeed were dropped.
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- His detention will however continue under the milder 'Maintenance of Public Order' Ordinance.
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- Notably, these developments come in the backdrop of US praise for Pakistan in securing the release of an American couple held hostage by the Haqqani Network since 2012.
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How does the future look?

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- U.S. and Afghanistan have only just revived talks with Pakistan on reining in the Taliban.
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- Hence, Pakistan freeing Saeed will be seen as an open challenge to India, the U.S. and the international community.
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- If Saeed isn't brought to justice, then all the international declarations on terrorism will carry little weight in future.
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- The next round of the FATF, which is due at the end of this month, must be used to send a tough message to Pakistan.
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Source: The Hindu

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