

Pakistan court denies access to voice samples of 26-11 suspects

27/01/2016 20:23 by admin

Islamabad: A Pakistani court today dismissed a petition seeking voice samples of 26/11 mastermind Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi and six other suspects in the case, marking it as the latest in a series of reversals in Pakistan's apparent intent to bring the perpetrators of the ghastly attack to justice.

The prosecution had filed an application in the Islamabad High Court seeking voice samples of the suspects to compare it with the communication intercepted by Indian intelligence and then present it before the anti-terrorism court (ATC) as evidence against the seven suspects in the Mumbai attack case.

However, the petition was dismissed by the Islamabad High Court on Monday. In 2011 and 2015 as well, requests regarding obtaining voice samples of Lakhvi had been turned down by the trial court on grounds that "no such law exists that allows obtaining of voice sample of an accused".

The prosecution's petition said the Indian intelligence agencies had intercepted communication between the suspects and the terrorists in connection with the Mumbai attack in 2008.

In the recorded intercepts, the suspects are heard instructing the terrorists.

The prosecution lawyers had argued that the samples were essential for concluding the investigation of this high profile case.

The trial court had also rejected another petition of the prosecution requesting the court to declare Ajmal Kasab and Faheem Ansari absconders in order to meet legal formalities.

The prosecution had told the court that unless it declared the two men absconders, the trial against them would remain "inconclusive" as both have been cited as accused in the Mumbai attack case by Indian authorities and that they were also wanted by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) that was probing the 26/11 case.

During External Affairs Minister Sushma Swara's visit here last month, Pakistan had assured India of "steps being taken to expedite the early conclusion" of the Mumbai attack trial, something that India has been pressing for long.

Pakistani authorities arrested seven Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) members involved in the planning of the attacks including the terrorist group's operations commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, the mastermind of the Mumbai attack.

Six accused "Abdul Wajid, Mazhar Iqbal, Hamad Amin Sadiq, Shahid Jameel Riaz, Jamil Ahmed and Younis Anjum -- have been in Adiala Jail for more than six years in connection with planning and executing the Mumbai attack in November, 2008, that left 166 people killed.

Lakhvi, 56, secured bail in December, 2014, and was subsequently released from Adiala Jail on April 10, 2015, after the Lahore High Court set aside the government's order to detain him under a public security act.

A trial is underway against them at the ATC since 2009.

- (With PTI inputs)