

Pakistan court to hold 2 hearings a week to expedite 26-11 case

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Islamabad: The Pakistani anti-terrorism court hearing the 2008 Mumbai attack case will hold the trial of the seven accused, including mastermind Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi, twice a week to expedite the case after Islamabad High Court gave a two-month deadline to the trial court.

"To expedite the case, the court has decided to hold the hearing twice a week - Wednesday and Thursday," Raja Rizwan Abbasi, a counsel for Lakhvi, told PTI.

The Islamabad High Court in mid-April had ordered the trial court to conclude the Mumbai attack case in two months.

The two-month deadline ended on June 15 but the pace of the case did not improve.

The IHC had also warned that it would cancel Lakhvi's bail if the trial court failed to conclude the case within the deadline.

A court official said: "The case could not be concluded within the deadline and now it is up to the IHC to take up the government's plea for cancellation of bail to Lakhvi." Meanwhile, the trial court today summoned four witnesses for the next hearing on June 24.

"Two witnesses who were to record their statements in the Anti-Terrorism Court Islamabad today could not turn up. So, the judge adjourned the hearing till next Wednesday and summoned (the) four witnesses," the court official said.

The hearing was held at Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.

Lakhvi walked out of the high-security jail on April 10 after the Lahore High Court suspended his detention under a security act.

The trial court had granted Lakhvi bail last December.

55-year-old Lakhvi is living at an undisclosed location since his release. He and six others have been charged with planning and executing the Mumbai attack in November, 2008 that left 166 people dead.

- PTI