

Judicial magistrate testifies before Pak court in 26-11 case

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Islamabad: A judicial magistrate of an Islamabad court today testified before an anti-terrorism court, hearing the trial of 2008 Mumbai attack case, and said he had recorded the statements of two witnesses against seven accused, including 26/11 mastermind Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi.

Magistrate Akram Abbasi told the Anti-Terrorism Court Islamabad which held the hearing at Adiala Jail Rawalpindi that it was true that he had recorded the statements of two witnesses against the accused, including LeT commander Lakhvi.

"I had recorded the statements of the two witnesses against the Mumbai attack accused including Lakhvi. Their statements presented in the court are the same which I had recorded," he testified.

Another magistrate was also summoned to record his statement but he could not turn up. He reportedly had an accident and is under treatment.

The court adjourned the hearing till tomorrow. Mumbai attack mastermind Lakhvi, who was released from Adiala Jail on April 10 on bail, did not appear in the court hearing today despite no decision on his petition to exempt him from in person appearance during the proceedings in the case by the trial court.

Under the law, it is mandatory for an accused on bail to appear in a court hearing.

The trial court has decided to hold the hearing twice a week - Wednesday and Thursday - to expedite the case.

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 has passed but the pace of the case had not yet picked up.

Lakhvi, 55, and six others - Abdul Wajid, Mazhar Iqbal, Hamad Amin Sadiq, Shahid Jameel Riaz, Jamil Ahmed and Younis Anjum - are accused of planning and executing the Mumbai attack in November, 2008 that left 166 people dead. The trial has been underway since 2009.

- PTI