

pakistan

Trial of Pakistani suspects in Mumbai attacks adjourned till March 30

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The trial of seven Pakistani suspects, including Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, charged with involvement in the Mumbai attacks was on Saturday adjourned for two weeks as the judge was away to attend a training course.

The trial was adjourned till March 30 as anti-terrorism court judge Chaudhry Habib-ur-Rehman was expected to return to duty on Monday, sources said

In a separate development, chief prosecutor Chaudhry Zulifqar Ali said that Indian authorities had not yet responded to a request for a written assurance that a Pakistani judicial commission would be allowed to cross-examine four key witnesses during a planned visit to Mumbai.

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▶ "India talks about a delay in the case but now it is causing a delay by not sending its reply," Ali said.

He said it should have taken Indian authorities more than a day to respond.

"We had written to the Indian government on February 12 and we're still awaiting its response," he said.

Ali said defence lawyers had also not submitted their travel documents for the planned visit.

The Pakistani judicial commission's visit to India has already been delayed by several weeks over the issue of the assurance that members of the panel will be allowed to cross-examine witnesses.

The commission is set to make a second visit to Mumbai to record the statements of four witnesses because the anti-terrorism court rejected a report submitted after its first visit on the ground that the panel was not allowed to conduct cross-examination.

The trial of the seven suspects has progressed at a snail's pace due to repeated adjournments and various technical delays.

They have been charged with planning, financing and executing the attacks that killed 166 people in November 2008.

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