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HC rejects Kasab's plea for closed-door interview with lawyers

Agencies : Mumbai, Wed Sep 29 2010, 14:08 hrs



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Taking note of the past records and aggressive behaviour of Pakistani terrorist Ajmal Kasab, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday rejected his plea for a closed-door meeting with lawyers to take a

stand on the confirmation of death sentence awarded to him for his role in the Mumbai terror attacks.

Justices Ranjana Desai and R V More, while dismissing the plea, said they had viewed a CD of CCTV footage submitted by government counsel Ujjwal Nikam which showed Kasab attacking prison personnel on September 1 and also considered the past experiences of Kasab on his aggressive posture in jail.

"Threat perception to Kasab cannot be questioned by this court in a case of this nature... National interest and safety outweighs all other considerations. Therefore, we reject Kasab's prayer seeking legal interview not within the hearing distance of jail staff and police," the two-judge bench observed.

Kasab's lawyer Amin Solkar argued that enough security had been provided in and around the jail where Kasab is lodged and said his client wanted to give him instructions in a free atmosphere and not in the presence of police and jail staff.

Nikam objected to Kasab's plea, saying he was a trained commando, and with swift movements he could pose a danger to his own life as well as to jail guards. Presence of jail staff was necessary to control his aggressive movements.

He submitted confidential reports about Kasab's behaviour in jail during the trial and thereafter.

The High Court ordered that these reports be kept confidential till the hearing concludes.

The court agreed with Nikam that the presence of jail staff was necessary within a hearing distance from Kasab, taking into account serious threat perception to him and his past experiences in judicial custody.

However, it made it clear that police personnel, particularly those connected with the 26/11

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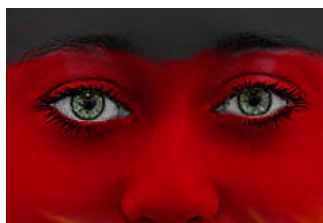
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