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Mumbai attack mastermind Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi arrested before his release from jail

Mumbai attack mastermind Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi was today arrested...

By: PTI | Islamabad | December 30, 2014 7:49 PM

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Mumbai attack mastermind Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi was today arrested just before his release following a Pakistani court's suspension of his detention under a public security order which had evoked a strong reaction from India.

"Lakhvi has been arrested in another case," an interior ministry spokesman told PTI. However, he said the details of the case would be provided to the media later.

Lakhvi was set to be freed from the Adaila Jail Rawalpindi this morning on the order of the Islamabad High Court after he submitted Rs 1 million surety bond, but just before that the jail superintendent received an order from the government regarding his arrest in another case.

"Lakhvi was then presented before a magistrate who remanded him in custody," the official said.

Lakhvi's counsel Raja Rizwan Abbasi has protested against the government's decision.

The Islamabad High Court yesterday suspended the government's Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) under which Lakhvi was being held under detention, paving the way for his release. This had outraged India which lodged its strong protest by summoning Pakistan High Commissioner Abdul Basit.

India had conveyed its "strong concern" to Pakistan over the development, saying, "there seems to be no end in sight to Pakistan remaining a safe-haven for well-known terror groups."

Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh summoned Pakistan High Commissioner Basit in New Delhi and the Indian mission in Islamabad took up the issue with the



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Following today's development, Lakhvi's counsel Abbasi said, "The executive authority does not seem to accept the court's order. Arresting my client in another case is like undermining of the court's order."

Islamabad High Court Judge Noorul Haq N Qureshi, while accepting Lakhvi's application challenging his detention under the MPO, yesterday suspended the government's order in this regard and directed him to submit a surety bond of Rs 1 million. The court also asked Lakhvi to ensure his presence in every hearing of the Mumbai attacks case.

The government's law officer was not present when the court gave its ruling.

While suspending Lakhvi's detention order, the court directed the Pakistan government to file a reply in this regard in the next hearing in the case on January 15.

Anti-Terrorism Court Judge in Islamabad Syed Kausar Abbas Zaidi had on December 18 granted bail to Lakhvi in the Mumbai attacks case citing lack of evidence against him, but before he could be released from jail, the government detained him for three more months under MPO in Adiala Jail where the trial is being held.

A senior official of the Interior Ministry had said earlier the government might detain Lakhvi in another case.

"Since the release of Lakhvi from jail will draw a lot flak from the world especially India, the Pakistani government may detain Lakhvi in any other case like it did in the case of LeJ chief Malik Ishaq," he had said.

Ishaq was remanded to judicial custody in a murder and terrorism case just before his release from a jail after government did not seek extension of his detention under the public security order.

Lakhvi's lawyer during yesterday's hearing also produced the order copy of the trial court that granted him bail.

The order has cited "weak evidence, the registration of the FIR invoking irrelevant sections and hearsay evidence against the suspect".

Lakhvi and other six accused – Abdul Wajid, Mazhar Iqbal, Hamad Amin Sadiq, Shahid Jameel Riaz, Jamil Ahmed and Younis Anjum – were allegedly involved in planning and executing the Mumbai attacks on November 26, 2008 that left 166 people dead.

Lakhvi was arrested in December 2008 and was indicted along with the six others on November 25, 2009 in connection with the case. The trial has been underway since 2009.

First Published on December 30, 2014 2:22 pm

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