

‘Remand’ for 6 terror suspects in Pakistan

Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, February 16, 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s Federal Investigation Agency has obtained a 14-day remand for at least six suspects it has arrested in connection with the Mumbai attacks, according to media reports.

A judge granted the remand after recording the statements of the suspects at a secret location, Dawn and Geo Television said.

Dawn newspaper, quoting sources, said the FIA had obtained remand for seven suspects

No official confirmation

No official has yet confirmed these reports, and it is unclear on which day, since the registration of the FIR last Thursday, the judge, Sakhi Mohammed Kahut, granted the remand.

Nor is it clear if Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi and Zarar Shah, the two important Lashkar-e-Taiba activists who are alleged to have played key roles in planning the Mumbai attacks, are among the six who have been remanded.

The media reports, however, said Lakhvi was among those remanded.

Secret document

With the FIR remaining a secret document, there is all-round confusion about the suspects named in it, and about who is in custody and who is not.

Last week, Interior Ministry chief Rehman Malik said a case was registered against eight suspects of whom six were in government custody.

He has said since then that Ajmal Amir ‘Kasab,’ the lone surviving gunman who is in the custody of the Mumbai police, is also named in the FIR.

Deliberate confusion

Sources in the diplomatic community said the confusion might be deliberate as the government needed to carry out further investigations and perhaps make more arrests. It could have to do with security considerations too, they said.

Shahbaz Ahmed Rajput, who says he is the defence lawyer for Hamad Amin Sadiq, one of the suspects, expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which the FIA had obtained the remand.

“I was waiting at the [anti-terrorist] court in Rawalpindi all day [on Friday and Saturday] but the suspects were not produced there. The proceedings must be held in notified premises and during court timings. But legal remedies are available to us and we will be availing of them as soon as we have set up our defence team,” he said.