

Pakistani court asks for information on release of arrested Indian

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Islamabad: A top Pakistani court has ordered authorities to provide information about the arrest and expected date of release of a 31-year-old Indian man arrested in 2012 for illegally entering the country from Afghanistan reportedly to meet a girl he had befriended online.

The Peshawar High Court yesterday heard the case of Mumbai resident Hamid Nehal Ansari who claimed he entered Pakistan with a fake identity card sent by his Facebook friends who left him in a hotel in Kohat city on November 14, 2012 before he was arrested.

The Dawn reported that a bench consisting of Chief Justice Mazhar Alam Miankhel and Justice Mohammad Daud Khan issued directives to the federal and provincial governments while hearing a petition filed by Ansari, seeking orders for the inclusion of the period of his detention in a three-year prison sentence for espionage awarded by a military court on February 10 this year.

The high court also ordered the administration of Peshawar Central Prison to provide Ansari, an engineer by profession, proper medical treatment along with diet recommended to him by doctors for certain ailments he had been suffering from.

Ansari had gone missing after he was taken into custody by intelligence agencies and local police in Kohat and finally in reply to a habeas corpus petition filed by his mother, Fauzia Ansari, the high court was informed on January 13 that he was in custody of the Pakistan Army and was being tried by a military court.

Fauzia Ansari had claimed that her son had befriended a Pakistani woman through social media and had gone to Pakistan to meet her.

Ansari's lawyer Qazi Mohammad Anwar said his client was sentenced to three years imprisonment and if he was extended benefit of Section 382-B of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the period of his detention prior to conviction would be included in his prison term and in that case he should have been released by now.

Requesting the court to issue an order for Ansari's release, the lawyer pointed out that the provincial home department had stated in its reply to the petition that in the light of the judgment of the military court, the petitioner was entitled to the benefit under Section 382-B but it had yet to ascertain what the date of his arrest was.

Anwar said on April 28 he had met his client in prison and Ansari had given him a letter stating that he could not communicate with him freely because of the presence of prison officials. PTI

He said Ansari had told him that he had been suffering from some stomach problem and the doctor had advised him to take milk and rice only as regular diet.

He added that his client had stated that he was given only milk for a single day and he feared that he might be suffering from stomach ulcer.

He said the eyesight of his client had also been affected and he needed immediate treatment adding that the prison administration claimed that they had confined the petitioner in a vacant cell as a "protective prisoner" whereas inmates in other cells were condemned prisoners sentenced to death.

He said Ansari had earlier claimed that he was kept in a barrack where one of the prisoners had tried to attack him.

The deputy attorney general said at the request of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, the interior ministry had requested the foreign ministry to provide assistance to Fauzia Ansari for getting a Pakistani visit visa so that she could meet her son. PTI

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