

Sentences in cypher case will be 'put off', FIA warned

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ISLAMABAD:

The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday told the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) prosecutor to start presenting his arguments in the cypher case from Wednesday and if he required more time, the court would suspend the sentences of the convicts. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb were hearing PTI founding chairman Imran Khan and party vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi's appeal against their conviction in the cypher case. Barrister Salman Safdar representing Imran and FIA Special Prosecutor Hamid Ali Shah appeared before the court. Safdar argued that the diplomatic cable was received.

by then principal secretary to PM Azam Khan and prosecution had been unable to establish that if he had handed it over to then-premier Imran or not. He added that his stance was that the copy of the document was lost from the PM's Office and that is what Azam had corroborated as well. Safdar further told the court that according to the mechanism, if the cypher was lost, it was necessary to report it to the foreign affairs ministry. This is followed by a departmental inquiry conducted by senior officers of the foreign affairs ministry but that did not happen. Besides, he said the foreign affairs ministry should have sent a reminder but it never came. The lawyer continued that the PM Office informed the foreign affairs ministry about the document being lost on March 28, 2022. He added that the foreign affairs ministry should have informed the Intelligence Bureau immediately about the development but it did not. Safdar said if the main allegation had not been proven, then the charge of negligence could not be sustained. "The point I am making is that there is nothing on record that the copy of the cipher was handed over to us."