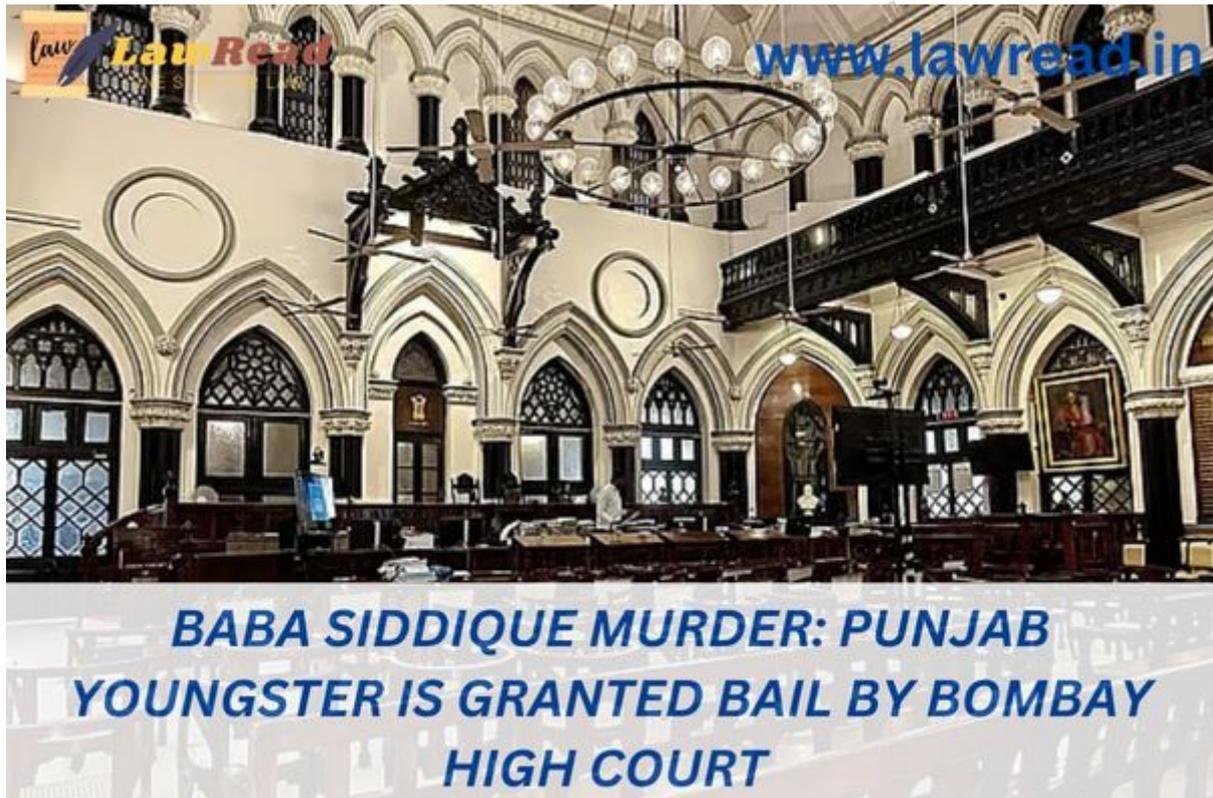


News

Baba Siddique murder: Punjab youngster is granted bail by Bombay High Court.



The 22-year-old had no prima facie MCOCA case against him, according to the court.

A 22-year-old man accused in the assassination case of former Maharashtra minister Ziauddin Abdul Rahim @ Baba Siddique was granted bail by the Bombay High Court on Monday after it was determined that there was no evidence connecting him directly to the alleged Anmol Bishnoi crime syndicate [Akashdeep Karaj Singh v. State of Maharashtra & Ors.].

Akashdeep Karaj Singh, who was detained by Mumbai police and subsequently charged under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) in connection with gang boss Anmol Bishnoi and his cohorts, had his bail request granted by Justice Neela Gokhale.

"The activities of the suspected Bishnoi brothers-led Organized Crime Syndicate are unquestionably grave crimes. The Court ruled that the MCOCA's provisions are correctly utilized.

But after reviewing the evidence against the defendants, Justice Gokhale concluded that there was no reason to think the offenses were initially accurate.

The Court ruled, "At this point, I am unable to form an opinion that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusations against Singh of doing the offence under the MCOCA are prima facie true."

Singh was an active participant of the syndicate, according to the prosecution. A photograph of him brandishing a gun, some unidentified international conversations, purported calls to co-accused Sujit Singh, and an alleged cash deposit in Punjab that was then transferred to a Mumbai bank account served as the main foundation for this accusation.

According to Justice Gokhale, this was not enough to trigger the strict bail restriction under Section 21(4) MCOCA.

Until it is proven that Singh knew the co-accused was involved in any kind of assistance to an organized criminal syndicate, simply placing a call to the co-accused does not establish a connection between Singh and the organization. Only during the trial can this fact be proven," the Court ruled.

Additionally, the prosecution made no attempt to identify the recipients of the international calls, according to the Court.

The judgment said that a mere accusation without any supporting evidence that the applicant called members of the Canadian Organised Crime Syndicate from abroad does not prove his involvement in the crime.

Singh was granted bail with strict terms after the court considered his age, lack of

criminal history, and the limited nature of the claimed connection (a phone call).

The terms include reporting to the prosecuting authorities every other Monday, paying ₹1 lakh with local sureties, and being prohibited from leaving Maharashtra without a court order.

Singh was represented by attorneys Abhishek Yende, Surbhi Agrawal, Shubham Kahite, and Sagar Paspohe.

Mahesh Mule, a special public prosecutor, appeared for State along with prosecutors Megha S. Bajoria and Parth Gawde.

Advocates Sumit Jadhav, Hritika Jannawar, Trivankumar Karnani, and Pradip Gharat represented the complainant.