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Supreme Court Denies Bail to Corporator Murder Accused, Orders Fast-Track Trial by January 2026

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The Supreme Court has denied bail to Prashant Bhaskar Mahatre, a key accused in the 2017 murder case of a Congress municipal corporator in Bhiwandi, Maharashtra. The bench, comprising Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi, also directed the Maharashtra government to fast-track the trial and conclude proceedings by January 2026.

The court took serious note of the delay in trial proceedings and questioned the state for failing to establish special courts to handle cases under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA). Despite the gravity of the charges and the length of time Mahatre has been in custody, the court ruled that mere claims of innocence or readiness to participate in the trial are not sufficient grounds to grant bail in cases involving serious offences.

“Speedy trial is not only a right of the accused, but also essential for the public interest,” the bench noted, while emphasizing the need for efficient infrastructure to handle MCOCA-related trials.

The 2017 murder is alleged to be part of a larger criminal conspiracy, and the trial has seen multiple delays due to procedural and infrastructural shortcomings. Mahatre’s legal team sought bail, citing prolonged incarceration, but the court maintained that the nature of the offence and evidence against him warranted continued judicial custody.

In addition to denying bail, the Supreme Court called upon the Maharashtra government to urgently designate or establish exclusive special courts to try MCOCA cases, citing the lack of such facilities as a significant contributor to delays in justice.

The bench expressed concern over the state’s inaction, noting that the absence of special courts violates the intent of the law meant to handle organized crime swiftly and effectively.

Legal experts view the ruling as a strong reminder to state governments of their responsibility to ensure timely justice through proper judicial infrastructure. The order reinforces the principle that bail cannot be granted lightly in organized crime cases, especially when statutory provisions and judicial scrutiny deem otherwise.

With this directive, the Maharashtra government is now under pressure to act promptly in creating the necessary legal framework to comply with the Supreme Court’s timeline for case completion.