

## **Indian business tycoon held for ‘links’ with Karachi trader Jabir Siddiq**

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LONDON: Scotland Yard has made three more arrests in connection with the three weeks ago arrest of Pakistani businessman Jabir Siddiq – and one of the arrested is a leading multi-millionaire Indian Muslim businessman.

It’s understood that the Indian businessman - who holds a large portfolio of properties across central London and has interests in shipping industry – was arrested from his house in Mayfair by the police and taken away to a police station for questioning about his relation with the Pakistani businessman.

Around three weeks ago, Jabir Siddiq was arrested from a five-star hotel near Edgware Road on the extradition request filed by the American government in relation to allegations of conspiracy to commit blackmail, import class-A drugs and money laundering in the USA. Jabir, who has been referred to as Jabir Siddiq & Jabir Moti, remains locked in Wandsworth prison and his initial application for bail was turned down by District Judge Margot Coleman at the Westminster Magistrates’ Court.

Sources told this correspondent that the leading Indian-origin businessman, widely respected in business circles, was kept at the police station for a day and questioned about his links with Jabir Siddiq. It’s understood that the two have been in contact with each other over phone. The businessman was questioned and allowed to go home but has been told by the police that he could be called to the police station again at any time during the course of investigation.

Sources told that the Indian businessman was interviewed under caution and asked questions about the contact Jabir Siddiq made with him after arriving in London three weeks ago and previously. The Indian businessman, according to sources, told the police that Jabir Siddiq was his friend but they have never been involved in any wrongdoing. The businessman was also asked about his trip to Pakistan several years and the people he met during that trip.

Separately, sources have told that two other individuals were also taken to the police station by the police and asked questions about Jabir Siddiq and their relation. None of the three people have been charged but the police have told them that they could be questioned again in relation to the on-going inquiry.

According to court papers, Jabir Siddiq Moti was arrested on a provisional warrant issued by the United States of America on August 16, 2018 in relation to an offence of conspiracy to import narcotics.

Leanna Bezzant, representing the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), said that charges against Siddiq carry a prison sentence of 25 years.

The prosecution has claimed that Jabir Siddiq was involved in extortion, debt collections and that he travelled extensively to conduct meetings on behalf of the leader of D-Company but his friends and lawyers have said he's a respected businessman whose family was amongst the founders of Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE).

Siddiq's lawyer Toby Cadman argued on behalf of Mr Moti that the first warrant was invalid as the information provided by the Prosecution did not match the information contained in the warrant.

The lawyer argued during the hearing that there was no evidence before the court at this stage and that this should be approached with some caution. He noted that there is the presumption of innocence and a presumption in favour of bail. Mr Toby Cadman confirmed at the hearing that his client strongly denied the allegations in their entirety and denied any involvement with any organised crime or terrorist organisation. Friends of Jabir Siddiq have said that allegations against him are baseless and he has never been involved in any wrongdoing.