



Promoting Understanding, Tolerance and Pluralism

July 27, 2010

The Honorable Bruce J. Kaplan, Esq.
Middlesex Prosecutor's Office
25 Kirkpatrick Street, 3rd Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear Prosecutor Kaplan:

I write to you on behalf of the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) to express our outrage over the tragic murder of Dr. Divyendu Sinha in Old Bridge, NJ and appeal to you to prosecute the five men in custody to the fullest extent of the law.

The heinous nature of their crime -- the unprovoked, fatal beating of an unsuspecting man in the presence of his wife and two children -- demonstrates a ruthlessness, depravity and absolute disregard for human life which we believe warrants harsher penalties that can only come about if tried as adults. Your motion to the Family Court to this end is appreciated and we hope that you pursue it and any other required motions or appeals zealously.

We also wish to strongly urge that the possibility of this brutal attack being a bias crime be fully investigated, and prosecuted as such, should the evidence so indicate. While initial media reports imply that the bias crime angle was ruled out because these men allegedly attempted to attack a white male just minutes prior to the fatal assault on Dr. Sinha (although the perpetrators were not white), later news reports indicate that efforts to assess whether there was racial bias may still be made. We urge you to push for a thorough and detailed investigation of any racial bias and motivation, including but not limited to any statements or actions made by the perpetrators before, during and after the attack.

Lastly, several community members have expressed a growing concern with the level of and/or lack of response by local law enforcement to a rising number of complaints of harassment, intimidation and attacks perpetrated against Indian Americans. If verifiable, this signals a more systematic issue that must be addressed with proactive steps by law enforcement as well as dialogue between the community, your office and local law enforcement to allay the concerns for personal safety of Middlesex County Indian and Hindu Americans.

We have come across some mainstream media reports reporting on a few such incidents and are conducting our own investigation of other complaints. We hope to begin a conversation with your office and also have a working relationship with the U.S. Department of Justice, should there be a need for broader investigation and engagement.

The Hindu American Foundation is an advocacy organization seeking to provide a voice for the Hindu American community. HAF interacts with members of government, media and the public at large about issues affecting the Hindu American community, including civil rights, discrimination and bias crimes. I look forward to continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,

Suhag A. Shukla, Esq.
Legal Counsel/Managing Director