

## Two More Teens Charged In NJ Scientist's Murder

New York: (IANS) US police has charged two more teenagers for the murder of an Indian-American computer scientist outside his home at Old Bridge in New Jersey.



Three other teenagers were charged recently after Divyendu Sinha, 49, an IIT Kharagpur alumnus, died from head injuries he received in the beating by a group of teenagers recently. Two

boys, one 17 and the other 16, join three other 17-year-olds charged earlier. The five, none of whom was identified because of their ages, may also face bias charges, Middlesex County Prosecutor Bruce Kaplan said.

In addition to the charges arising from Sinha's fatal beating, the five juveniles, all Old Bridge residents, were charged in a separate unrelated case of an altercation with a motorist minutes before they attacked Sinha, Kaplan said.

The five teenagers engaged in a motor vehicle chase with another motorist less than five minutes before they attacked Sinha, the prosecutor said. The incidents occurred less than two miles from each other.

Kaplan said that while the attack on Sinha appears to be random and unprovoked in light of the earlier incident, authorities may decide to file bias charges once their investigation is completed.

The initial focus of the probe, he said, "has been to determine who was responsible for the murder of Dr. Sinha".

## US Visas Pose Appallingly Pervasive Problem: US Official

Washington: (IANS) A day after India raised the issue of visas for Indian professionals and skilled workers, a senior US official acknowledged that visas posed an "appallingly pervasive problem" in science and technology cooperation.

"Visas have been an appalling pervasive problem in science and technology cooperation," said Dr John P Holdren, advisor to the US president on science and technology, recently.

"We need to streamline visa procedures and we have made considerable achievements already in the Obama administration," Holdren said at the inauguration of first US-India Joint Commission on Science and Technology Cooperation.

Indian Minister of State for Science and Technology Prithviraj Chavan, who is leading the Indian team, said the coming together of the US and India, one a very large economy and the other poised to become one, would have great bearing on the future.

"The commitment of our two leaders in building knowledge society, without a doubt, is at a level never seen before," he said. "For the relationship to be meaningful, it has to be a mutually beneficial arrangement, with a win win situation."

The present day challenges of water, food security, food, climate change or threat to national security can only be addressed through science

and technology and through cooperation between willing partners, Chavan said.

Science and technology plays a key role in addressing the challenges being faced by both India and the US, Holdren said noting the two countries have already accomplished a lot through their cooperation in the field of science and technology.

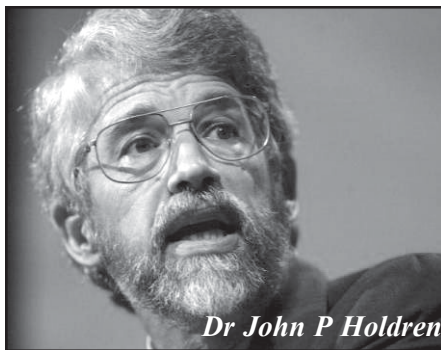
Holdren's acknowledgement of the problems with the US visa regime came a day after Indian Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma raised the issue in a meeting with the US Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke.

Highlighting India's concerns, he emphasised the need for an active dialogue with the end objective of launching negotiations on a Totalisation

Agreement. He pointed out that due to the absence of such an agreement, Indian companies in the US were making double payments of social security, without getting any benefits.

Sharma also highlighted India's concerns on the US export control regime as applicable to India and sought their early removal prior to President Barack Obama's visit to India in November.

He also sought US support for India's membership of multilateral export control regimes and emphasised the need for pruning of the US entity list to remove Indian government entities.



Dr John P Holdren

## Groom-To-Be Killed In Boat Accident

New York: (IANS) A young Indian American physiotherapist preparing to marry his long-time sweetheart next month was killed in a boating accident in New York Harbor, media reports said.

Jijo Puthuvamkunnath, 30, was celebrating with friends on a small boat near the Statue of Liberty Friday afternoon when they were hit by a 30-foot ProLine craft piloted by Richard Aquilone, New York Daily News said.



The impact shattered the tiny boat and pinned Puthuvamkunnath in the hull, killing the New Jersey man just two days

after he sat with his fiance Sissy Chacko for their wedding portrait.

Puthuvamkunnath, an immigrant from India who earned a doctorate from Rutgers University, was a physical therapist who worked with children at schools and hospitals throughout New Jersey.

Clutching an invitation to a wedding that will never be, the victim's heartbroken father, Varghese Puthuvamkunnath, the Daily said, had one message for the boater charged with taking his son's life: "Give this to the man who killed my son!"

Varghese was crying so hard Saturday he could barely walk. "My boy, my boy," he said, as his voice trailed off and the tears streamed down his face. "I lost my child."

US Park Police officials believe Aquilone's boat - the Reel Impulsive - hit the wake of a passing Shark speedboat and then came crashing down atop the 17-foot Bayliner in which Puthuvamkunnath was sitting with two friends.

Aquilone, 39, was charged with vehicular manslaughter and operating a vessel while under the influence of alcohol. He blurted out his condolences to the dead man's family after his arraignment in Manhattan Criminal Court. "I apologise for this, really," Aquilone said.

The wedding party posed for photos on Wednesday and the invitations were mailed out last month for an Aug 28 ceremony at Assyrian Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary in Paramus, New Jersey.

## More Indian Americans Contesting Polls This Year

Washington: (IANS) With the rise of 'desi power', as people of Indian origin call themselves, a record number of Indian Americans are running for public office this year.

In addition to Nikki 'Randhawa' Haley, who brushed aside allegations of marital infidelity and an ethnic slur to become the Republican nominee for governor in South



Reshma Saujani

Carolina, Indian Americans are campaigning this year for congressional seats in Pennsylvania, Kansas, California, New York and Ohio.

More than a dozen others serve in senior positions in the Obama administration, including US Chief Information Officer Vivek Kundra and USAID chief Rajiv Shah.

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, the first Indian American governor, made the Republican short list for vice president in 2008.

Like Haley, most of the politicians in races this year are second-generation immigrants who volunteered for local political campaigns, served in state legislatures or worked on Capitol Hill, the Washington Post noted recently.

Manan Trivedi, a doctor and Iraq war veteran, recently won the Democratic primary in

Pennsylvania's 6th Congressional District. Before running for Congress, he served as a healthcare adviser to the Obama campaign.

Raj Goyle, who has served in the Kansas legislature for three years, is running in the Democratic primary in the 4th Congressional District, which includes his home town of Wichita.

Reshma Saujani, a Democratic fundraiser in the South Asian community, says she is the first Indian American woman to run for Congress.

"I always wanted to serve, but I never thought someone with my name could actually run," Saujani,

who is challenging Democratic House member Carolyn B. Maloney in the Sep 14 primary, told the Post.

The increased political involvement is an indication of "successful assimilation into mainstream American society", Dino Teppara, chair of the Indian American Conservative Council and former chief of staff for Republican House member Joe Wilson, was quoted as saying.

The estimated 2.5 million Indian Americans rank among the most highly educated ethnic groups in the US, according to census figures, and they have the highest per-capita income.

## Rahman Postpones North American Leg Of 'Jai Ho' Concert

New Delhi: (IANS) Music maestro A.R. Rahman has cancelled the North American leg of his "Jai Ho Concert: The Journey Home World Tour" after a lighting rig collapsed in Detroit before the show.

"Dear friends, fans and well-wishers, as you may know, members of our tour miraculously escaped a big disaster in Detroit this past Saturday, when part of the Pontiac Silverdome infrastructure collapsed on our set. All the artists, singers, musicians, dancers, technicians (myself included) have been almost given a second life," Rahman wrote on his Facebook page.



"With that, we have decided to postpone the remaining dates of the North American leg of this tour and will reschedule them at a later date. We will go ahead with the concerts scheduled in Europe and UK. That is the best option we have, considering the circumstances.

"While I apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused to our friends in the US and Canada, maybe it's a blessing in disguise as we will have the opportunity to perform for you with even more energy and perfection," he wrote.

The Oscar winning musician

is on a world tour that takes him across US, Canada, France, Switzerland, Holland and Britain. He has so far performed in New York, Atlantic City and Chicago.

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