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QUEENS MAN CHARGED WITH HATE CRIME AND OTHER CHARGES
FOR DESTROYING STATUE IN FRONT OF HINDU TEMPLE

*Smashed Gandhi Statue into Pieces; Four Others Remain Unapprehended;
Faces up to Fifteen Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Sukhpal Singh, 27, was arrested and charged with criminal mischief as a hate crime for allegedly smashing a statue in front of the Tulsi Mandir Temple last month. The incident took place around 3:00 AM on Tuesday, August 16, 2022.

District Attorney Katz said, "As alleged, the defendant, along with several unapprehended others, committed a disgraceful act of violence against a Mahatma Gandhi statue that has become a universal symbol of peace, unity and inclusivity. Hate and bias-motivated attacks have no place in our communities and my Office will hold such perpetrators accountable. The defendant has been apprehended and is charged appropriately."

Singh, of Little Neck Road, Queens, was arrested on Saturday and charged with one count of criminal mischief in the second degree as a hate crime, criminal mischief in the second degree and aggravated harassment in the first degree. Yesterday, the defendant was arraigned on the charges before Queens Criminal Court Judge Odessa Kennedy, who ordered the defendant to return to court on October 17, 2022. Singh faces up to fifteen years in prison if convicted.

According to the complaint, on August 16, 2022, at 9:00 a.m., a priest at the Tulsi Mandir Temple located at 103-26 111th Street observed a statue depicting Mahatma Gandhi was broken into multiple pieces along with the words "Kutta Dog" spray painted on the pieces.

Furthermore, officers observed video surveillance from August 16, 2022, which depicted five individuals pushing down the Mahatma Gandhi statue, striking it several times with a sledgehammer and spray painting the statue and running towards Liberty Avenue and then some entering a Mercedes Benz C-Class vehicle bearing the license plate # KUG9664 and some entering a black Toyota Camry.

Continuing, said DA Katz, after investigation by the NYPD it was determined that the registered owner of the Mercedes Benz vehicle observed on video surveillance is defendant Singh.

The case is being prosecuted by the District Attorney's Hate Crimes Bureau under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michael Brovner, Bureau Chief and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Supreme Court Trial Division Pishoy Yacoub.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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