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MOTORIST CHARGED WITH MANSLAUGHTER AND LEAVING THE SCENE OF FATALITY
FOR STRIKING WORKER ON NASSAU EXPRESSWAY

*Defendant Sped Through Construction Lane, 44-Year-Old Victim's Body Thrown 168 Feet
Faces up to 22 Years in Prison, if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Daveanand Budhai was arraigned on charges of manslaughter, assault, leaving the scene of a fatality, reckless driving and other charges for causing the death of a safety flag worker who was positioned inside a construction zone on the Nassau Expressway Friday morning. Budhai was allegedly driving at a high rate of speed near exit 1N on the Nassau Expressway, which leads to the Van Wyck Expressway.

DA Katz said: "As alleged, 44-year-old Isabel Alvarez was simply doing her job as a flag person at a construction site when this defendant barreled his sedan into her and threw the woman's body 168 feet and into the shoulder of the roadway. The defendant was ignoring the laws of the road, speeding and using a construction zone as his personal shortcut when his actions took the life of the worker. My office is committed to aggressively prosecuting those who endanger everyone on our roadways. Our condolences are with the family, friends and coworkers of Isabel Alvarez as they mourn her senseless loss."

Budhai, 25, of 115th Street in South Ozone Park, was arraigned by Judge Diego Freire on a felony complaint charging him with manslaughter in the second degree, assault in the second degree, leaving the scene of a fatality without reporting, reckless driving, aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and related charges. If convicted the defendant faces up to 22 years. The defendant was ordered by Judge Freire to return to court on September 26.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges, on September 19, at approximately 7:28 a.m., Daveanand Budhai was operating an Infiniti sedan driving eastbound at a high rate of speed on the Nassau Expressway toward Exit 1N to the Van Wyck Expressway. At the time of the crash, the ramp was an active construction zone, and the left lane was closed and marked with multiple traffic drums and signage. The posted speed for the ramp is 25 miles per hour.

Budhai drove into the traffic drums and struck 44-year-old Isabel Alvarez, who was working as a flag person holding a "STOP/SLOW" paddle in the construction area. She was wearing her required safety equipment, including a hard hat and fluorescent reflective visibility vest.

The victim's body was thrown approximately 168 feet and landed in the left shoulder of the roadway, which caused her death.

After hitting Alvarez, Budhai fled from the scene, exited the expressway, and drove to the intersection of 134 Street and South Conduit Avenue, which is over one mile from the collision. The defendant then called 911 to request an ambulance for injuries he sustained to his hands as a result of the collision.

When police arrived at the scene of the defendant's 911 call, the Q50 sedan was observed to have significant front-end damage, including a shattered windshield that appeared to be broken open. Blood and glass were inside the vehicle as well as fluorescent marks on the hood and roof of the vehicle.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Christopher Paul of the NYPD's Collision Investigation Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Vivian Gonzalez of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Matthew Hauszpigel, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jonathan Selkove, Unit Chief of the District Attorney's Vehicular Homicide Unit and Deputy Bureau Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and John Kosinski, Bureau

Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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

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