



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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CITY CHIEF ENGINEER ARRESTED IN "1%" SHAKEDOWN -- Sought Bribe From Manhattan Bridge Reconstruction Contractor --

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of NANDA CHAKRAVARTTI, the Engineer-in-Charge of the City Department of Transportation's (DOT) \$127 million Manhattan Bridge Reconstruction project, for soliciting a 1% payoff from a contractor performing work on the project, and offering, in return, to help the firm increase its project profits by allowing assignment of more workers.

The arrest was the result of a ongoing joint investigation by DOI and the Office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau, which began when the contractor reported to DOI that CHAKRAVARTTI had solicited a bribe from an employee of the contractor. No payment was ever made.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "Bridge renovations cost the City big money and are vital to the public's safety and economic welfare. This arrest sends a stern warning to any City worker looking for 'a piece of the action' that corruption carries a high risk of apprehension and prosecution. I extend my sincere thanks to DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall and commend her for her exemplary assistance and cooperation in this investigation."

DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall said, "This agency does not tolerate corruption. We have provided full cooperation in this investigation, and will continue to do so."

The investigation disclosed that, in August 1999, at the DOT Manhattan Bridge Reconstruction project field office at 10 Jay Street in downtown Brooklyn, CHAKRAVARTTI had met with an employee of the contractor, and had asked to be paid 1% of the contractor's profit-earning contract items on the bridge reconstruction, in return for allowing the contractor to assign more employees to the bridge project and thereby increase the amount of DOT's payments to the contractor.

CHAKRAVARTTI, 54, of 111 Cuffys Lane in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, was arrested yesterday afternoon at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office by DA's Rackets Investigators Michael McTighe and Joseph Piraino.

CHAKRAVARTTI, was hired by DOT in 1994 as a civil engineer. In 1997 he served as Engineer-in-Charge of the Brooklyn Bridge Reconstruction project, and in 1999 he was assigned as Engineer-in-Charge of the Manhattan Bridge Reconstruction project. He currently earns an annual salary of \$75,447 and has been suspended without pay. CHAKRAVARTTI has been charged with Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, a

Class D felony, and Criminal Solicitation in the Fourth Degree and Official Misconduct, both Class A misdemeanors. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

The investigation is being conducted by Ronald P. Calvosa, DOI's Inspector General for DOT, and members of his staff, including First Deputy Inspector General Mary T. Piechocki and Special Investigator Edward Zinser.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney John Dormin of the DA's Rackets Bureau, under the supervision of Bureau Chief Patrick Dugan, is handling the matter.