

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of New York

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Rochester Couple Charged With Fraud And Money Laundering

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ROCHESTER, N.Y. - U.S. Attorney James P. Kennedy, Jr. announced today that Anjaneyulu Katam and Mahalakshmi Cheruvu, of Rochester, NY, were arrested and charged by criminal complaint with visa fraud, money laundering, false statements, and conspiracy to defraud the United States. The charges carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kyle Rossi, who is handling the case, stated that according to the complaint, between 2011 and 2016, Katam and Cheruvu ran businesses in which they falsified immigration documents for Indian nationals to enter the U.S. and work in tech industries involving computer programming. The husband and wife manipulated the H-1B visa program, which allows U.S. employers temporarily to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations. The complaint states that Katam and Cheruvu falsified visa applications, work experience documents and work contracts, which they then submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of State, in order to secure H-1B visas for Indian nationals. Their efforts resulted in the unlawful entry and employment of several Indian nationals within the United States.

The defendants made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jonathan Feldman and were released on conditions.

The criminal complaint is the result of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations, under the direction of Michael C. Mikulka, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Region, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Kevin Kelly, and the Department of State, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Charles Brandeis.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.