



## Finance man in rape trial

A FINANCE consultant from north London is on trial for allegedly raping an 18-year-old woman after a night out drinking with his colleagues.

Sanjay Naker denies three charges of rape, one count of attempted rape, one charge of assault by penetration, and a count of sexual assault as the trial began at Inner London crown court last week.

The married 28-year-old is accused of carrying the woman over his shoulder after she was denied entry into a nightclub in central London for being drunk and raped her in an alleyway in March last year.

Naker told police the sex was consensual and said the woman had not appeared drunk. He admitted later searching online for a definition of the word "rape" but said it reassured him he had done nothing wrong.

The prosecution alleges that Naker forced the extremely drunk woman to perform sex acts on him before trying to have sex with her.

Naker denies the allegations against him as the trial continues.



**POLICY COSTS:** Chai Patel (top right) believes that targeting migrants for additional fees 'poisons' the debate around immigration



# Britain 'pricing migrants out'

## OUTRAGE AMID 'PROHIBITIVE' COST OF VISA AND PASSPORT APPLICATION FEES

by NADEEM BADSHAH

**MIGRANTS in the UK - among them doctors and nurses - are facing poverty due to the rocketing price of Home Offices fees, lawyers and campaigners have warned.**

They have hit out at the rising charges for asylum, immigration and nationality applications and say it is breaking up families with some moving back to south Asia because they cannot afford the costs.

Among non-EU migrants affected are those working in the NHS who face visas costs of £1,200 and a £600 Immigration Health Surcharge - paid every time migrants change jobs, even if it's within a year.

The independent chief inspector of borders and immigration has launched an inquiry into the charges, which have gone up since 2010. Other charges are a £3,250 levy for indefinite leave for an adult dependent relative and £1,330 for an adult naturalisation application.

The Home Office has reportedly made profits of up to 800 per cent on some immigration applications from families. The cost to the department of processing a naturalisation application is £372.

Vicash Ramkissoon, business immigration director at Duncan Lewis Solicitors, said the UK now has a reputation for having "one of the highest visa processing fees in the world".

He told *Eastern Eye*: "Migrants have faced year on year increases to their visa costs which are clearly unjustifiable especially when it has been widely reported that the Home Office are making up to an 800 per cent profit on some applications.

"Costs are much higher when applying for settlement in the UK and a family of four would be charged an extortionate amount of almost £10,000 to make an application for indefinite leave to remain.

"Many have no choice in paying such costs, having settled here with their families, and are often faced with using credit cards or taking out loans to pay for Home Office fees.

"In extreme cases, only some members have applied initially to save costs, which can lead to the risk of breaching immigration rules for the other family members, especially when their visas have expired.

"The additional cost of the IHS, which is mandatory for most applications, can only be described as a 'stealth tax' against working migrants who would already be contributing to the UK's public services through tax and national insurance contributions."

The registration fee for an adult has risen from

£500 seven years ago to £1,206. And the cost of a settlement visa for a dependent relative has increased from £585 in 2008-09 to £3,250 in 2017-18.

Naturalisation for non-British overseas territory citizens costs £1,330, compared with £906 in 2014-15, while nationality registration for adults has gone up from £823 in 2014-15 to £1,206.

Chai Patel, legal and policy director at the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, told *Eastern Eye*: "The evidence shows that migrants contribute more to the UK's public services in taxes than they use themselves.

"In that context, targeting migrants for additional taxes, fees and surcharges seems nonsensical.

"Many of these measures are announced by politicians to give the impression that migrants create a drain on the public purse, when in fact the reverse is true. This sort of thing poisons the public debate and needs to stop."

Registration fees for children to become British citizens has also soared. It costs £1,012 to register under-18s, up from £500 in 2011. Discounts for a second or additional child were axed in 2014.

Amit Kapadia, executive director of the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme Forum, said: "The HSMP Forum made number of submissions against the Home Office's exorbitant fees which is, at times, 10 times more than the costs it incurs in processing an application.

"Furthermore, the kind of ever-deteriorating services which are received by applicants makes it wholly disproportionate.

"On top of this, the immigration health surcharge impacts migrants' family life as it means they are either forced into poverty or the option to send their family back home.

"The application of an immigration health surcharge is a new low. Those having a family with a sole bread winner are even more disadvantaged as a result of such draconian visa fees and surcharge."

A Home Office spokeswoman said when setting fees, it takes into account the wider costs involved in running its border, immigration and citizenship system.

"There are exceptions to application fees to protect the most vulnerable, such as for young people who are in the care of a local authority.

"Application fees are also waived where evidence provided shows a person may be destitute, or where there are exceptional financial circumstances, and requiring a payment would result in a breach of rights under the European convention on human rights."

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