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OPINION

NRI tutor charged with raping pupils

[Wednesday, May 31, 2006 10:39:05 am AP]

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NEW YORK: An Indian-origin female teacher and director at an exclusive Manhattan private school, already charged with the statutory rape and sodomy of a male pupil has been indicted on similar charges involving a second boy, a prosecutor has said.

Lina Sinha, 40, began having sex with the second pupil at the private Montessori International School of New York, which encourages pupils to learn and develop their creativity at their own pace, when he was 12; Assistant District Attorney Florence Chapin told the court.

Sinha began sexual liaisons with the first boy, now a New York City police officer, when he was 13 and she was 29, the prosecutor said, adding that the liaisons lasted for years.

Chapin disclosed the case of the second boy during a hearing in Manhattan's state Supreme Court in which she told Justice Carol Berkman that Sinha is now charged with 81 crimes. Chapin asked the judge to set the teacher's bail at USD 100,000.

Prosecutors have said Sinha has family ties in India and could possibly flee.

Chapin said Sinha, on administrative leave from the school on Manhattan's East Side, began a sexual relationship with the first pupil in June 1996, when he was a 13-year-old eighth-grader. She was charged in October 2005 with raping him.

When he tried to end the affair in 2004, Chapin said, Sinha tried to ruin his life "by making up heinous allegations that he raped a young girl and then made separate allegations that he also brutally assaulted the defendant (Sinha)."

Sinha assumed another person's identity on at least 10 occasions in 2004-05 to file rape charges in person, by telephone and by e-mail claiming the policeman had raped her niece, the prosecutor said yesterday.

Investigators found the person whose identity Sinha had assumed and that person said she did not have a niece, had never reported any rape and did not know the victim or the defendant, the prosecutor said.

The officer reported his former relationship with Sinha to police after the teacher tried to frame him and about a week before the five-year statute of limitations on her sex crimes would have expired, the prosecutor said.

Prosecutors said Sinha could not be charged with improper sexual contact with her former pupil after he turned 17 because that is the age of consent in New York State.

Meanwhile, in January 2001, Sinha began a sexual liaison with the second pupil, who was 12 and in the seventh grade, Chapin said.

Besides rape and sodomy, Sinha is charged with criminal impersonation, bribing a witness, tampering with physical evidence, endangering the welfare of a child and falsely reporting an incident. If convicted on the rape or sodomy charges, she would face up to 25 years in prison.

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