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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MVA EMPLOYEE, BALTIMORE MAN, INDICTED IN FALSE DRIVERS LICENSE SCHEME

Baltimore - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, Gary M. Bald, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore District, Louis Crocetti, District Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Baltimore District Office, and James Kuiken, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, Washington Field Office, announced that Mohan B. Thapa, age 32, a legal resident alien from Nepal living in Baltimore, and Mellarie L. Chisholm, age 37, of Towson, were indicted today in connection with their alleged roles in a scheme to provide Maryland MVA identification cards and driver's licenses to illegal aliens and aliens who did not have proper proof of identification.

The indictment alleges that between mid-September 2001 and the end of September 2002 Thapa paid Chisholm, an employee at the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, Mondawmin

Mall office, undisclosed amounts of money in order for Chisholm to process applications for driver's

licenses and Maryland identification cards for aliens who did not have proper proof of identification. The indictment further alleges that between 300 and 500 illegal aliens and aliens without proper identification received Maryland identification cards or driver's licenses in the past year as a result of the relationship between Thapa and Chisholm. Thapa, who lived in the 6100 block of Fairdel Avenue in Baltimore, was a certified court interpreter who provided translation services for individuals attempting to obtain Maryland driver's licenses.

The indictment specifically charges both Chisholm and Thapa with one count of conspiracy, two counts of using the mails to aid in a bribery scheme, and two counts of producing false identity documents. The maximum prison sentence for the conspiracy charge and for the use of the mails to aid in bribery charges, is five years for each count in the indictment. The maximum term of imprisonment for the production of false identity documents is fifteen years for each count in the indictment. Each count in the indictment carries a maximum fine of \$250,000.

Both Mr. Thapa and Ms. Chisholm were arrested on September 27, 2002, by reason of criminal complaints and arrest warrants issued by the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. Ms. Chisholm was released on pretrial conditions. Mr. Thapa has been detained since his arrest. No further court proceedings have been scheduled at this time.

An indictment is a finding by a federal grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that the crimes charged therein were committed. An indictment is merely an accusation and both Mr. Thapa and Ms. Chisholm are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The case was investigated by special agents of the FBI, the INS, the Inspector General of

the U.S. Department of Transportation and investigators with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph L. Evans.

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