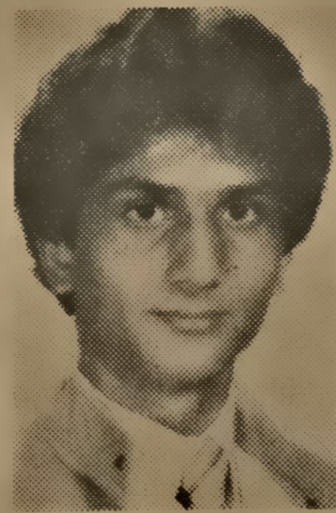


DISASTER IN THE AIR The tragedy of Air India Flight 182



Inder Thakur



Bipin Patel



Shyla Aurora



Akhil Wahdwa



Serina Wahdwa



Ramwati Gupta



Lakshmy Subramanian



Veena Subramanian



Ivy Thachetta

146 boarded ill-fated jet here

A young woman who had made a successful life for herself in Toronto, flying home for a long-awaited reunion with her family.

Proud mothers taking their children back to India for eagerly anticipated introductions to their grandparents.

Entire families on a summer holiday they had spent years saving pennies to afford.

The elderly who were returning for one last, nostalgic visit to the country of their birth.

All dead. Parents, children, babies, old men and old women — all excited and some no doubt nervous about the long, trans-Atlantic flight that would take them to an ancestral home some had never even seen.

It took them, instead, to their deaths, exploding and plunging into the North Atlantic.

We may never know if the 329 people aboard the doomed Air India Flight 182 even had time to realize their fate; if

Written by Rosie DiManno with files from Jane Coutts, Don Dutton, Cal Millar, Jonathon Ferguson, Stan Josey, Joseph Hall, Dana Flavelle, Paul Bilodeau, Dale Brazao, Pat McNeily, Kim Zarzour and Damien Cox.

there were a few moments before and after the explosion to see and feel and understand the disaster that had befallen them.

But in hundreds of Canadian and Indian homes today, those who are left behind — the friends and families of all those who died so suddenly and so unnecessarily — will have years to feel and mourn, if not understand, the tragedy.

Telephones started ringing around Metro early yesterday as news of the tragedy began to spread. Instead of joyous airport reunions, the relatives of the dead wept tears of grief.

In shock, they huddled in their homes, clutching pictures of spouses, children and parents who perished. Friends and relatives brought parcels of food, because Indian tradition decrees that no cooking shall take place in a household where someone has just died. Meanwhile, other family members from around the globe, reached out to each other in frantic, trans-Atlantic calls, seeking solace and some fragment of hope.

But there was none.

Of the 329 people aboard — 307 passengers and 22 crew members — 280 were Canadians. Of those, 146 boarded the ill-fated plane at Pearson International Airport.

In the litany of disaster and terrorist madness, they have become statistics. But to those who knew and loved them, they were living, breathing human beings, with hopes and dreams and every reason in the world to live.

Star's Vijaya Thampi 'was a wonderful girl'

Vijaya Thampi, 28, was to have flown to India 10 days ago but changed her plans at the last minute so she could celebrate her 10th wedding anniversary with her husband. It was to be her last.

"She was a wonderful girl. She was my best friend," her heart-broken husband, Vern, told The Star yesterday.

"Up until now, I thought I was the luckiest man in the world."

The Markham woman had worked for The Star since early 1981. She and her husband emigrated to Canada nine years ago and their daughter Nisha will turn 6 on July 29, the day her mother was to return to Toronto.

"She planned the trip around those two days," her husband explained.

A native of Bombay, Vijaya was travelling alone to spend a month with her mother and brothers in Bombay.

"This was almost the only thing we quarrelled about," Thampi said. "I didn't want her to go, but she was determined to. She and her mother were just the same sort of women, so warm and so close. They missed each other badly."

Thampi spoke to his mother-in-law after receiving word of his wife's death. She collapsed at the news. "Vijaya was her only girl. I don't think she'll be able to bear this."

Vijaya, who was fluent in four languages, was a receptionist in The Star's personnel department.

"She was the typical Indian girl," said her husband. "At first she didn't want to work, but I was convinced she had great talents and I persuaded her to go to Seneca (College) and get training."

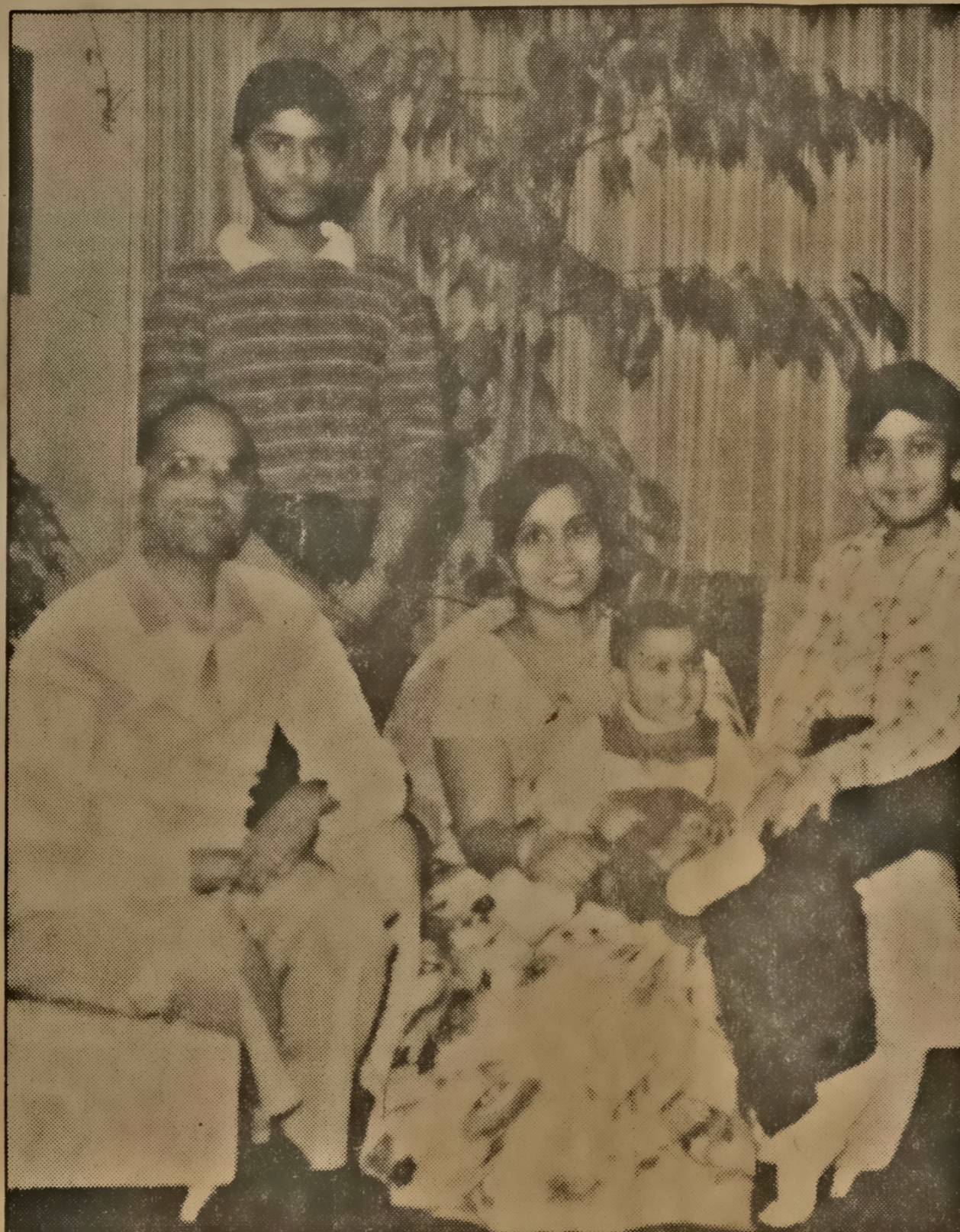
"And she did very, very well in her job. I am convinced that she would have surpassed me in my career. She was growing up so wonderfully."

"She was a very sincere, honest and beautiful person," said Jim Herman, industrial, health and safety administrator at The Star.

"Everybody at the company who knew her will miss her very much."

Ron Thompson, The Star's benefits administrator, described Thampi as "a real ray of light in the department."

"You know, she used to make the press-room men take off their inky shoes when



Family slain: The crash of Air India Flight 182 wiped out the Sharma family of Fieldside Dr., Scarborough. A recent picture shows Shyan Sharma, bottom left, and his wife Sumitra with their three sons Sandeep, 15, standing, baby Vikash, 2½ and Anuf, 10.

they came into to personnel, and nobody else ever managed that," he remembered.

Thampi is planning to fly to England to claim his wife's body.

Error in flight bookings cost him wife, children

If not for a twist of "ill fate" — a mistake in flight bookings — Mississauga scientist Arup K. Das would still have his wife and two children alive and well.

Grief-stricken relatives and friends who gathered at the Abruz Rd. home of Das, an Atomic Energy of Canada employee, said yesterday that his wife, Ruby, daughter Anita, 16, and son Arindam, 14, had been booked on next Friday's flight to India.

But early last week, they learned that a close friend of the Das family, Mita Gupta, 16, who lives in the London area, was booked by mistake on the June 22 flight. They had planned to travel together.

"It was an ill fate. He (Das) had a lot of trouble changing the bookings ahead and it wasn't until Thursday or Friday that everything was arranged," said the friend, Samir Ghosh.

All were going to visit relatives in the Calcutta area, including Ruby Das's parents. The trip had been planned to coincide with the end of the school year and moving the date ahead didn't seem to make much difference at the time.

Das's holidays were not scheduled until July and he planned to fly to India at that time to join his family, said Ghosh.

Das came to Canada in the mid-1960s, living for two years on the East Coast where he did research at the University of New Brunswick. He then moved to Montreal where he lived until 1977, when he joined AEC in Mississauga, where he works in designing.

The Das children were both students at Cawthra Park Secondary School. Mita Gupta, a Grade 11 student, was the daughter of Prabir Gupta, manager of a large poultry farm near the southwestern community of Melbourne.

A relative said her father and Das were close friends and she was a close friend of Anita Das.

Adopted girl was going to visit natural parents

Just three years ago, Surjit Rai and his wife chose an eight-year-old girl named Kiranjit from India to be the daughter they never had.

Now they've lost her again.

The Jane St. youngster was one of about 80 children who died on Flight 182 early yesterday.

"My wife is in despair, she is weeping so much, so much," Rai told The Star.

Kiranjit, 11, was on her way to India to spend the summer with her natural parents, who wanted to see her again.

"We had only one son, so we heard of her through relatives in India and we arranged to adopt her," said Rai. "But her natural parents asked to see her again, and we said she could go."

"Her natural father was meeting her at

the airport. He was waiting to see her again."

Kiranjit had just finished Grade 5 at King George School in York. Her father said she was good at everything, especially English and math.

"She loved to read; she read all the time. When she got the chance to go to India, she read all about it."

'My whole family's dead' says grieving father of 3

There's a kind of desperate calm in Parshatam Dhunna's voice as he discussed the greatest loss a man can suffer — the death of his entire family.

"What can I say? They're all dead. My whole family's dead," the stunned Hamilton resident repeated in a soft, steady voice.

"I have friends here. My brother-in-law is here, but I know that nobody can do anything. It's a great blow."

Dhunna's wife Bhag, 34, left Saturday for India, accompanied by her mother, Nasib Manjania, 62, and her three children. They had planned to stay until Aug. 24 and Dhunna was to join the family July 13.

"We'd been planning the trip for six months. The children were so excited. My son went there with me in 1980, but my wife and daughter had not been there since they came to this country in 1975."

Dhunna said the family left before him after his daughter, Shashi, 16, and son Rajesh, 14, had finished school early because of the teachers' strike in Hamilton. The couple's second son, Suneal, was only 2.



Star employee: Vijaya Thampi, 28, who worked in The Star's personnel department, was to have flown to India 10 days ago but she changed her plans. Yesterday she died in the wreckage of Flight 182 on her way to see her mother.

Relatives to get free flights

Relatives of the victims from yesterday's Air India crash will be flown free of charge to Cork, Ireland, to begin the painful process of identifying bodies.

Within hours of the crash, the airline said it reserved 58 seats on an Air Canada flight tonight to New York, where passengers will transfer to an Air India flight to London.

The airline said it will pay all flight and accommodation expenses for one relative from each family involved in

the disaster.

"Our priority is to get the relatives over there as quickly as possible," an Air India spokesman said. He indicated more seats might be reserved for relatives if the need arises.

The airline originally wanted to take relatives on direct flights from Toronto to London last night, but changed plans because not all the bodies were immediately recovered from the crash site off the Irish coast.

Dhunna, who works at Firestone, said both his older children were in Grade 9 at Scott Park School, where they did extremely well in their school work. Both loved swimming.

"They were such nice kids. My son especially, he was so helpful, always helping around the house, helping his sister. I can't really believe it."

Dhunna said his mother-in-law, who lived with them, was especially looking forward to the trip, since she only left India a year ago and was having some trouble adjusting to life in Canada, particularly the climate.

"I don't know what to do, it's really tragic," said Dhunna. "It's such a big blow, it's unbelievable."

A husband remembers his wife's final goodbye

Dr. Bal Gupta, an engineer with Ontario Hydro, was awakened at 6 a.m. by a friend telling him the devastating news: The plane carrying his wife to India had crashed in the North Atlantic.

Just hours earlier, Gupta had taken his wife, Ramwati, 38, from their Rosburn Dr. home in Etobicoke to Pearson International Airport for the 10 p.m. flight.

His two sons, Suneel, 18, and Susheel, 12, were also at the airport to say goodbye — their final goodbye — to their mother.

Gupta said his friend was crying on the phone.

"He'd just woken up and heard about the plane," he said. "He told me he thought the Air India plane carrying my wife had crashed."

Gupta said he was stunned and just couldn't believe it. "I called the newspapers to confirm something had happened."

He also had someone call his brother in New Delhi and asked him to notify his wife's parents who live in a small village, about 60 miles from the city.

"I wouldn't be able to get through to them . . . there isn't good telephone service to that area."

Throughout the day, friends who arrived at Gupta's Burnhamthorpe-Renforth area home gathered around a radio and television waiting for the latest developments.

"It'll be a miracle if anyone survived," Gupta said. "I know she is gone. No one could live through that."

Gupta said he and his youngest son were also going to India to visit relatives this year, but couldn't get a seat on the flight.

He said he wife, an employee at the Sear's catalogue office, received a telephone call from Air India Monday offering her the one seat which was left on the flight.

"She took it because it would give her a chance to visit with her family before we got there," he said.

Gupta and his son were planing to travel on an Air Kuwait flight on July 6.

He said the family came to Canada in 1968 and have visited India every four or five years.

They were last there in 1981 and were hoping to see as many relatives as possible on this trip.

Gupta said the family has no relatives here, but they have many friends.

At the airport, while saying goodbye to his wife, Gupta said he recognized many people he knew who were on the same flight.

"It's a real tragedy for many people here."

Hostess for Air India was visiting her sister

Shan Rana heard a Sunday morning bulletin about the crash only hours after he'd driven his sister-in-law, Shyla Aurora, to the airport for her return trip to India.

Aurora, 27, a hostess with Air India, had spent the past three weeks in Metro visiting with her sister, Shipra, and her parents, Roshan and Sundra Aurora, who are on a two-month holiday and staying at Rana's Mosque Dr. home.

"She's my only sister," cried Shipra after being told the jetliner had plunged 31,000 feet into the ocean off Ireland, leaving no survivors.

Rana said his sister-in-law was not working on the flight although she knew most of the crew members, who arrived Saturday to handle the once-a-week flight from Toronto to Bombay.

Aurora is single and had travelled to Canada on three or four other occasions to visit her sister.

Rana said most of the crew brought their families on the trip and had spent the past few days visiting throughout the Metro area, with a sidetrip to Niagara Falls.

Rana said he's taken the flight's purser, Inder Thakur, his wife, Priya and their son Vishal, 4, on a couple of outings and saw him at the airport just before the jet took off.

The flight staff were all friends and had made arrangements last year to make this trip with their families, he added.

Rana's brother, Paul, who was also at the airport, said he too recognized many people, including one of his closest friends, his wife and their three sons, who were travelling on the doomed flight.

"I saw many people I know," he said. "It's a tragic day . . . I'm going to know many of those who died."

Scarborough family among those who died

For the Sharma family of Fieldside Dr. in Scarborough — Shyam and Sumitra and their three sons — the trip was in response to the pleas of a mother and grandmother now in her 80s who didn't want to die without seeing her family once again.

Even the oldest son, Sanbeep, 16, a Grade 11 student at Albert Campbell Secondary School, who had wanted to complete some additional courses this summer, decided to go on the flight.

Shyam Sharma, a registered chartered accountant with International Business Machines for the past 12 years, came to Canada in 1968. He had worked as a junior accountant for a Scarborough firm at first, while completing his Canadian training.

The Sharmas's two other children were Anuf, 10, and Vikash, 2½.

"They were the finest people I have ever met," said Sneha Varma, who with her husband, Ram, have been close friends of the Sharmas since they lived in the same apartment building on Eglinton Ave. E.

It was to be adventure for 2 teenaged brothers

Devan and Rahul Nadkarni were two teenaged brothers on the adventure of their young lives — their first summer vacation in India.

Aged 18 and 16 respectively, the brothers are the sons of Dr. Ullas Nadkarni and his wife Kalpana, and were described by a family friend as "very bright boys."

"The younger one used to row for the school team," said 17-year-old Atiya Hasain.

"We've been friends for years. I'm really shocked and upset. I still can't believe they're gone."

Hasain said the Nadkarni family spent yesterday morning calling around to con-

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Parmjit Kaar



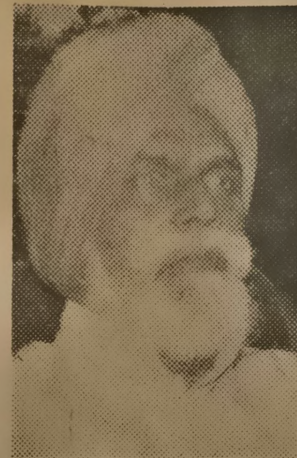
Krithika Laurence



Shyamala Laurence



Rajashree Sarangi



Mukhtiar Singh Brar



Santosh Kapoor



Sharmila Kapoor



Sabrina Kapoor



Ritu Gogne

They were all just 'going home'

Continued from previous page

firm that the airline had indeed crashed before mourning relatives and friends arrived at their home.

Rexdale woman planned to visit ailing father

Parmjit Kaar had been planning for months to visit her ailing father who lives in a small village outside New Delhi. But every time the trip was scheduled, something came up and she had to cancel.

But this time around, there were no last-minute snags to save the Rexdale woman from her death.

Yesterday, relatives went to her Kiskadee Dr. home to comfort Kaar's husband, Sukvinder Bassi.

"He's very broken up but he's being strong about it," a niece of the dead woman told The Star.

She said her aunt, who was in her mid-20s and worked in a factory, had been born in India and last visited the country six years ago.

The couple had no children but Kaar's niece said her aunt doted on all the other youngsters in her family.

"She was very sweet, very good with children," she said. "She was just a great lady. This so terrible."

Cancelled plans saved this Mississauga family

A Mississauga family was supposed to be on the death flight but cancelled their booking to attend a wedding here next weekend.

"I am happy for us but feel devastated about all the poor people who were on the plane," said Mississauga physician Mahesh Kapur.

Kapur, his wife Kusum and children Neeti, 7, and Anand, 5, had planned to travel with the Shyam Sharma family of Scarborough.

The Sharma family included Shyam, a 45-year-old accountant, his wife Sumitra, 40, and their children Sandeep, 16, Anuj, 9, and Vikas, 3.

"I still can't believe this has happened," said Kusum, who learned of the tragedy early yesterday morning when she received a phone call from her brother in London, England.

The Kusums will now leave for India July 6. They say they will go, despite the crash of Flight 182.

Trip was to be vacation for his teenaged niece

Ramanatan Tarakad of Toronto said his 16-year-old niece Janaki Ramaswamy, had been on the flight.

"I'm in shock," Tarakad told reporters. "She was like a daughter to me. I went to the airport to get her a window seat."

Tarakad said he had brought the Grade 11 student to Canada when she was only two years old.

Like many of those on Flight 182,



Tragic error: A tragic mistake in flight bookings cost Mississauga scientist Arup K. Das his wife, Ruby, and two children Arindam, 14, left and Anita, 16. They were booked to fly to India next week but were forced to change their plans.

Janaki was beginning a holiday trip to India, planning to visit her grandmother at Madras on the Bay of Bengal.

"She was going on vacation," said a looking forward to it," Tarakad said.

Mother postponed trip so daughters could go

Santosh Kapoor had planned to go to India last January but postponed the trip because her children wanted to accompany her.

Kapoor, 39, and daughters Sharmila, 16, and Sabrina, 6, were passengers on the doomed Air India Flight 182. Ramesh Kapoor stayed home to run the family's small manufacturing firm.

"The kids wanted to see their grandparents so Mrs. Kapoor put off her trip until Sharmila was out of school," said a friend at the Kapoor home on Indian Line in Mississauga.

"The family hadn't been to India in five

years so they were anxious to visit their relatives," said the friend, adding that Ramesh Kapoor was "in shock" over the loss of his family.

Mississauga woman mourns loss of sister

In another part of Mississauga, Sangeeta Gogne is mourning the loss of her 14-year-old sister Ritu who had been living with her for the past year.

Never giving up hope that her sister might still be alive, Gogne described Ritu to a reporter as if the young woman was merely lost.

"She's a tiny thing, only about 4-feet, 10 inches tall, and she looks more like a boy," Gogne told The Star. "She had on a blue T-shirt and white pants and gold bangles on her arms."

Raj Shaida, the girl's brother-in-law, said he has accepted an offer from Air India to fly to London to identify her body, if it is found.

Last rites for Hindu dead

The last rites of the Hindu victims of yesterday's Air India tragedy will end when their remains, if found, are assigned to the holy waters of the Ganges River in India.

Most Hindus cremate their adult dead, collect the ashes and sprinkle them in Ganga Jal, the water of Ganges that flows from the Himalayas southeast to the Bay of Bengal.

The ashes are generally poured 240 kilometres (150 miles) downstream from New Delhi at Haridwar, a sacred city of swamis and other Hindu holy men, temples and ashrams, theological institutions.

The most common sight in this small community is of Hindus arriving from all over India clutching Kalash, an urn holding the ashes.

They recruit a Brahmin (Hindu holy

man) to perform the last rites and sit either on the banks or in canoes in the middle of the river. After sprinkling the ashes — and, in some cases, even the bones — the bereaved purify themselves by taking a dip in holy water, a sample of which they would perhaps take home.

The believers attribute supernatural qualities to the water, which is said not to go stale even when kept for years — generally in unrefrigerated conditions.

The mingling of the ashes with the Ganges signifies the purification of the dead who, according to the Hindu belief of rebirth, will rise again in a form determined by the Karma, or deeds, of the last life.

Most Hindus who have emigrated to Canada usually keep the ashes of the dead here until someone from the family goes to India, and the Ganges.

"We always have hope, until it is all finalized, hope is there," Arora said.

Scarborough couple lose their children

A Scarborough couple lost their only children who were on their way to spend the summer holidays with grandparents in India.

Serina Wadhwa, 8, and her younger brother Akhil, 5, were among the unaccompanied children aboard Flight 182.

There was an air of disbelief as the family and relatives gathered at the home of parents Ashok and Suman Wadhwa, of Campania Crescent.

They had selected Air India over British Airways because the children would not have to change planes en route, the father explained.

"We did not want to worry about them running around an airport," said Wadhwa, 39. He asked a stewardess to take special care of the children on the long flight.

"My son was very happy, and looking forward to going," he said. Akhil was to celebrate his sixth birthday next week at the home of his grandparents, Satyapal and Santosh Wadhwa, in New Delhi.

The Wadhwas emigrated to Canada in 1971, and both the children were born here.

Ashok Wadhwa described his only daughter, a Grade 3 student at Alemeir Public School, as "a very artistic, creative, outgoing child."

"She was the sweetest, most affectionate," added an uncle, Vijay Dewan. "They were both beautiful children."

He said he had taken a photograph of the children and their mother Suman, 31, only four days ago. He gave the photo to his sister so she would have something to remember her children by, for the two months they would be in New Delhi.

Suman Wadhwa was in a state of shock and disbelief at losing her only children, her aunt Swarup Rani Arora, said last night, and is reluctant to accept the flight to Ireland to identify the bodies.

Last photo a memento of uncle's visit

An east-end restaurateur lost an uncle who was returning to India after an 11-month stay in Canada.

Mukhtiar Singh, 55, a farmer from the northwest Indian province of Punjab, had been visiting relatives and friends in the Metro area.

His nephew, Gurdarshan Singh, 42, owner of Brar's Restaurant on Gerrard St. E., had taken a photograph of Mukhtiar Singh just before he boarded the plane.

Singh leaves a wife and two sons living in the Punjab.

Teenager from Rexdale called 'a super dancer'

They called Rajashree Sarangi "a super, super dancer."

The Rexdale girl was just 14, but the friends who gathered to comfort her parents yesterday said she was a favorite at many Indian community functions as an Indian classical dancer.

Her most recent appearance in her beautiful gold costume was at the June 12 Bhopal Disaster Benefit. Between 1,700 and 2,500 were killed and 200,000 injured by a cyanide gas leak in that Indian city last December.

Rajashree, who just completed Grade 9 at North Albion Collegiate Institute, was going back to India for a second summer of classical dancing studies under Kalu Charan Mahapatra, one of that country's best known teachers.

She was the only daughter of Raja Sarangi and his wife, Mina, of Marlebon Rd. They also have a son, Loknath "Lucky," 8.

Raja Sarangi, from Orissa province in India, graduated as an electrical engineer in that country and studied in Germany before coming to Canada in 1968 to continue his studies at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto. He is employed at Domtar Packaging.

Brother and sister had planned their weddings

A brother and sister from Lawrence Ave. W., in North York, were on their way to India for their marriages, accompanied by a younger brother.

Safshikan Singh of Islington Ave., New Toronto, said that his wife's parents, Pritam Singh and Balwant Kaur, flew to India in April and completed arrangements for the marriages of their son, Jagjit Singh, 24, and daughter, Gurmit Kaur, 20. Their 17-year-old brother, North York high school student Dara Singh, was to attend the weddings.

Yesterday, Safshikan Singh got a call from their father in India.

"He asked, 'How many of my children were on that plane?'" Safshikan Singh said. "I said three — that only my wife was left."

Safshikan Singh first learned of the disaster when awakened by a telephone call from the owner of Good Luck Travel, where they had bought their tickets.

He'll 'always remember' son's last wave

In Bramalea, Mohan Patel's voice broke when he recalled saying goodbye at the airport to his adopted son, Bipin, 17, another passenger on the ill-fated flight.

Patel said he told the Chinguacousy Secondary School student, who was going to spend the summer with his natural parents in India: "Take care of yourself and have a good time. I'll always remember that wave," added Patel, of Mallard Crescent.

Patel said he had adopted his sister's son to give him a university education. "He was a very bright boy, very ambitious. He wanted to be an engineer," he said.

Flying Air India a step into culture of the east

By Haroon Siddiqui Toronto Star

The moment you step into an Air India jumbo jet in Toronto, Montreal or New York city, you are already in India.

The hostesses, clad in flowing silk saris, greet you the Indian way, with folded hands. The interior is decorated with batik patterns and the airline logo of a little maharajah, an Indian prince, beckons you to fly his "magic carpet" and his "palace in the sky."

The framed pictures are reproductions of paintings of 3,000-year-old Indian mythology. The sitar is playing in the background and your fellow-travellers are fellow-Indians, babbling away in any of 14 familiar tongues of India.

There's the hustle and bustle that accompanies any gathering of Indians. People are talking in excited voices. The children — and some adults — are refusing to settle down, giving a hard time to the crew who do not seem to mind. It's the happy confusion of one large extended family going home.

Indian food

The few non-Indians are generally left alone to murmur their disapprovals.

The food served is Indian, aromatic and elaborate — usually Samosas (patties) and Murkuls (Indian pretzel) to go with drinks, and then Chapati (flattened bread) and rice with at least two or three curries, and yogurt.

The food comes non-vegetarian or vegetarian, the latter for Hindus, especially women who have not, unlike most of their men, given up vegetarianism despite living in the West.

And there's an endless supply of that main ingredient of Indian meals — cold drinking water, something you don't readily get on other airlines.

The movie shown over the Atlantic is

usually in Hindi, the main Indian language.

For the Indian patrons of the airline, it's really a home away from home.

Most of the passengers, invariably, are women and children or senior citizens visiting their grown-up children in Canada and the United States. They all have special reasons to feel secure on this airline.

And they do not have to change planes on the long 20-hour journey; the flight originating in Toronto touches Mirabel, and then just one European point before arriving in New Delhi and Bombay.

Indian women, who constitute the bulk of Air India business from the West, have a great tendency to visit home often.

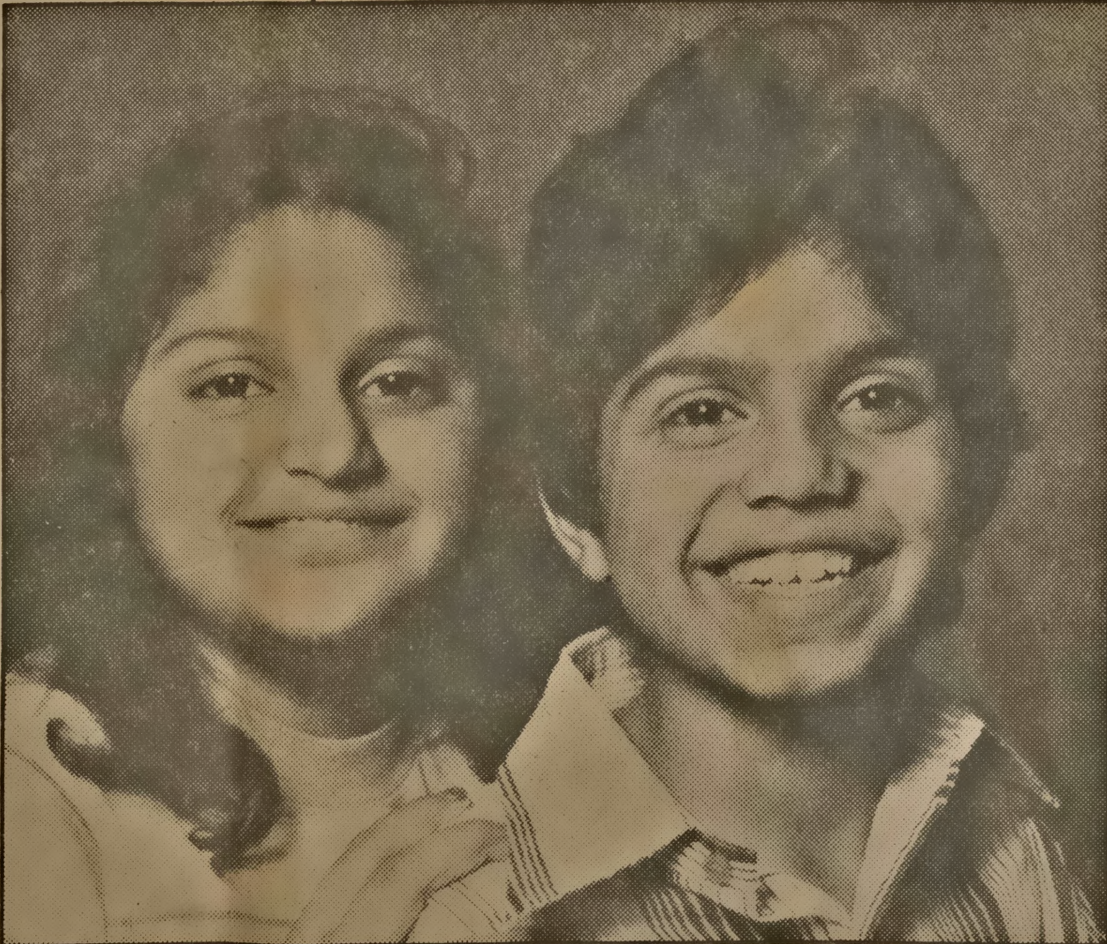
Travelling usually on the \$1,300, 120-day excursion fare, they are not accompanied by husbands, the breadwinners. And they take along their Canadian-born children who, upon arrival in India, would be welcomed with open arms and overly fussed over by the rest of the family — that bedrock of Indian society.

Many Indians in North America are also beginning to send their teenagers home every summer in the hope of creating in them a cultural buffer from what they see as the evils of society here — premarital sex, drinking and drugs.

All these patrons fly the airline despite a plethora of problems they might face.

It is often over-booked. Its computerized ticketing system in India rarely works. Its offices in Bombay, New Delhi and other Indian cities are scenes of angry people unsuccessfully waving their tickets for reservations on return flights to England, Canada and the U.S.

Yet, drawing on its ethnic market, Air India remains financially successful while other airlines struggle.



Family killed: Hamilton resident Parshatam Dhunna lost his entire family in the crash that killed 329 on board an Air India jumbo yesterday. Dead are, clockwise from bottom right: Nasib, Suneal, wife Bhag, Shashi, and Rajesh.

DISASTER IN THE AIR The tragedy of Air India Flight 182

Last 8 minutes a mystery in jet's plunge

By Stephen Handelman
Toronto Star

LONDON — Air India Flight 182 was less than an hour away from Shannon Airport yesterday when the pilot's voice crackled over the ground radio.

Capt. H.S. Narendra, preparing for the end of a routine journey across the Atlantic, gave Shannon air controllers in Ireland his co-ordinates in a calm, unruffled voice.

It was Flight 182's last contact with the world.

At 8:16 a.m. in London (3:16 a.m. in Toronto), the Boeing 747 jumbo jet disappeared from Shannon's radar screens and plunged 9,500 metres (31,000 feet) into the waters off the southern Irish coast with 329 people aboard.

What happened in the eight minutes between Capt. Narendra's last radio contact with Shannon and the plane's disappearance remains a mystery.

But pilots and aviation experts here said all the clues available so far point to a mid-air explosion.

"The trail of wreckage found so far in the sea indicates the plane came apart in the air," Geoffrey Wilkinson, an aircraft investigator, said in London last night. "In this day and age, sadly, you cannot preclude the possibility of a bomb."

No 'Mayday' signal

If there was any malfunction in the final moments of the flight, Narendra would have had ample time to signal an emergency, pilots said.

He could have pressed a button on the control column of the jet which would have relayed a "Mayday" signal in seconds to air traffic controllers.

"I find it hard to believe there was any malfunction that would have caused what happened," said Capt. Steve Last of the International Federation of Airline Pilots. "It's more likely to have been some kind of sabotage."

Pilot error or illness was also discounted.

The 57-year-old Narendra was one of Air India's most experienced pilots. Flying since 1951, he became a senior captain in 1964.

There was nothing unusual about the weather conditions off the coast at the time the plane radioed its last signal.

"It was most likely a bomb," Michael Ramsden, editor in chief of the magazine Flight International and one of Britain's leading experts on air crashes, told the Chicago Tribune.

"It is the most likely reason for a catastrophe," he said.

Death toll on Flight 182 3rd-worst in air history

The crash early yesterday of Air India Flight 182 involved by far the greatest loss of Canadian lives in commercial flying history — 280 of the 329 passengers aboard — and ranks third among the worst disasters in aviation history.

It was the fourth and worst crash involving state-owned Air India, and the first commercial jet to crash on the transatlantic route, the world's busiest international air route, carrying 20 million passengers a year on 40 airlines.

It was also the worst air disaster over water. The plane was the 12th Boeing 747 jumbo jetliner lost since the aircraft came into service 15 years ago.

The world's first known aircraft bombing occurred in September, 1949, when a Canadian Pacific Airlines DC-3 on its way from Quebec city to Baie Comeau, Que., exploded in mid-air and crashed, killing 23 people.

Tenerife crash

Here is a list of the worst commercial aviation disasters worldwide:

March, 1977: 582 died in a collision of two Boeing 747s at the airport on Tenerife in Spain's Canary Islands.

March, 1974: 346 died in the worst single-plane accident when a Turkish DC-10 crashed northeast of Paris.

Aug. 19, 1980: 301 died in the emergency landing of a Saudi Arabian L-1011 at the airport in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

May 25, 1979: 273 died when an American Airlines DC-10 crashed on takeoff in Chicago.

Sept. 1, 1983: 269 died when a Korean Air Lines 747 was shot down by a Soviet fighter after flying through Soviet airspace near Sakhalin Island.

November, 1979: 257 died when an Air New Zealand DC-10 struck a mountain in Antarctica.

Jan. 1, 1978: 213 died when an Air India 747 en route to the Middle East kingdom of Dubai crashed after taking off from Bombay.

December, 1974: 191 died when a chartered Dutch DC-8 returning Indonesian Moslems from Saudi Arabia went down in Sri Lanka.

August, 1975: 188 died when a chartered Moroccan Boeing 707 crashed near Agadir, Morocco.

November, 1978: 183 died when a chartered Icelandic Airlines DC-8 crashed short of an airport in Colombo, Sri Lanka. On Nov. 27, 1983, 183 people died when an Avianca Boeing 747 crashed near Madrid's Barajas airport.

trophe, so sudden and so complete, to an aircraft (the Boeing 747) which has a very fine record of safety and has before survived quite extensive damage."

Within minutes of the disappearance of Flight 182, one of the largest sea and air rescue operations ever mounted off the British Isles began.

Spotter planes, Sea King helicopters and Hercules transport planes took off from airfields around Britain and the Irish Republic.

Two Royal Navy ships, several freighters, and Spanish and Irish fishing craft headed toward the area where the plane went down, about 180 kilometres (110 miles) south of Ireland's southernmost point.

At Heathrow's Terminal 3 — where about 60 passengers and Air India employees were waiting to board the plane on its continuing flight to New Delhi and Bombay — Flight 182 was taken off the black airline departures and arrivals board.

At 8:46 a.m. London time, the Defence Ministry's Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Plymouth was busily arranging for the first surveillance flights.

At 9:11 a.m., Nimrod aircraft were in the air. Moments later, pilots reported seeing a "five-mile" (eight-kilometre) trail of wreckage in the sea.

By noon yesterday, hundreds of army, navy and civilian personnel around Britain and Ireland were at work on the disaster, and an accident investigation team from New Delhi was preparing to leave for Ireland.

Irish authorities set up special emergency centres at both Cork and Shannon airports.

At 3 p.m. RAF helicopter pilots brought back the first bodies, covered with gray blankets.

They were the bodies of two adult males and a child. On their feet, observers saw slippers of the kind given by airlines to first-class passengers on long-distance flights.

The bodies were brought to Cork Hospital, where a temporary morgue was set up. Doctors who examined the bodies said there was no initial evidence of an explosion.

"They all sustained multiple injuries," said Dr. John O'Reardon. "But I cannot tell you any more than that for the moment."

If there had been a bomb, the absence of any explosive material on the bodies of first-class passengers suggested the bomb would have been at the back of the plane, according to investigators.

Over the next several hours, helicopters

December, 1981: 180 died when a chartered Yugoslavian Inex-Adria Airways DC-9 slammed into a mountain near Ajaccio, Corsica.

Three separate crashes each killed 176 people: A Soviet Aeroflot crash near Moscow in October, 1972; the collision of a British Airways Trident and a Yugoslav DC-9 near Zagreb, Yugoslavia, in September, 1976; and the crash of a Jordanian Boeing 707 at Nigeria's Kano airport in January, 1973.



Mother weeps for son: Prakesh Kaur, right, breaks down at Delhi airport after being informed her son, S.S. Binder, a co-pilot on the doomed Air India 747, was confirmed dead. With her is Binder's mother-in-law, Mukthair Kaur.



Body found: One of the bodies recovered from the sea in the North Atlantic following the crash of an Air India jumbo jet is carried from a helicopter at Cork Airport, Ireland, yes-

terday. Airline officials said they suspected a bomb caused the plane to explode in midair. Two babies and 84 other children were among the 329 killed.

landed and took off in a constant flurry of activity — depositing each time more of the tragic evidence of Flight 182. One ambulanceman carried a child's teddy bear wrapped in plastic.

Flight Lieutenant Paul Redfern, pilot of the first RAF helicopter on the scene, said the wreckage of the jumbo jet was "in small bits, with no piece bigger than 10 metres (35 feet)."

Redfern said none of the recovered victims were wearing lifejackets and the life rafts weren't inflated.

Asked if that indicated that the passengers had no warning before the jumbo jet

crashed, Redfern said: "That would seem to make a lot of sense."

He said there doesn't appear to be any survivors.

"There's no signs of life," he said. "There's just debris and bodies scattered over miles of ocean."

Another pilot, Flight-Lt. John Cox, said: "The degree of mutilation of some of the bodies and all the small wreckage seems to support the theory of an explosion."

As investigators began piecing together the last minutes of the flight, they came up with one nightmarish scenario that might have happened.

If Flight 182 had not been delayed at

both Toronto and Montreal before it headed across the Atlantic, the presumed "explosion" would have occurred a few minutes before it landed at Heathrow Airport. In that case, debris might have crashed into nearby residential areas.

"It is one of the possibilities we are looking at," admitted one Air India spokesman in London yesterday.

The spokesman said Flight 182 was making a routine re-fuelling stop at London, which would have kept it on the ground about 90 minutes.

Some 23 of the passengers were Air India employees and their families, including two infants, scheduled to get off in London.

Baggage security for Air India flights tighter than rules require, official says

Air India's baggage security — with x-ray checks of all baggage passing through airport terminals — is tighter than Transport Canada's requirements for airlines flying out of Canada, an airline official says.

Most baggage passing through Canadian airports is not checked unless it is carried on by a passenger.

But Air India has a standing policy that people and baggage be "checked 100 per cent," said Sam Tanashene, superintendent of sales for the airline's Toronto office.

"All checked baggage (luggage not carried on by the passenger) is examined by an x-ray machine owned by Air India," he said.

The policy has been in effect internationally for six months and nothing is loaded without a full security check, David Yodh, supervisor of Air India at Montreal's Mirabel Airport, said.

Bags removed

The carrier also gives passengers a boarding pass that lists the seat number, corresponding with a number affixed to each piece of luggage.

If a passenger is not seated for takeoff, his or her bags are removed from the plane, John d'Souza, Air India security officer at Mirabel, said.

A spokesman for Air Canada — which handles Canadian ground operations for Air India — said most airlines only use x-ray machines to scan passengers and hand baggage before they board.

"They (checked baggage) don't go through an x-ray machine unless they are bags that have been spot-checked by security," said Maureen-Curow, a public affairs assistant for Air Canada in Toronto.

At Pearson International Airport, ticket agents pass checked baggage through a sorter that sends it to the individual airline's baggage room. It is then loaded into large containers and put into the airplane.

Extra precautions are taken by Air India because "they have been having problems in their country and some of them have related to Canada," Curow said.

Security steeped up

Terrorist threats prompted pleas weeks ago by the High Commission of India for help from the federal government to beef up security for India-bound flights from Canada, external affairs officials in Ottawa said yesterday.

High Commission counsellor M. K. Dhar said the request for stepped-up security was issued because of the visit to Washington on June 11 of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the first anniversary of the storming of the Sikh Golden Temple by Indian troops June 4-7, 1984.

The High Commission also asked for increased security for Indian diplomats based in Ottawa and both requests were met by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, according to the external affairs department.

"Yes, there were concerns expressed about a month ago, so added RCMP security precautions were taken," Sean Brady, official spokesman for External Affairs Minister Joe Clark, said.

"But at this point, we have no way of confirming that this (the plane crash killing all 329 passengers and crew aboard the India-bound flight) was caused by a terrorist bomb," Brady said.

Three suitcases were blocked from the

flight, Brady confirmed, for security reasons, but he said he did not know if there was a subsequent RCMP recommendation that the flight be delayed from its scheduled departure.

The suitcases had tripped the electronic alarm in the baggage sorting area and were removed from the baggage containers. Specially trained dogs sniffed at the suitcases for explosives, but didn't react, according to a spokesman. Had the dogs reacted, the bags probably would have been opened immediately.

The bags were instead placed in a decompression chamber in a special room partially underground, about a kilometre from the terminal, and opened by Quebec provincial police between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. yesterday, several hours after Flight 182 plunged suddenly into the North Atlantic off the Irish coast.

Police found an iron and portable radio inside, but nothing of a dangerous nature.

After yesterday's incidents, Canadian authorities announced beefed-up security checks for all flights leaving Canada for Europe and Asia, including a 24-hour holding period for cargo.

Hold cargo

Air Canada spokesman Esther Szykarsky said the government is asking carriers to step up inspections, either by x-raying or opening and visually inspecting all luggage to be checked.

"We're going to hold all cargo shipments for 24 hours except perishables from known shippers," she said, adding that with the additional checks, passengers taking international flights had better arrive at the airport an hour earlier than normal.

Montreal East Indians grieve

By Paula Todd Toronto Star

MONTREAL — Montreal's Air India office here was transformed yesterday into a command post for relatives seeking news of the dead.

Emergency staff at the office, answering constantly ringing telephones and comforting the grieving, repeated the same tragic message: "There are no survivors as far as we know. There are no survivors expected."

Among the dead were 105 who boarded the jet in Montreal, which has about 6,000 residents of Indian origin.

Hundreds of weeping and screaming relatives called or came in person to the downtown Montreal office which had been open since 6:30 a.m. yesterday.

'One last time'

Promod Sabharwal, 45, held a tear-soaked handkerchief to his eyes, saying, "Thank God I saw her one last time now." Sabharwal's daughter, Meghan (Bonnie) Sabharwal, 11, was returning to India on the downed aircraft after a two-month vacation in Montreal.

Her father, who was in London on business, had flown to Montreal's Mirabel Airport to wish her a safe flight. It was the last time he saw her.

"We think maybe it was in the cards, you know, that he got to see her that last time," said Satish Sabharwal, the girl's uncle, with whom she'd been staying in Montreal.

Ferzin Bharucha, 31, lost his best friend Freddie Bulsara and his father-in-law.

"You don't need to ask how I feel, do you? Look around you and you know how we all feel," the La Salle accountant said.

Bulsara was an airline purser who was flying as a passenger back to Bombay after a two-week vacation in Montreal. Bharucha's father-in-law, 65, a high school

teacher, was flying to India on personal business.

"I saw them both off before they went," Bharucha said.

Some relatives were angry about the delay in going to London, crying out, "Doesn't anybody care?"

But Air India sales representative Philomena Netto, hugged them and through tears told the crowd, "We are doing everything we can. They're family to us, too."

Montreal's close-knit Indian community responded rapidly, according to National Association of Canadian of Origins in India national president John Kurien, who knew 34 of the victims.

An Air Canada flight from Dorval Airport is scheduled to leave today at 3 p.m. for New York where family members will transfer to an Air India flight for London, to identify the bodies of the victims.

A community spokesman said they hope the majority of close relatives will fly together on that flight to lend emotional support.

Kurien said the Montreal Indian families are so close that many have already contacted each other and made arrangements for child care and meals without official help.

Religious services at Sikh and Hindu temples, usually attended by about 60 worshippers each, were packed with more than 400 people who had come from as far away as Ottawa and Quebec to offer assistance.

"The emotional shock is so great, all we can do right now is to try and help people recover," Kurien said, adding that Indian community leaders are urging people not to jump to conclusions about the cause of the crash. "We are not speculating right now that it was a bomb or that this was the actions of terrorists. If the experts don't know, neither do we. We will wait."

DISASTER IN THE AIR The tragedy of Air India Flight 182

East Indian community mourns its loss

By Brian McAndrew Toronto Star

Metro's East Indian community was in deep mourning yesterday, its mood as dark as the north Atlantic Ocean where 329 people died in an Air India crash.

Almost every one of the more than 200 people who boarded the flight at Pearson International Airport was of East Indian descent.

The usual Sunday afternoon bazaar atmosphere along Gerrard St. E. between Coxwell and Greenwood Aves. was replaced by subdued mourning as people huddled in front of small curry restaurants and sari shops to quietly discuss the tragedy.

Community mourns

About half the usual bustling crowd that spends Sunday afternoon in the popular area dubbed *Little India* ventured out on the street yesterday.

"People are in a very bad way here," said Mukesh Vyas, 25, as he stood outside a fruit and vegetable market.

Many of the 60 East Indian shops closed for the day, as did the India Theatre.

"The East Indian community is mad, upset and crying for the victims," said theatre owner Dhian Thapar.

He joined about 300 others last night at the west side Hindu Prathana Samaj Temple for memorial services for the victims of the flight.

The community's distress was combined with a growing unrest over speculation the plane was sabotaged by terrorists, possibly Sikh extremists.

But the husband and father of three persons lost on the flight pleaded for calm within Metro's East Indian community.

Desperate hope

"Violence can't get back the persons who are already dead," said Chaman Puri of Wildfern Drive, Mississauga.

His wife, Veena, daughter, Ashu, 12, and son, Amit, 5, died on their way to India to visit Veena's ailing father.

Family members and friends gathered at the homes of the surviving relatives of crash victims.

Puri held on to a desperate hope that somehow his family had survived.

"I am bewildered," said Puri, struggling against the shock that hit him early yesterday when friends telephoned with news of the crash.

"I can only hope there is a one-in-a-million chance they are still alive," he said, looking over a set of children's swings in his backyard. "Their toys are still out in every room. My wife's saris are in the closets."

His eldest daughter, Anu Puri, 21, was safe with relatives in India, travelling from Pearson on a flight several weeks ago.

Puri said he would accept an Air India offer to fly one family member to London to try to identify the bodies recovered from the ocean.

Just turned 16

Shard Berry was also aboard the doomed flight, making his first visit to India since his family moved to Mississauga five years ago. He turned 16 earlier this month, finished his Grade 10 exams at Martingrove Collegiate Institute on Wednesday and became a Canadian citizen the next day.

"He was a precious boy," Satya Kumar

Berry said of his only son. "Now there is no one to carry on the family name," said the saddened father from his West Mall apartment in Etobicoke.

Berry travelled throughout the world three times during the 1970s before settling on Canada to make a new home for his family.

"This was the place for me, where a man can be free and a man's family would not have to depend just on him," he said. "I thought I was immune. I took life and death for granted. I am shattered."

"I have always called myself the luckiest man in the world, but this wipes out your life."

The teenaged Berry was going to India to join an older sister visiting relatives. They were to return together in August.

Not vengeful

Berry pondered the possibility that a terrorist bomb may have blown up the plane, but he showed no desire for vengeance.

He consoled himself by trusting in eventual justice. "We believe a person's deeds catch up with him," he said.

But others in the community fear a violent backlash will erupt in Metro, even if there is never any proof of sabotage against the Air India 747.

"In this case there will be violence," predicted Bob Singh, publisher of the India Calling weekly newspaper. "Even before it is proved (what happened), passion will take many forms."

"The anger is going to be directed against the Sikhs and that isn't fair unless it is proved, or there is some statement of claim," Singh said.

329 dead: People who were on board

Metro passengers

Miss Shyla Aurora, 27, holidaying Air India Stewardess;

Dibak Bhat, Mrs. Mukta Bhat, Miss Leena Bisen, Sharad Berry, 16, of The West Mall, Etobicoke.

Shingra Cheema, 34, Dixon Rd, Mrs. Ruby Das, Ahrud Rd, Mississauga, Miss Anita Das, 16, Arindam Das, 14, Mrs. Bhag Dhunna, 34, Cannon Street Hamilton, Shashi Dhunna, 16, Rajesh Dhunna, 16, Suneel Dhunna, 2;

Miss Ritu Goene, 14, Sanderling Cres. Mississauga, Ramwati Gupta, 38, Rossburn Drive Etobicoke, Mita Gupta, 16, of Melbourne, Ont.;

Mrs. Shila Jalan, Colbeck St., Toronto, Dev Jalan, Vinay Jalan, Anita Jalan;

Mrs. Gurmit Kaur, 20, Lawrence Ave. W., Mrs. Santosh Kapoor, Indian Road, Mississauga, Sharmila Kapoor, 16, Sabrina Kapoor, 6;

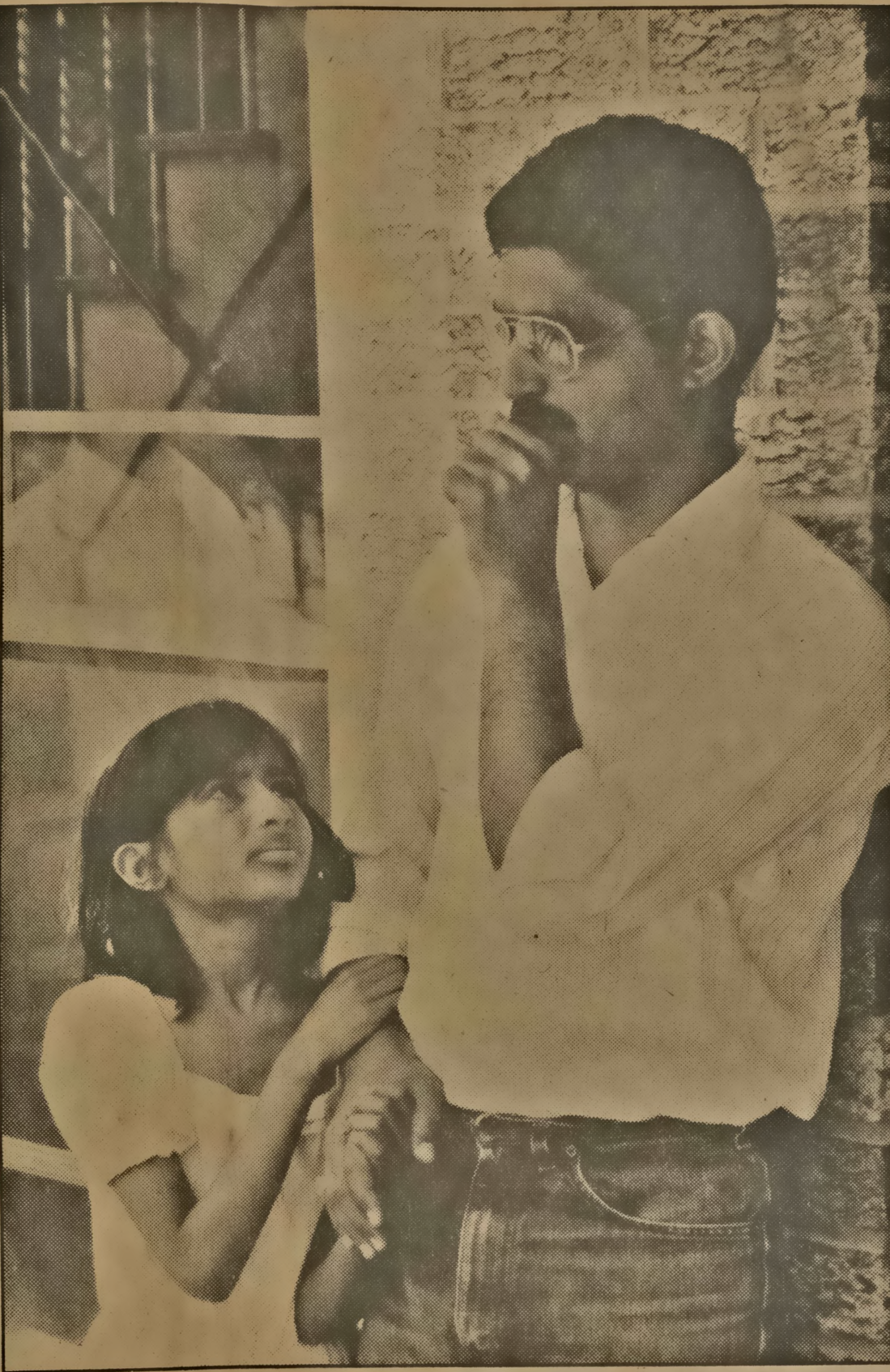
Shyamala Laurence, 18, and Nicola Laurence, 16, both of Karen Park Crescent, Mississauga;

Rajinder Mamak, Sarnia, Nasib Manjania, 62, (mother of Bhag Dhunna); Amit Puri, Wildfern Drive, Mississauga, Ashu Puri, 12, Veena Puri, mother of above;

Janika Ramaswamy, 16, Kiranjit Rai, 11, Jane St., Toronto;

Mrs. Sugra Sadiq, 65, Brahms Ave., Toronto; Rajashree Saranga, 14, Marlebone Rd., Rexdale, Shyam Sharma, Toronto, IBM employee, his wife, Sumitra, and their three sons; Jagjit Singh, 24, Lawrence Ave. W., Dara Singh, 17, brother of Jagjit and Gurmit, same address, Mukti Singh, 55, Punjab, India, Lakshmy Subramanian, John Cabotway, Mississauga, and daughter, Veena, 8;

Vijaya Thampi, 28, Toronto Star employee, Inder Thakur, 35, purser on flight,



Father's grief: Mohan Patel is comforted by his 10-year-old daughter Ina outside their Bramalea home after being told that his adopted son Bipin was among the 329 people who died in the Air India crash.

Priya Thakur, 27, wife of purser, Vishal Thakur, 4, son of purser; Serina Wadhwa, 8, Campania Cres. Scarborough, Akhil Wadhwa, 5;

Full List of Passengers

Mr. Rahul Aggarwal, Indra Ahmed, Ahmed, A. Alexander, Simon Alexander, Alexander, Alexander, Alexander, Miss Collette Allard, Anantaraman, Anantaraman, Bhawan Anand, Anand, Anand, Anand, Ruth Ashirvatham, Ashirvatham, Ashirvatham;

Mrs. S. Balaraman, Balaraman, R. Balasubraman, Mr. Anju Bajaj, Mr. G. Beauchamp, Mr. V. Bedi, Jatin Bedi, Anu Bedi, Mrs. Saraj Bedi, Mr. J. Berar, Adarsh Bhagat, Mrs. B. Bhagwanti, Mrs. Nirmal Bhalla, Miss Manju Bhalla, Dalir Bhalla, Mr. Harish Bhardwaj, Miss C. Bhat, Miss T. Bhat, Miss B. Bhat, Mr. V. Bhat, Mr. P. V. Bhat, Mrs. C.P. Bhat, Mr. S. Bhat, Mukta Bhatt, Tina Bhatt, Miss Leena Bisen;

Miss R. Castonguay, Miss R. Castonguay, Sukuma Chandrasekhar, Neetam Chatlani, Marc Chatlani, Malam Chatlani, Singra Cheema, Mrs. S.R. Chopra, Mr. J.R. Chopra;

V. Daniel and family, Arupt Das, Ruby Das, Das, Mr. R. Desouza, Dhunna family of Toronto;

A. Enayati; Homai Furdoonji, Anita Gadkar and male, age 11, Miss J. Gambhir, Miss A. Gambhir, Mrs. S. Gambhir, Gogner Krishn Gopalan, Mrs. Kalpana Gossain Aruna Gossain, Aparna Gossain, Mr. Daljit Grewal, Mrs. Santosh Gupta, Shashi Gupta, Mr. R. Gupta, Miss B. Gupta, Rajesh Gupta, Mrs. R. Gupta, G. Gupta, A. Gupta, Ramvat Gupta, Anumit Gupta, Mrs. S. Gupta;

Mrs. R. Harpalani, Miss D. Harpalani;

Miss S. Harpalani; Mr. and Mrs. P. Jacob, J. Jacob, Anur Jain, Miss Indu Jain, Miss Ruchi Jain, Miss Prakash Jain, Mrs. Mala Jaipuria, Mr. A. Josephine, Mrs. Z. Jethva, Mrs. A. Job, Miss Teena Job;

Mrs. M. Kachroo, Indra Kalsi, Rama Kamrila, Santosh Kapoor, Kapoor, Kapoor, Mr. Atham Kaship, Sukwinder Kaur, Paramjit Kaur, Gurmit Kaur, Mr. Bishan Kaushal, Kelly, Khandelwal, Khandelwal, Mrs. Suman Khera, Miss Rashmi Khera, Mrs. S. Kochner, Mrs. C. Kumar, Kunal Kumar, Mrs. Manju Kumar;

P. Lakshman, K. Lakshman, Shyamala and Nicola Laurence, Mrs. S. Lazar, Miss S. Lazar, Mr. G. Leger, Mr. D. Loughheed; Monish Lulla, Sam Madon, Miss L. Mainguy, Mr. Atul Malhotra, Rajinder Mamak, Mr. N. Manjani, Mrs. Devendra Marjara, Miss Seemant Marjara, Mr. A. Martel, Sabharwal Meghna, Kishor Mehta and family, Natasha Merchant, Mrs. Balinder Kaur Minhas, Miss Kulbir Kaur Minhas, Ramathull Mohammed, Prabha Molakala, Mukerji, Nishit Mukherji, Renu Mukhi, Deepak Mullick, Murthy family, S. Murugan, G. Murugan and family;

Deven Nadkarni, Nadkarni, Dr. Y. Nayudamma;

Vishnu Pada and family, Mr. Mukul Paliwal, Bipin Patel, M. Patel, Babubh Patel, Mohan Patel, Mrs. Thakur Priya, Mrs. Veena Puri, Ashu Puri, Amit Puri; Syed Quadri and Shaista Quadri;

Nagu Radhakrishna, J. Radhakrishna, T. Radhakrishnan, Verran V. Raghu, Raghuvaran, Ranganum Rai, Pratik Ramchandran, Janaki Ramaswami, Mohammed Ramath, Mr. B. Rauthan, Miss Pooja Rauthan;

S. Sadiq, Sujata Sagi and family, Mr. P. Sahu, Miss P. Sahu, Mr. R. Sahu, Dattar Sakhawalkar, Sakhawalkar, Usha Sakhawalkar, Sakhawalkar, Sakhawalkar, M. r. S. Sankurathri, Miss S. Sankurathri, Mrs. M. Sankurathri, R. Sarangi, Miss Kalpana Seth, Miss Shilpa Seth, Mrs. Sadhanada Seth, Mr. Satish Seth and infant, Mr. O.P. Sawhney, Mrs. Shakuntala Sharma, Mrs. Uma Sharma, Miss S. Sharma, Miss S. Sharma, Mr. Omprakash Sharma, Manmoh Sharma and family, Sumitra Sharma, A. Sharma, V. Sharma, Mrs. I. Sharma, Miss V. Sharma, Mr. N. Sharma, Sundee Sharma, Sharvan Sharma, Shyam Sharma, Mrs. Irene Shukla, Jagjit Singh, Mr. Abhinav Singh, Mukti Singh, Akhand Singh, Mr. Dara Singh, Miss Shubhana Singh, Miss Shalini Singh, Mr. Balbir Singh, Ajai Singh, Amar Singh, Mrs. J. Singh, R. Singh, Mrs. Usha Singh, Mrs. R. Singh, Prof. A.K. Sinha, Miss Ritu Soni, Master Pankaj Soni, Miss Monica Soni, Mrs. U. Soni, Primaljit Sran, Mr. Brj Srivastava, L. Subramanian, V. Subramanian, G. Subramanian, Miss R. Sutras, A. Swaminathan, I. Swaminathan, Swaminathan;

Ivy Thachettu, V. Thampi, K.K. Thomas and family, Mrs. A.C. Travasso, Mr. L.M. Travasso, Mr. C.A. Travasso, Ms. L.L. Travasso, Nirmal Trivedi, Trivedi, Chitra Tumkur, Ramoh Tumkur, Sanjay Turlapati and 11-year-old male, F. Turlapati and 14-year-old male;

Parminder Uppal, Kuldeep Uppal, Mrs. Hema Upreti, Mr. Vikram Upreti, Dr. G.C. Upreti;

Miss Juliet Vaz, Geetha Venkatesan, Thrichu Venkateswara, Mr. Balvindr Rai Verma, Thakur Vishay;

Serina Wadhwa, Akil Wadhwa;

The Crew of Flight 182

Capt. H.S. Narendra, Capt. S.S. Binder, Flight Engineer D.D. Dumasia, Flight Systems Manager S. Lazar, Purser I. Thakur, Purser K.M. Thakur.

Metro Sikhs fear backlash over crash of jetliner

Metro Sikh leaders held an emergency meeting last night to discuss fears that their community will be blamed for the suspected bombing of an Air India jet which killed 329 people.

The meeting was called almost immediately after the news broke of the plane crash and the community leaders elected Uday Singh, a mathematics professor at Laurentian University, as their official spokesman.

"We all share the grief of the victims of this ill-fated flight," Singh said after the meeting. He pointed out that some of the victims were Sikhs, including the engineer on the plane.

The leaders met at the World Sikh Organization office at Siriguru Singh Sabha Malton temple on Airport Rd., following a special ceremony to pray for the victims.

The leaders said they fear the Indian government would try to blame Sikhs to discredit their fight for Khalistan, an independent Sikh nation that would be formed from Indian territory.

"That's what we've been discussing here or on the phone all day," said Raghbir Singh Samagh, the president of the World Sikh Organization.

"We are fighting open war with the Indian government, not the people," Darshan Singh Saini said. "The situation is sorrowful and the anti-Sikh faction is exploiting it."

Claimed responsibility

A telephone call placed to the New York Times yesterday afternoon claimed the Sikh Student Federation was responsible for the plane crash but Metro's Sikh leaders argued that anyone could have made the call.

In Vancouver, a spokesman for the Sikh Student Federation, who identified himself as Manmohan Singh, denied B.C. members of the radical organization had anything to do with the disaster.

"There is no point in putting any religion or movement in front pages, and make it look stupid in the eyes of the world for no reason," said Singh.

The Sikh Student Federation, which has a prominent, active Vancouver chapter, advocates the use of force for the creation of an independent Sikh homeland, to be named Khalistan. The local chapter of the federation has occasionally been blamed, by more moderate Sikh and Hindu leaders in Vancouver's large East Indian community, for several politically related assaults here in recent years.

Singh Saini, who is a member of the Khalistan government in exile, said such claims of responsibility were "being propagated by the anti-Sikh faction to deteriorate our public image."

World leaders send messages of condolence

NEW DELHI (AP-Reuters) — Messages of sympathy from government leaders around the world have been sent to grieving relatives of the 329 victims of Sunday's crash of an Air India jumbo jet.

India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi expressed a "terrible sense of loss" upon hearing the news of the crash of the airliner, which had flown from Toronto and Montreal en route to India via London.

In Britain, the Queen sent messages to India and Canada expressing sympathy.

The Queen said in a statement she was deeply saddened and asked officials to convey to the bereaved a "message of deepest sympathy" from Prince Philip and herself.

Prince's regrets

Prince Andrew issued a statement shortly after landing in Fredericton to Canada's Governor-General Jeanne Sauve conveying his regrets.

"I was deeply shocked and grieved to learn, as I landed in Canada, of the tragic crash which has brought sorrow to so many Canadian families. Please convey my deepest sympathies to the bereaved."

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher spoke of her "terrible shock" in a message to Indian Prime Minister Gandhi.

Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald sent messages to India and Canada to express the condolences of the Irish people at the "terrible loss of life" in the disaster.

He praised rescue services from Ireland, Britain and the United States who joined in the search.

In Canada, a dazed Indian community reacted with an outpouring of shock and grief to Sunday's crash.

Special hotlines

John Kurien, president of the National Association of Canadians of Origin in India, said the disaster was probably the worst to strike the Indian community in Canada in terms of numbers of people lost.

Shankar Rayo, regional vice-president of the Association, said he was profoundly shocked at the disaster.

"There is a tremendous amount of sorrow over the deaths of Canadians of origin in India in the crash," he said, adding the group was setting up special hotlines to assist grieving relatives.

"We are absolutely shocked and dazed," said Sunder Kumar, a spokesman for the Indian High Commission in Ottawa. "So many innocent lives lost."

There are about 200,000 Canadians of Indian origin, most of whom live in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto.

Son's premonition didn't deter airline

A Metro man said he had a premonition of pending disaster and tried to get his mother off ill-fated Air India Flight 182 before it left Toronto, but airline officials refused to take her off the plane.

Taher Sadiq, 38, of Midland Ave., said he asked Air India officials to take his 65-year-old mother Sugra Sadiq off the Boeing 747 jumbo jetliner while it was delayed 1½ hours at Pearson International Airport.

Shaken and sobbing, Sadiq told reporters at Air India's Toronto office that his mother, a retired physician who was flying to Bombay for medical treatment, was so terrified of flying that she took with her on the flight a ceremonial Moslem dress that was to be worn at the time of her death.

"She was always scared, afraid of flying in the plane," he said.

'A sixth sense'

Sadiq said that as he watched airport attendants working on the plane he "had a sixth sense that something was wrong" and tried to convince Air India officials to let his mother off the aircraft.

"I wanted her to get off that flight," he said in a trembling voice. "There was something definitely unnatural."

Sadiq said his father Syed, 68, was supposed to go to India with his wife but shortly before the trip decided not to go for religious reasons.

Sadiq's mother had been in Canada for six years. She had two other children.

She is presumed dead, along with the other 328 passengers and crew members who were aboard.



Mother killed: Taher Sadiq, whose mother Sugra was killed yesterday when an Air India 747 jet crashed, is comforted by a friend after being told of his mother's death. She was returning to India for medical treatment.