

## 'When the plane crashed, my child was a Canadian.'



ADRIAN WYLD/CANADIAN PRESS

Rattan Kalsi lost his daughter Indira in the 1985 Air-India bombing. The Canadian government responded to the event as though the passengers were Indian, not Canadian, he says.

# Marking Canada's tragedy

For the first time, Ottawa will officially commemorate the 1985 Air-India bombing

BY ROBERT MATAS, VANCOUVER

Rattan Kalsi observed a fast yesterday to prepare for the 20th anniversary of the horrific Air-India disaster.

Mr. Kalsi's 21-year-old daughter

Indira was on the ill-fated Boeing 747 that blew up over the Atlantic Ocean, disappearing from the radar screen at 3:14 a.m. EDT on June 23, 1985.

The retired tool-and-die maker from London, Ont., abstained from

food to clear his mind and concentrate on thoughts of his daughter, he said in an emotional interview before leaving for a seaside memorial service in the Irish village of Ahakista, not far from the spot where the aircraft disintegrated.

"There is no way you can replace your child," he said. "My loss will never be recovered."

But fasting brings him closer to his daughter, he said, his voice

shaking. Returning to Ireland for the anniversary of the disaster has been an important part of Mr. Kalsi's life for 20 years. He has missed only one anniversary since 1985. Some years, dozens of other families showed up. One year, he was there alone.

This morning, he is among hundreds who made the journey to remember the victims of the Air-India disaster, the deadliest terrorist at-

tack in Canadian history.

Reflecting a seismic shift in attitude to the mid-air explosions, the Canadian government for the first time has recognized the event as a national tragedy. Flags on government buildings are to fly at half mast today. Parliamentarians will observe a moment of silence in the House of Commons.

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