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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Dr. Asha Goel, a longtime Orangeville obstetrician, was murdered while visiting India last summer.**

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### Story

Friday, November 12th, 2004

## Goel family petitioning Ottawa to take on cause of murdered doctor

PETER CRISCIONE, Banner Staff Writer

Who killed Asha Goel?

For the last 15 months the answer to that question has plagued the hearts and minds of a community torn by the tragic death of one of its own.

The longtime Orangeville obstetrician was found dead in a 14th floor apartment in Mumbai, India, on Aug. 23 of 2003 - only a few hours before her scheduled return to Canada.

Goel, 63, suffered a blow to the head, was stabbed repeatedly and had her jaw broken. She was staying with her brother, Suresh Chandra Agarwal, who had fallen severely ill.

But in a case marred with controversy, the push to find out why Goel was murdered, and who her killers were, has cast her kin into a personal hell.

Now, with little headway made in the investigation, Indian officials plan to close the books on the affair, despite the protests of family members.

"We are struggling to get answers, to find the truth," says Goel's daughter Seema Goel, noting that Mumbai authorities have expressed little interest in solving the case. "We may be able to do more if the Canadian government intervenes diplomatically."

To that end, Seema is taking her message to the streets, organizing a petition in an attempt to get Canadian officials involved in the matter.

The visual arts professor at the University of Regina has put the wheels in motion, continuing the fight one signature at a time.

"I don't even know if this will work," she says. "But I don't know where else to start, what else to do."

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The events surrounding the incident are bizarre and deserve further investigation, says Seema. For example, the murder occurred while five other people lay asleep in the same Mumbai apartment.

Shortly after the killing, a family acquaintance admitted to having a role in the murder and alleged that Goel's brother - - whom she had gone to visit -- put him up to it.

However, the situation has taken many odd turns and the individual was eventually released, with no solid resolution to the case.

Since then, Seema says her brother and father -- who is also a doctor at Headwaters -- have travelled to and from India close to a dozen times in attempts to keep police motivated in their investigation.

However, despite their efforts, very little has happened and now the family has even gone as far as to enlist the help of Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson.

"The family has asked me to arrange a meeting with federal officials," Tilson says. "I will do my best to arrange one but I don't know how much Foreign Affairs will get involved. All I can do is try."

Goel was an obstetrician and gynecologist in Orangeville for 16 years and ran a second practice in Brampton, geared to serving immigrant women.

Her family members say Goel delivered more than 10,000 babies while working in Orangeville.

Goel's contributions to the community have not gone unnoticed.

About 100 people gathered at Headwaters Health Care Centre Nov. 5, to pay tribute to the fallen doctor.

A stained glass window was erected in memory of Goel in the A wing of the facility.

Seema Goel is encouraging the public to help further the family's cause by either signing the petition online at [www.ashagoel.ca](http://www.ashagoel.ca) or by writing a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pierre Pettigrew at Lester B Pearson Building, Tower A, 10th floor, 125 Sussex Dr., Ottawa ON, K1A 0G2.