

Press Release

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VANCOUVER, B.C., OCTOBER 14, 2005. Two years ago (August 23, 2003), Dr. Asha Goel was brutally murdered while visiting her ailing elder brother, Suresh Agrawal, in Mumbai (Bombay), India.

Dr. Goel, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Headwaters Health Centre, Orangeville, Ontario, was a member of the Canadian medical community for over 40 years, during which time she practised in Saskatchewan and Ontario, delivering over 10,000 babies and helping tens of thousands of women. Her shocking murder has prompted concern and outrage from Canadians seeking to understand how this happened and to assist the Goel family in finding justice. Between the Goels' website, [www.ashagoel.ca](http://www.ashagoel.ca), and hand written signatures, over 11,000 people have joined the Goels in a petition to Foreign Affaires Minister Pierre Pettigrew requesting his ministry's assistance with the case.

### **Three Arrests**

Earlier this month, the Mumbai police announced the arrests of three men. The arrested men are Mr. Narendra Goel, a son-in-law of Suresh Agrawal, Mr. M. Shinde, a lodging house manager employed by Suresh Agrawal, and Mr. Pawankumar Goenka, the key manager of Subhash Agrawal of Ottawa (one of Dr. Goel's two other brothers).

"This awful crime has devastated us," said Dr. S. K. Goel. "We are relieved that the authorities have found some of the people responsible for my wife's death, but we believe there are likely more arrests to be made." Dr. S.K. Goel and his wife Dr. Asha Goel worked together at Headwaters Healthcare Centre for 17 years where he continues practising general surgery. He attests to the deep affection her patients and colleagues showed her saying, "Asha is deeply missed by the community here. She was a very fine doctor, and always took the time to care for her patients, friends and colleagues. They have collected thousands of signatures to help us."

His son, Sanjay Goel, added, "My mother was an innocent woman, a doctor whose life was devoted to helping other people. It is unthinkable that anyone would want to harm her, much less as a large conspiracy as it now appears was involved. There are still many unanswered questions."

### **Motive Reportedly a Property Dispute**

As reported in the Times of India, the motivation for the crime apparently arose out of a property dispute among Dr. Goel's siblings, in which Suresh and Subhash were accused in court of trying to deprive the third and youngest brother, Shekhar, of any share of his inheritance. Reportedly, Dr. Goel died trying to defend her youngest brother's rights.

According to reports in the Indian media, all the people arrested so far had been under suspicion from the earliest days of the case, but these arrests were delayed due to a lack of physical evidence, as well as other case management issues involving the original investigating authority. The Indian media has reported the handling of the case has "raised eyebrows" in police circles there. The case was transferred in January 2004 to the elite "Crime Branch" detectives of the Mumbai Police, who eventually made the recent arrests under the leadership of Joint Commissioner Meera Borwanker who has taken a personal interest in the case.

Sanjay Goel had praise for the Crime Branch investigators who made the arrests, observing: "After much patience, persistence, and dogged police work, inspector J.K. Hargude and his Crime Branch team have found those implicated in actually carrying out the crime." Nevertheless, Goel doubts the case has been fully solved. "There are very likely still people at large whose involvement with the case has yet to be adequately probed." The Goels are determined that all people involved in both planning and carrying out the murder be brought to justice.

### **Family Calls on Government of Canada for Assistance**

Sanjay Goel said, "Future progress in this case may depend on the Canadian Government. We are counting on Ottawa to do the right thing for my family and the entire Indo-Canadian community, which has suffered a great deal of pain and outrage over the handling of this matter. Although we are grateful for the assistance of the Canadian High Commission staff in Mumbai, we believe that the Canadian Government must now take an active role in the investigation to ensure that all avenues are pursued and the guilty brought to justice." Goel continued, "We don't want this to be another Air India situation in which many feel the concerns of the Indo-Canadian community have been neglected. This needs to be made a priority at the highest levels. As the case goes forward, I hope the investigation will receive the support and attention it deserves from Ottawa."

For further information on this case and comment, please contact: Sanjay K. Goel at (604)760-3102 and see [www.ashagoel.ca](http://www.ashagoel.ca).