

# East Indian community grieves for victims

## Teacher recalled for her good work

Continued from Page 1

"She was so great she was unbelievable," he said. "She is a very, very conscientious young lady. She had a good rapport with administrators, staff, students and parents. She does her job above and beyond the call of duty."

"THERE'S NOTHING else that could be said about her other than praise, beautiful words about this young lady."

Before moving to Farmington Hills the Gupta's were residents of Canton Township. Alameddine said, adding he was uncertain how long the family had been in the United States.

The Gupta's daughter, Arti, known as Arlene, was going to enter the fifth grade in the fall at Woodcreek Elementary School. She was born in Windsor, Ontario, according to school records.

HER BROTHER, Amit, also known as Kevin, who would have entered the second grade, also at Woodcreek, was born in Livonia.

"They were lovely children. Not a bit of a problem," said a Woodcreek school employee.

Alameddine remembers Arti and Amit as "polite children" who were "a reflection of their parents."

"They were just beautiful children. They were just as cute as anything you can see," Alameddine said.

The children accompanied Gupta when she stopped at East Middle School to say goodbye to Alameddine shortly before their scheduled trip.

"She came with her children to bid me farewell," he said. "I gave each a kiss and a hug."



Members of the Indian community gathered Tuesday evening at Bharatiya Temple in Troy to mourn the loss of their loved ones, victims of the Air India jetliner crash.

## Cultural leader laments a wounded generation

By Diane Gale staff writer

Thousands of persons in the Indian community are mourning the loss of relatives and friends who were victims of the Air-India disaster that claimed the lives of 329 passengers, including Michigan residents.

"We feel a big loss in losing a younger generation of our Indian relatives," said Ganesh Naidu, treasurer of Tamil Sangam of Michigan, a non-denominational Indian cultural group.

The crash took the lives of 86 infants and children under 12 years old, said Joseph Moore of Air-India's Detroit

office. More than 300 victims were of Indian descent.

Approximately 250 families are involved in the Tamil Sangam association, which is located in Dearborn Heights and represents persons from the southern portion of India. Naidu said Michigan's largest concentration of Indian persons are in Troy and Sterling Heights, followed by Canton Township, Dearborn Heights and Farmington Hills. Approximately 14,000 Indians live in the Detroit Metropolitan area, according to the 1980 census.

"It's (the crash) a tragedy to the India community in general and we lost our valuable members and friends of the community," Naidu said.

HE ESPECIALLY LAMENTS the loss of 14-year-old Anand Swaminathan of Sterling Heights. Swaminathan's two sisters, brother and mother were also crash victims. His father Sundaresan (Sam) was not on the flight. An Ypsilanti Township family of four were also victims of the crash. Both families were active members of the Tamil Sangam.

"They were very much involved in the group and we lost them," Naidu said. "I'm unable to comment on the political (aspect), and the reason for the attack, because they are looking for that information," Naidu said.

Please turn to Page 8

## Hundreds gather at Hindu temple

By Sharon Dargay staff writer

The eulogies spoke of shattered lives. The lulling chants were laced with sorrow.

The statue of the Hindu God, Vishnu, smiled benevolently at a sea of grim faces from his marble sanctuary.

But some of the more than 500 persons who attended a funeral prayer service at Bharatiya Temple, Troy, on Tuesday expressed more hope than anger, more spiritual renewal than grief over the crash of an Air-India flight off the coast of Ireland.

"I think at the time of such tragedies, people come together and revive their spiritual energy," said Vishnu Patel, temple board chairman. "When you analyze the philosophy of love, then you can see it is something that has sprouted inside or is it a reaction to an outside fear?"

"There are so many communities in India. Each one is unique and yet when the pressure was from an outside force, that makes you unite."

At least 21 of the 329 passengers aboard the ill-fated jet were associated with the temple and the Indian community in southeastern Michigan.

The crash on Sunday wiped out an entire family from Canton Township and left widowers in Troy and Farmington Hills.

VICTIMS INCLUDED Pulivelli Jacob, 43, his wife, Aleykutty, 39, and their daughters, Jessie, 13, and Jancy, 10 and son, Justin, 8, of Canton Township.

Saroj Bedi, 39, her daughter, Anu, 15 and son, Justin, 9, of Troy planned to visit relatives in India. Parkash Bedi flew to London after the crash to identify the bodies of his wife and children.

Shashi Gupta, 35, her daughter, Arti, 10 and son, Amit, 6, of Farmington Hills, also were on their way to visit relatives. They are survived by husband and father, Sudhir Gupta.

At least three Sikh extremist groups reportedly have claimed responsibility for the crash. Canadian officials, investigating the Toronto-New Delhi bound flight, say the crash may have been caused by a bomb.

Investigators have not confirmed the link to Sikh groups.

But the suggestion of terrorist in-

volvement turned sadness to anger for some of the victims' friends, like Ed Jones of Metamora. He and his wife, Barbara, had known the Bedi family for 10 years.

"It's all so senseless. It makes me mad," Jones admitted. "It's one thing when you can't put names and faces on the casualty, but when you're close, it's totally different. It brings it close to home and to tell you the truth, it infuriates me."

NANCY BHATT, Rochester, didn't know any of the victims whose names were listed on passenger rosters that circulated through the crowd during services. She felt saddened by the accident, but expressed hope that survivors would feel closer to God.

"I don't know where the world is going. The whole world is going to terrorism. Where will it end?"

"Anybody could have been in their (victims') place. I think this will make you get closer to the creator of this world," she said.

"If it were an explosion caused by somebody, I wish it is never repeated," added Ravi Parameswaran of Bloomfield Hills.

"I don't think you can feel anger at this point. The overwhelming emotion is sadness that such a thing had to happen. To lose them (victims) for apparently no reason is devastating," he added.

Throughout the hourlong service, speakers urged mourners to ask God to grant peace to the dead and strength to survivors. Members also prayed for the safe return of American hostages in Lebanon.

"We are all victims. When you think about it, we have all suffered," Patel said. "We are angry because this shouldn't have happened. Same thing about the American hostages. But somehow, the anger shouldn't be the guiding force. Our intelligence should be."

BUT WORDS of comfort and a show of unity among members of the Indian community couldn't assuage the tears of some mourners like Bindi Sekhar of Oak Park. The 17-year-old wrestled with grief and anger, as she recalled summer holidays spent with Shyamal

Please turn to Page 8

## Canton community shares in plane crash tragedy

By Diane Gale staff writer

Framed pictures of the Canton Township family presumed killed in the Air-India jetliner crash hied the mantle of a fireplace in their Brittany Drive home.

Cans of Rold are standing in a neat row on the kitchen floor, a brand new bicycle sits in the garage and a swing set was erected this year in the backyard. Pulivelli K. Jacob, 44; Aleykutty, 39, their daughters, Jissey, 13; Jancy, 10; and their son, Justin, 8, left the home neat and in obvious preparation for their return from a six-week visit to India.

NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS and relatives are grief-stricken about the disaster. They say the Jacobs were devout Christians, hard workers and "good people."

"He (Mr. Jacob) was attending a Bible school in Michigan to become a minister," said Mrs. Jacob's brother, Thomas Alex of Bronx, N.Y.

"He wanted to be a Christian minister . . . and they wanted to preach the gospel," Alex said. "They were very nice people, both of them loved each other. They were an ideal couple."

ALEX, WHO LEARNED of the crash through news reports, is planning to fly with his brother to Shannon, Ireland, to identify the bodies.

Alex said he had no idea who could be responsible for the crash other than those mentioned in news reports. Three extremist groups have claimed responsibility.

"They (Jacob family) were not at all politically active," Alex said. "They were always religious people."

The Jacobs, who traveled to India about every two years, were making this trip because Mrs. Jacob's mother was ill.

"MY SISTER (Mrs. Jacob) wanted to take my mother to the hospital, and that was the main reason (they went to India). (My mother) needed a cataract operation and she has an infection," said Alex, who spoke in a low and labored tone.

The Jacobs, who moved from southern India to the United States 16 years ago, lived in New York before buying a home in Canton about five years ago.

"They wanted a better education for their children, and they liked the place (Canton)," Alex said.

Mr. Jacob worked as a medical attorney in New York, and also was employed "for awhile" as an X-ray technician at Ann Arbor's Veterans Administration Hospital where Mrs. Jacob worked as a registered nurse. Mr. Jacob owned an independent taxi cab company at Metro Airport and recently started

a travel agency, Dual Travel, which he operated out of his home, Alex said. Each family member was a naturalized U.S. citizen.

C.V. SAMUEL, a Warren resident, was a close friend of the family for about five years. He said his family and the Jacobs were members of the India Christian Prayer Fellowship, which operates out of members' homes. The interdenominational group meets every Sunday evening. Last Sunday, a special prayer meeting was held for the Jacob family.

"The prayer service was very heart wrenching," said George Abraham, a friend of the Jacobs.

"No one could speak or even pray," Abraham said. "We could only keep weeping."

ABRAHAM SAID the Jacobs were like family to him. As he wiped his eyes, he said he was sure they were coming home.

On June 15, Samuel had a going-away "plenic" party for the Jacobs.

"We wanted them to play with the kids, and we never knew that was going to be the last time they were going to play," Samuel said. "I think I can say within a short time this family became one of the best loved and respected families of the community . . . and in the Indian community."

"It is really hard," Samuel said. "I have never met such dedicated people serving the Lord so unselfishly. I think they were personally involved with their spirituality and love and concern for others. I think it was time for this family to go home in heaven to receive their eternal reward."

JAMES CARNES, 11, a next-door neighbor, said he was friends with Justin.

"He tried to stay out of trouble . . . He was picked on by some of the kids in the neighborhood," Carnes said. "He was real nice . . . He just learned how to ride a bike last summer. He was real athletic."

Jim Phayakalas, 11, another neighborhood friend, said Justin was "nice, and he liked to play a lot and he likes to run. Sometimes he didn't like to come out."

JAMES CARNES' mother said the family left her a key to the home while they were away in order to care for the grass and other things.

"They were my neighbors, and good Christians, and I feel very bad that they're dead, but they're going to heaven," Carnes said.

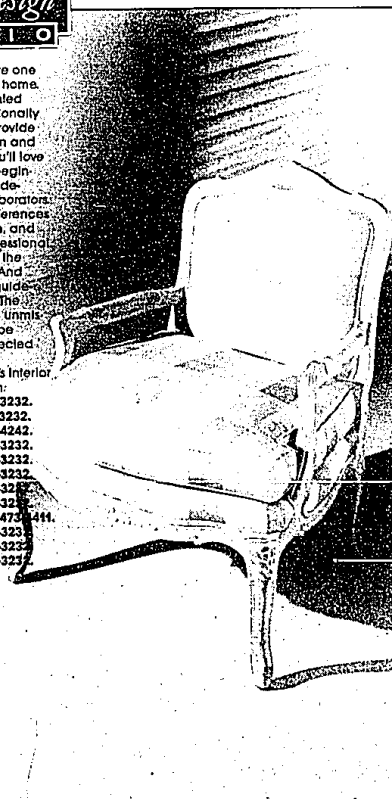
"They were very quiet and kept to themselves," she said. "The kids were very well behaved, and the parents brought them up very, very good. They were great parents, great neighbors and good to the children. They were really nice to live next to."

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