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PRESS RELEASE

KOMAGATA MARU PHOTO - EXHIBITION

OFFICIAL RELEASE FUNCTION :

Date/time : **Wednesday, May 17, 1989 ; 7:30 P.M.**

Place: **Moti Mahal Restaurant 6450 Main St.**
Punjabi Market, Vancouver, B.C.



"To admit Orientals in large numbers would mean in the end the extinction of the white people, and we always have in mind the necessity of keeping this a white man's country."

B.C. Premier Sir Richard McBride, May 22, 1914.

Seventy five years ago Komagata Maru, with its 376 Indian passengers on board, was greeted with the above sentiment when it arrived in Vancouver on May 23rd, 1914. Being part of the British Empire at the time, Indians considered it their right to enter Canada. To challenge unjust Canadian immigration laws, restricting their entry, they chartered Komagata Maru to come to Vancouver. The Canadian government, however, stood firm on its discriminatory policies. For two months the authorities held at bay the passengers' efforts to land. Finally on July 23rd, with the help HMCS Rainbow Komagata Maru was forced to leave the Canadian waters. The incident has been described as "an exercise in Canadian prejudice".

To commemorate the **75th anniversary of Komagata Maru**, Vancouver Sath has prepared an exhibition of photographs and various important documents depicting this tragedy. While showing the hardships and ill-treatment suffered by early Indo-Canadians the exhibition also reveal their determination and courage to fight injustice. We feel that the memory and the spirit of this heritage is very significant for all Canadians. By remembering those who stood up against injustice we can better equip ourselves in our efforts to build a better future for mankind

Vancouver Sath is working in cooperation with various other organizations and individuals in the community who are planning activities to commemorate the event. We only express the general sentiment of the community when we say that the different levels of Canadian government should recognize the significance of this incident and move towards giving it the much deserved place in Canada's history.

Vancouver Sath's other activities for this event include translation and publication of various old documents in both Punjabi and English and production of original plays about Komagata Maru.

Contact : Sadhu Binning at 437-9014 or Sukhwant Hundal at 581-3211