



Missing man's kin want answers

TheStar.com - GTA

Police have not verified if body at blast site belongs to employee, 24

August 15, 2008

Emily Mathieu
Gagandeep Ghuman
Staff Reporters

Thousands of kilometres from the heart of a massive propane explosion in a north Toronto neighbourhood, the family of a young man declared missing after the blast is desperate for information.

"They are worried and they do not know what they can do because no family member has a passport. But they want to come to Toronto to try and find out what is going on," said Amar Singh Bhullar, chief editor of *Hamdard Weekly*, a Punjabi newspaper in Mississauga.

Parminder Saini, 24, has been missing since a massive explosion at Sunrise Propane on Sunday forced the evacuation of thousands.

On Monday, police discovered a body at the scene. The same day, a lawyer speaking for the owners of Sunrise Propane confirmed Saini was an employee and that his whereabouts were unknown.

But Toronto Police Const. Wendy Drummond said, "The identity of the body has not been confirmed at this time." The information obtained in the post-mortem has not been fully assessed, she said.

Police confirmed they have been in touch with the family in India several times. According to Bhullar, the exchange yielded little information and now the frantic family is desperate to know more.

Yesterday Bhullar contacted Saini's older brother, Bikramjit Singh, at the family home in the city of Bathinda in Punjab province.

He told Bhullar his brother did not have up-to-date medical or dental records but understood the police had been to his brother's residence in Brampton to collect some clothing to test for DNA.

Drummond would not comment on the statement, but said, "When we are trying to identify a body there are several ways in which to do so," including fingerprints, dental records or collecting DNA from clothing.

Saini's brother described him as a fun-loving, hard-working, intelligent man from a well-educated family. Their father, Rajinder Singh, and mother, Sukhnain Kaur, both hold government positions.

Saini studied as a mechanical engineer at Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Engineering College in

Fatehgarh Sahib.

"I am missing him. I can't believe what has happened," said a close friend and former college classmate who asked that his name not be printed because he had not asked Saini's family for permission to speak to the media. He described Saini as a "happy man" with a permanent smile on his face.

"He is a good guy, he is a kind guy, a really generous guy. Always ready to help others," he said.

Saini moved to Canada in 2007 to pursue further education at Sheridan College in Brampton.

In his profile on Orkut, an online social networking site, Saini – nicknamed "Rocky" – described Canada as a land of gods and beautiful people. The profile has photos of a handsome young man with friends, images of cars and videos of musical artists. He also writes that the movie *The Dark Knight* was "awesome, worth watching."

A poem scribbled by Saini could serve as a sad epitaph for his life.

"I am dust, my life is mere specks of dust and what I talk will one day be dust," Saini writes. Beneath the poem is what seems like a cryptic message for someone he loved.

He writes, "There are many good looking people in the world. God knows why I fell in love with you. I don't know what you think of me, but I have given my heart to you."

He had been at Sunrise Propane for only a few weeks, Bhullar said.

About one hour before the blast Saini had a light-hearted conversation with his brother. After he moved to Canada, Saini cut his long hair, and his brother was teasing him about his new look.

Five days later, his family still doesn't know what happened.

Bhullar said they are holding onto hope. The family told him they think Saini could be lying low, scared by massive efforts to confirm the young man is in fact the body found at the blast site.

"One thing they are thinking is, maybe this body does not belong to Parminder," he said.