

# Vancouver Sun

## MLA receives Indian honour

Thu Jan 11 2007

Page: B7

Section: Westcoast News

Byline: Kim Bolan

Dateline: SURREY

Source: Vancouver Sun

Illustrations: Colour Photo: Dave Hayer receives award from Indian president A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

SURREY - Surrey Liberal MLA Dave Hayer has received one of India's highest honours for his tireless work against terrorism in Canada.

Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam gave Hayer the award at a conference in New Delhi this week.

Hayer, the only Canadian honoured, was one of 15 recipients of Indian origin from around the world presented with the 2007 Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award.

"I am absolutely thrilled to have been given this honour," Hayer said Wednesday in a telephone interview from India. "This experience has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me and one that I will never forget."

The award was established by the Indian government to honour the achievements of people of Indian origin in their chosen field.

Hayer, who is parliamentary secretary for multiculturalism and immigration, said he was singled out for his advocacy on behalf of the victims of the Air India bombing and his call for tougher laws with respect to terrorism.

His journalist father, Tara Singh Hayer, was assassinated in November 1998 after

writing extensively about those he believed were behind the 1985 Air India bombing in his Indo-Canadian Times newspaper.

Tara Hayer had agreed to be a witness in the Air India case when he was shot in the garage of his Surrey house. His murder remains unsolved, although a task force continues to investigate the slaying.

The issue of threats against witnesses is to be tackled when the second part of the Air India inquiry resumes Feb. 19 in Ottawa under commissioner and former Supreme Court of Canada Justice John Major.

Hayer was a vocal supporter of the establishment of an inquiry into the Air India bombing and subsequent investigation. The judicial inquiry was called after the March 2005 acquittals of two B.C. men in the Air India case, which remains the worst mass murder in Canadian history.

Dave Hayer learned he would be a recipient of the award last week and was invited to the Indian capital to accept the prize in person. He said he not only met Kalam, the Indian president, but had a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as well.

"I did talk to them about my dad's case and terrorism in general," Hayer said.

In handing out the awards, Kalam praised the achievements of "overseas Indians," a group that numbers 25 million.

[kbolan@png.canwest.com](mailto:kbolan@png.canwest.com)

© 2007 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.