

# Man charged in attack on Indian consulate

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By Walter Stefaniuk Toronto Star

A suspect has been charged with public mischief after a man in a black turban went on a chair-swinging rampage at the Indian consulate at Bloor and Yonge Sts. yesterday, smashing furniture and portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

No one was injured but a receptionist in the consulate's lobby on the 29th floor of the Hudson's Bay Centre was treated for shock.

Metro police estimated damage at about \$2,000.

"It is not a question of damage," Consul-General Surinder Malik said in an interview amid the debris. "It's a matter of dishonoring the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, and Mrs. Gandhi and the president, Zail Singh, a Sikh himself and an eminent person."

A life-sized photograph of peace pacifist Mahatma Gandhi, who led India to independence from Brit-

ain after World War II, lay torn on the floor. Smaller portraits of Indira Gandhi and Singh were shattered.

The end of a table was sheared off by the force of a blow and other furniture was ripped or scratched by metal chairs that had been thrown about.

The Metro incident occurred while special units of the Indian Army stormed Sikh temples in the Punjab where rebels have been holed up for up to two years.

Some consulate staff members believed the man was armed. They saw an object like a pistol in the back of his belt when his jacket flew up as he flailed at the furnishings, Malik said.

But Metro police said there was no indication the man was armed.

Charged with public mischief over \$200 to private property is Jasbir Singh Saini, 21, of Trowell Ave. in York city.