



PERPETRATOR OF 1985 AIR INDIA BOMBINGS, WHICH KILLED 331, FREED FROM JAIL

News / Personalities



It was the deadliest terrorist strike involving an aircraft until the September 11 attacks.

The only convicted perpetrator of the 1985 Air India bombings was released from a Canadian prison on Wednesday, the *Times of India* reports.

Inderjit Singh Reyat, a Sikh who emigrated to Canada, had served more than two decades in jail for building the two suitcase bombs involved in the plot, intended for two Air India Boeing 747s. The first detonated at Tokyo's Narita airport while being transferred to its target aircraft, killing two baggage handlers. The second hit its target: it exploded aboard Air India Flight 182 over the Atlantic Ocean as it neared Ireland, tearing apart the aircraft and killing all 329 people onboard.

It was the deadliest terrorist attack involving an aircraft until the September 11 attacks, and remains the largest mass murder in Canadian history.

Reyat was one of several suspects, many of whom had been linked to a Sikh extremist group outraged by the Indian army's June 1984 raid on a Sikh shrine in Amritsar. (The raid, called

Operation Blue Star, is also believed to have precipitated the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in October 1984).

The other suspects were ultimately acquitted, however, in part because Reyat declined to implicate them while testifying in their trials. In 2010, a Canadian court found him guilty of perjury, sentencing him to nine years in prison; in his verdict, Judge Ian Josephson called him “an unmitigated liar under oath.”

Reyat will serve the last three and a half years of his sentence in a halfway house, banned from communicating with his alleged co-conspirators in the attack and the families of the attack’s victims. He will also receive psychological counseling for what one psychologist decribed in 2013 as “a lack of ‘true empathy and remorse.’”

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