

# *Rich Indians in Southall are homesick*

BY SCOTT McCORMACK

**Southall (London), Aug. 11:** The sign outside the local primary school sternly warns against parking in front of the gates — in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

Within shouting distance of the modest building are a mosque, a church, Sikh and Hindu temples, plus the Sum Mari Bureau, proudly claiming to have arranged 6,000 marriages since 1972.

Just down the road at the corner pub customers can pay in pounds or in rupees as Indian movies blare from several television screens.

This is mini-Punjab, a bustling corner of southwest London named after the border dis-

trict split between India and Pakistan 50 years ago when Britain granted independence to its former colony and partitioned it into two nations.

Southall is full of residents whose roots go back to the Punjab, some of them Sikhs and Hindus who found themselves on the wrong side of the border and fled the newly-formed Pakistan for India.

Nearly 23,000 ethnic Indians, in addition to more than 3,000 Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, live in the neighbourhood and make up almost 70 per cent of its population, according to the latest available data.

Gurdip Gujral was 13 when his family fled their home in the farming village of Sargodha in

Pakistani Punjab in 1947 and moved to India to escape the impending violence.

A decade later, he arrived in England with his young wife and nine-month-old son. Mr Gujral, a burly man with a red turban and the full beard of an orthodox Sikh, took a job as a cleaner in a local factory and moved into a one-room flat in Southall. Struggling to support his family on a weekly wage of £8.50 a week. He gradually built up an Indian import business. Now a British citizen, he ranks among the wealthiest Asians in the country. Even after decades in his adopted homeland, Mr Gujral still misses his ancestral home. "We have great friends here. We are British but still we are foreign. There is something missing." (*Reuter*)