

## Komagata Maru Memorial website launched

TORONTO

The Brown Canada Project of Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) this week launched Komagata Maru Memorial Website <http://km.browncanada.ca>. The website provides a historical narrative of the Komagata Maru incident, as well as an analysis of South Asian immigration into Canada in the 'Migration and Movement' section, a release issued here claims.

The website offers an important analysis of South Asian history in Canada, which is often omitted from Canadian history textbooks. It includes historical photographs, information on the key players of the Komagata Maru incident, and an extensive time-line of South Asian history in Canada.

According to Neethan Shan, Executive Director of CASSA, "It is important for us to remember, and commemorate the Komagata Maru incident because it was one of many examples of exclusionary and racist immigration tactics to maintain a "White" Canada."

Other unique features include the "Remember" section, which includes and invites commentary from community members. The "Remember" section includes both historic and current recollections of the Komagata Maru incident by artists, historians, educators, and community members.

"Through this project and this website, we have been able to raise awareness on the Komagata Maru Incident to ensure that the current and future generations remember the struggles of our community, which continues in many forms even today," said Anita Khanna, Project Manager of the Brown

Canada Project.

Brown Canada is a community-led project documenting, creating, and sharing South Asian histories in Canada. Our collective entry point is through the Komagata Maru incident.

It is worth mentioning that Gurdit Singh, a Sikh entrepreneur based in Singapore, chartered a Japanese ship, the Komagata Maru, to carry Indian immigrants to Canada. On May 23, 1914, the ship arrived in Vancouver Harbour with 376

passengers aboard. The passengers were challenging the Continuous Journey Regulation which was an effective way of keeping people from India out of Canada until 1948.

Only a half-mile from Canadian shores, the Komagata Maru was surrounded by immigration boats and the passengers were held as prisoners on the ship. Following a two month stalemate, the ship was escorted out of the harbour by the Canadian military on July 23 and

forced to sail back to India, where the passengers encountered hostile British authorities, who suspected them of being members of the revolutionary Ghadar Party. About 40 people went missing or were killed.

The Komagata Maru incident is an example of the enforcing of an exclusionary "White" Canada immigration policy and is also an important part of the anti-colonial narrative against British rule in the Indian subcontinent.\*