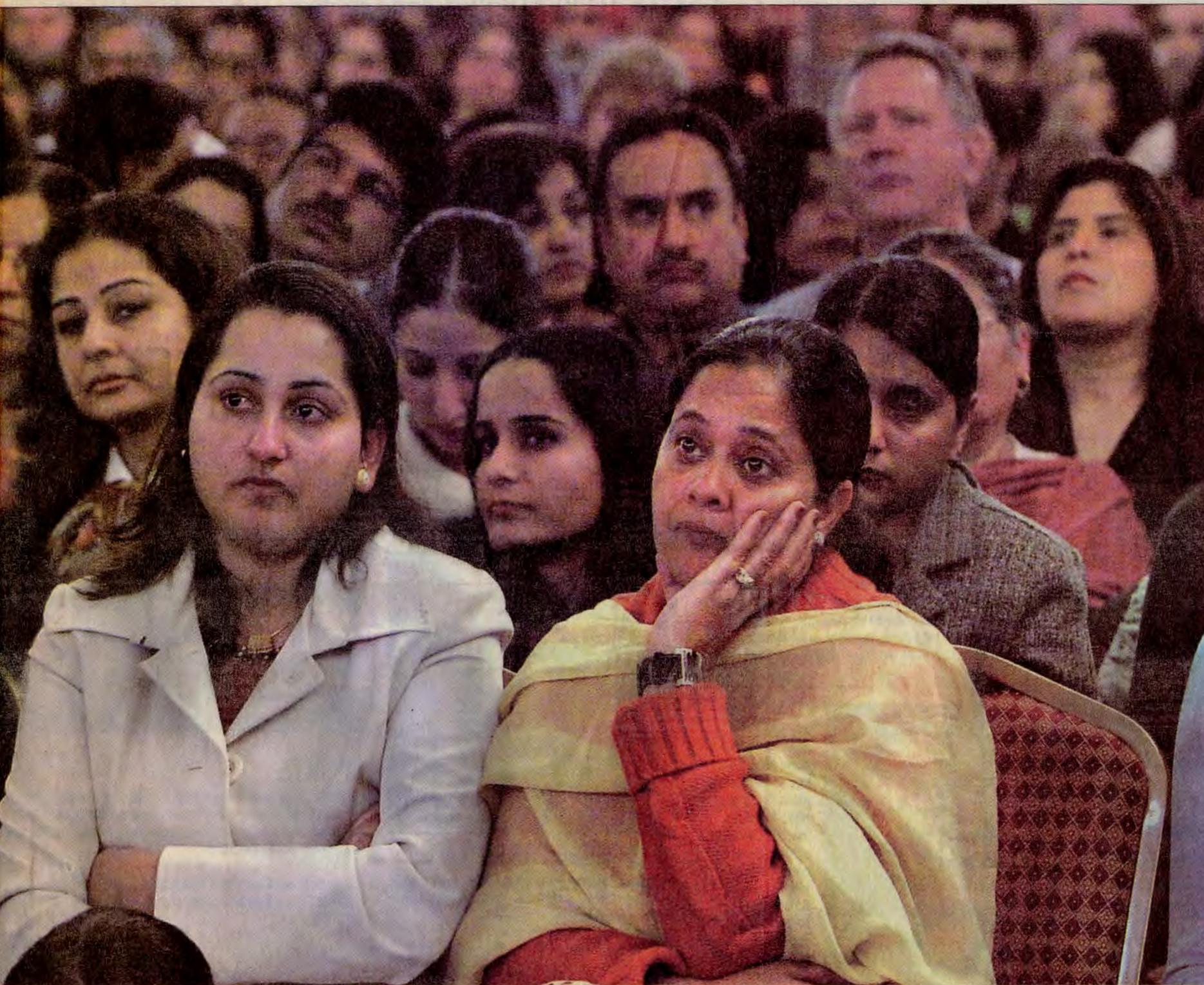


A-G CALLS FOR FIGHT AGAINST 'CANCER' OF SPOUSAL ABUSE



**Wally Oppal
makes plea during
forum on
domestic abuse**

BY KIM BOLAN
VANCOUVER SUN

One by one, Indo-Canadian women stood up to tell tales of being beaten, slapped and threatened with knives and guns, moving a crowd of more than 2,000 people to tears Thursday night.

The forum was organized by Surrey-based Radio India as an emergency community response to three brutal assaults in the last two weeks that left two women dead and one fighting for her life.

The women signed up to speak as they entered the jammed Surrey banquet hall, launching a forum that was later addressed by politicians and social services representatives.

One woman who said she was the mother of two girls told of being beaten by her husband for years before working up the courage to leave.

"I am a survivor of 11 years of physical, mental and verbal abuse," she said. "I was held at knifepoint. I was held at gunpoint."

She said that as in many extended Indo-Canadian families, she was encouraged to put up with the beatings to save face, but she finally left.

"I am here today in one piece and my daughters are as happy as kids can be," she said. "Save your daughters, save your sisters ... if I can do it, you can do it."

Attorney-General Wally Oppal praised the forum organizers and the women who told their stories.

STEVE BOSCH/VANCOUVER SUN

Women in the packed audience listen to first-hand stories of spousal abuse at a forum Thursday night on violence against women in the South Asian community.

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