

Community raises funds to send Saravanan's body back to India

GEORGE JOSEPH

The Arlington, Texas, police continued their investigation last week in the murder of Saravanan Ramasubramanian, 32, a clerk at the Conoco gas station at West Pioneer Parkway in Arlington, who was shot dead on January 7.

He died from handgun wounds to his head and abdomen, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner has determined.

The police took his cellphone to determine the places he visited and identify the friends he might have. They were also trying to determine the motive behind the killing.

Prasad Thotakura, a community activist, met with the police and informed them about the concerns of the community. The police, he said, are following several leads, though they had declined to elaborate.

Thotakura said that he has visited the place where Saravanan got killed. He claimed that it was surprising that the assailants didn't touch any cash or merchandise from the store.

"The whole community was in shock and anxious to know the mystery behind this killing," he said. "It is very sad to see a promising young man who came to this country with a lot of hope and aspiration get killed for no reason," he told *India Abroad*.



■ Saravanan Ramasubramanian

Not many people knew Saravanan, a computer programmer who had joined the gas station only four days before his murder and was living in a motel.

A native of Melur near Madurai, he came to the US five years ago and lived for a couple of years in New York, his relatives have told Thotakura.

Saravanan, who had a master's in computer applications from Madurai Kamraj University, was the only son of his parents and has two sisters. His father retired as a fitter from a spinning mill in Madurai.

After the murder, the officials at the Indian consulate in Houston approached Thotakura to help with sending the body to India.

Thotakura contacted the family in Tamil Nadu. "Initially his parents won't believe that this happened to their son," he said. "Later they said they wanted to see at least his body and requested to send it to Madurai for the final rites."

With the help of the local community, Thotakura raised the money to send the body to India on January 13; the funeral was held on January 16.

Schepps Dairy Company has announced a \$10,000 reward for any leads in this case.

"As a community, we stood together, worked relentlessly as a team, raised the required funds in no time, and took care of all logistics and formalities to send Saravanan's body to India," Thotakura said while thanking those who helped.