

APRIL 2, 2010

## NORTH AMERICAN Newslines

# 'Student killed in robbery belonged to Hyderabad'

STAFF REPORTER

New York

**A**N Indian college student killed in a robbery in Oklahoma City last Sunday belonged to the same city, Hyderabad, in India, as a man critically injured in a robbery last month, an Indian Association leader said, according to a local report.

Prasanth Goinaka, 26, was not an employee but was watching the cash register for a friend when S K Foods, 2000 N MacArthur Blvd., was robbed. He died from multiple gunshot wounds, the state medical examiner said, reported NewsOk.com. A spokeswoman for the medical examiner would not say how many times or where in his body he was shot.

On February 2, Friendly Foods clerk Adi Vaka, 26, was shot in the chest by two men who robbed the store at NW 28 and Classen Boulevard. Vaka is recovering at a local hospital, said Rishi Middela, former vice-president of the Oklahoma Telugu Association.

In Vaka's shooting, an arrest warrant has been issued for Carlos Xavier Ross, 18, who is absconding. Police said the cases do not appear to be related. Surveillance video of both crimes appears to show different suspects. But in both cases, robbers cleaned out the cash registers and the victims' wallets.

Middela was quoted as saying he did not think race or ethnicity were factors in either shooting.

"I'm not really sure why they are targeting the stores they are targeting, but I don't think it had anything to do with race," he said.



TANA officials pay their last respects to Prasanth Goinaka.

Goinaka went to California in January for college and came here last week to visit a friend. Middela, who lives in Norman, said he first heard about Goinaka's death from friends and family in India.

He said he is trying to help coordinate communication with Goinaka's family and get the body flown to India. As Goinaka was visiting, the process is complicated.

"If he had been a local member of our association or if he was living here, we would have known more about his family," Middela said. "But because he was pretty new here, we didn't know much."

The Oklahoma Telugu Association is helping to raise money to return the body to India, Middela said. He said the association also wanted to try to stop the release of the store

surveillance video that showed the robbery. The video released by Oklahoma City police does not show the shooting.

Middela said he knew the tape had to be released to help catch the people who did it, but he said he wanted to spare Goinaka's family from seeing their only son like that, the report said.

"We just didn't want the parents to see him dragged around and then pushed to the floor and killed," he said. "It was really horrible for me to watch. Just think what it was like for his parents having to watch that."

Pramod Vadrevu, an Oklahoma City officer with the Telugu Association of North America, said he was told on March 24 that Goinaka's body had been taken to Dallas, and officials were waiting on final paperwork before flying the body back to India.

Prasad Thotakura, Executive Vice President, TANA, said in a statement from Dallas that all formalities have been completed to send the body.

He said several community members, including Consul General of India Sanjiv Arora, Dr Vishwanadham Puligandla, Dr Sridhar Reddy Korsapti, Rao Kalvala, Dr Narasimha Reddy Urimindi, Ram Yalamanchili, Gopi Chillakuri, Prasad MVL and Raheem Mohammad visited Rehma Funeral Home in Dallas on March 26 to pay last respects to Goinaka.

Jyaram Komati, TANA president and Mohan Nannapaneni, Secretary of TANA conveyed deepest condolences to the Goinaka family in Hyderabad.