

Indian community shocked at Virginia Tech shootout

Shock and disbelief descended on the Indian community at the Virginia Tech university, after a gunman went on a shooting spree Monday and killed 33 people, including a professor of Indian origin.

Members of the student community and the faculty said Prof. G.V. Loganathan, 51, who was among those killed in the twin shootouts, was an affable person and an able teacher who was always eager to help Indian students.

'I've known Prof. Loganathan rather well. In fact, I have lost a good friend and the university an excellent teacher,' said Prof. Kumar Mallikarjunan, associate professor in the biological systems engineering department.

'He was always ready to help and very popular among the students and faculty at Virginia Tech,' Mallikarjunan told IANS about his late colleague, who was with the civil and environmental engineering department.

He recalled that Loganathan, who is survived by wife and two daughters, received the dean's award for excellence in teaching in 1998 and a similar award last year.

According to Amit Chandra Agarwal, vice president of the Indian Students' Association (ISA) at Virginia Tech, the student community as a whole had been shocked by the incident Monday.

'This is a quiet, peaceful place, full of students from all over the world. The shootout and the loss of lives have really shocked us. We will be holding prayer meetings for the deceased later in the day,' he added.

'As of now we don't have any news of any Indian student being part of the list of casualties.'

Recalling the incident, Agarwal said there were two shootouts - one at around 7.15 in the morning and the other some two hours later.

'After the first shootout, the police found two victims in one of the dormitories, West Ambler Johnston Residence Hall. The students were asked to remain calm and remain in their premises,' he said.

'The second shootout was at the Norris Hall where we have our faculties, labs and classrooms. This is where Prof. Loganathan is believed to have died. The police say that the gunman also shot himself,' he added.

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