

## Minal's dreams brought her to US varsity -- and death

Before a berserk killer's bullet found her in a classroom at Virginia Tech, [Mumbai](#) girl Minal Panchal looked forward to following her father's footsteps in the world of architecture.

The Harry Potter fan who loved cricket as well as Indian and Chinese cuisines was confirmed dead a full 24 hours after the shooting spree by South Korean Cho Seung-Hui that killed 32 people Monday.

The body of the 26-year-old, who describes herself as a fan of dry, sarcastic humour, sketching and cricket in blog site Orkut, is likely to be handed over to her family in two to three days.

Minal's mother, who is a Mumbai-based widow, and her brother-in-law, who is based in New Jersey, are yet to take a decision on whether they will transport the body back to India.

'Well, she is the most sweet girl I have ever known. I know her from nursery. We use to share the same bench,' says friend Sachin Shah.

'Minal is one of the few people whom I categorise as 'beauty with brains'. She has nice caring nature towards her friends and enjoys her life to the fullest,' adds another blogger, Adi Das Girish.

Panchal had studied at the Our Lady of Remedy High School and later pursued her bachelors from the Rizvi School of Architecture, both in Mumbai, before she came to Virginia Tech for further studies.

She had read through the entire Harry Potter series and counted 'When Harry Met Sally', 'Matrix 1', 'The Beach', 'The Way We Are', 'Philadelphia Story' and 'Seven Years in Tibet' among her favourite movies.

A scrapbook of hers on Orkut has hundreds of condolence messages from not just her friends, classmates and acquaintances but also those who have never met or known her in the past.

'I don't know u personally... not even seen u... but I would never want some thing this happening to anyone... May ur soul rest in peace,' said one.

According to one message, Panchal's body was found around 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time Tuesday.

The blogger attributed this news to Shrikar Bhave, Panchal's batchmate who was on his way to Virginia Tech from Raleigh to support Minal's parents who are there already.

Neighbours at her fifth-floor apartment in Borivili West's Park View residence said Minal's mother left for the US two weeks ago while her elder sister Kavita is married and lives in the US.

'Minal's mother left to visit Kavita, who lives in New Jersey with her husband. Minal's father Hiralal, an architect, passed away a couple of years back after a cardiac arrest,' said a neighbour in Mumbai.

'She was a brilliant student and warm and friendly. She always wanted to excel academically and

wanted to make it big in the field of architecture. I just can't believe Minal is no longer there,' Neeta Bhivankar, Minal's childhood friend, told IANS.

'Who would know that I'd lose her so soon and so cruelly?' she asked, echoing all of Minal's friends and family.

An ardent fan of Ayn Rand's 'The Fountainhead', Minal had decided to follow in her father's footsteps and become an architect. Instead she followed him to another world.

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