

Two Indian students shot dead at Louisiana State University

Two students of Indian origin were found shot dead inside an apartment at Louisiana State University (LSU) and police Friday began searching for three men believed to be behind the crime.

The victims, Chandrasekhar Reddy Komma and Kiran Kumar Allam hailed from Kurnool and Karim Nagar in Andhra Pradesh respectively.

This is the first killing on the campus since the early 1990s. Both Komma and Allam were doctoral students, according to university authorities. Komma was working toward a doctorate degree in biochemistry and Allam was in the chemistry doctoral programme.

The two men were found inside an apartment at the Edward Gay complex after campus police received a call about 10.30 p.m. seeking medical attention. Both had been shot once in the head, according to Charles Zewe, a spokesman for the LSU System.

'From what we're being told, Komma was bound with a computer cable and shot.

The other man was found near the door,' he said. 'There was no indication of forced entry.'

The call to 911 was made by Allam's pregnant wife, who returned home and found the men dead, according to local media reports citing Srinivasa Pothakamuri, a friend of Komma.

No other incidents were reported and the campus was not locked down, though officials were cautioning students about travelling to the university Friday morning and police patrols were increased on campus.

The shootings happened as final exams were nearing completion on the 30,000-student campus and classes were not cancelled. 'Finals wrap up Saturday, but many of them are already finished,' said LSU spokeswoman Kristine Calongne. 'A lot of students have already gone home.'

The murders were the first homicides on LSU's campus since the early 1990s, she said.

A text message was sent to students registered for an emergency alert system. Officials also sent out an e-mail to all LSU e-mail address, voice mail messages and posted a notice on the LSU Web site.

Many colleges and universities implemented such emergency-alert measures after shootings at Virginia Tech University earlier this year.

The apartment building where the shootings took place is designated for married and graduate students. It is on the north edge of the campus, near one of Baton Rouge's highest-crime areas and near an elementary school.

The apartment complex, a cluster of pale yellow cinderblock, three-story buildings, is within sight of the transition offices of Louisiana Governor-elect Bobby Jindal.

'There have been some crimes there, but it's also where the LSU band practices,' Zewe said. 'It's

only about two blocks from Kirby-Smith hall, where the Jindal transition office is.'

'Police actually think it was a straight home invasion and not a concern to the rest of the campus,' Calongne said.

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