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# Vigil held in honor of slain Boston University student

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT APRIL 30, 2012

-  ARTICLE
-  PHOTOS
-  COMMENTS



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**A woman anointed a photograph of Kanagala Seshadri Rao, the Boston University graduate student killed on April 19, at a candlelight vigil Sunday night at Marsh Plaza on campus.**

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In a display of mourning, unity, and protest over the recent fatal shooting of a Boston University graduate student, more than 75 people gathered for a candlelight vigil at the campus Sunday evening.

The group solemnly chanted, sang, and prayed together outside Marsh Chapel. They huddled around a table lined with candles and incense.

At the table's center, surrounded by flowers, was a framed photograph of the slain student, 24-year-old Kanagala Seshadri Rao.

"We grieve. We have lost a child," Pandit Ramsamooj, a Hindu campus minister at Boston University, said at the vigil organized by campus and local Indian and Hindu groups.

Those at the vigil said the unexplained killing of Rao has left his family in his native India and his classmates and friends

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at home and abroad heartbroken and in a state of disbelief.

Rao was found lying outside with gunshot wounds to his head and leg about 2:40 a.m. on April 19, according to the university. He was pronounced dead at the scene, which was in the 100 block of Allston Street in a residential area about 1 mile from the BU campus.

Rao's death has been ruled a homicide, according to police. No arrests have been made and police have repeatedly declined to provide more details of the case, including a possible motive for the attack.

"We will announce any developments that become available to the public," Boston police spokeswoman Elaine Driscoll said in an e-mail last week.

Ratnesh Kansal, a 24-year-old student in the Metropolitan College at BU who knew Rao through his roommate, said he is worried about the progress of the police investigation.

"The major concern right now is that Boston Police need to work to find out who did this," he said. "The culprit needs to be caught.

Rao moved to Boston last fall to pursue a master's in a selective mathematical finance program at in the university's management school.

During his first month here, he stayed with Lokesh Ravidranathan, 24, of Allston, a fellow native of India who recently completed graduate engineering studies at Boston University.

Ravidranathan said he took classes with Rao and lived close to him for four years during their undergraduate studies at the National Institute of Technology Karnataka Surathakal in India.

"He was very nice, genuine," he said. "He would go out of his way to help out anyone who needed it."

Ravidranathan said one of the most unforgettable moments he shared with Rao was on a class trip. He said

PHOTOS



**Photos: Remembering slain Boston University student**

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*'We grieve. We have lost a child.'*

Pandit Ramsamooj A Hindu campus  
minister at Boston University

Rao started trying to etch his name into a rock, laboring for one hour to carve it out.

“This kind of fascinated us,” Ravidranathan said. The act was a display of Rao’s “determination and motivation for doing something.”

The Allston resident said the death of his former classmate has left him and others he knows on edge.

“It’s been a very tragic incident,” he said. “I have become more aware of my surroundings.”

Boston University plans to hold a memorial service for Rao on Friday at 10 a.m. in the School of Management Auditorium.

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