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News

Ontario doctor slain in India; Orangeville MD beaten to death Police say robbery could be motive

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Toronto Star

The chief of obstetrics at an Orangeville hospital has been beaten to death in Mumbai, India, where she was visiting her sick brother. Dr. Asha Goel, 62, was found in a pool of blood on the floor of the bedroom she used at her brother's house in the upper class suburb of Malabar Hill, police in the city said yesterday.

A spokesperson for Orangeville's Headwaters Health Care Centre said Goel's husband, Dr. S.K. Goel, who is a general surgeon at the hospital, informed the staff. He has left for India.

"It is a huge loss," communications officer Kathryn Hunt said.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Canadian High Commission office in Mumbai is monitoring the police investigation that began after a servant found Goel's body early Saturday (late Friday in Toronto).

When contacted by the Star yesterday, police in India were tight-lipped about the investigation, but a story published in the Times of India newspaper said investigators were leaning toward robbery as the motive for the murder, as a gold ring and some \$3,000 were missing.

Yesterday, Dr. Harry Bergen, chief of staff at the hospital, said he had known Goel since she came to the hospital in 1987. Bergen, also a surgeon, worked alongside Goel's husband and it was he who informed him of the doctor's murder late Friday.

"We are all in a state of shock," Bergen said. "She was a very outgoing doctor, dedicated to her work and well liked by her colleagues and staff."

He said Goel was especially pleased when she became a grandmother for the first time just over a year ago and last month celebrated when her youngest daughter was married. The couple have two daughters and a son, all of whom live outside Orangeville.

Hunt said the slain doctor was one of three obstetricians at the hospital and was on the medical advisory committee. She had her initial medical training in Mumbai (then Bombay), graduating in 1963. She then came to Canada for specialist training in obstetrics in Regina, which was completed in 1970. She was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Before coming to Orangeville, she spent 17 years at Pasqua Hospital in Regina, Hunt said.

She had come from Canada to Mumbai a few days before her death to visit her brother, Suresh Chandra Agarwal, who had recently started kidney dialysis, and his wife, who recently suffered a stroke.

