

Markham father struggles with sudden death of wife, daughter

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Only one day before, his livingroom was filled with the joy and laughter of his two daughters and wife. In its place now remains despair, half of that family wiped out during a horrific crash that has left so many asking why.

"The hardest part is that it's so sudden, you never imagine it happening," he said. "It's just all so sudden."

Pradeep was alerted to the news at 11:50 Monday morning, hours after arriving to work at a bank in Toronto.

On their way back from dropping him off at the Markham GO Station, near their home, his wife Inoka Athuraliya-Liyana-Waduge, 42, and his daughter Savani, 4, were struck while driving their Toyota and killed mere blocks from their home.

Police say their black Corolla was travelling eastbound when a black Infinity G35, driven by a still unnamed 28-year-old who was with

his five-and-a-half-month-old child, crossed the centre line near 16th Avenue and Bur Oak Drive before colliding head on.

There are no skid marks on the road to signify braking. However, near the crash site, strewn with car parts and shards of plastic, rests a makeshift memorial, containing a small number of flowers and a stuffed Minion toy at the base of a nearby tree. Inoka died first from her injuries, before Savani died a short time after while being treated at Sick Kids.

HEAD-ON CRASH

Inoka wanted to keep the family car on Monday, Pradeep said, so she could take her older daughter Mihara to her badminton lesson. The 12-year-old was left at home and it fell to her to call her father when a policeman showed up at their door explaining that "mommy had been in an accident."

"This is the biggest shock I had in my life, I didn't expect this to happen to me," he said softly, his head low, still in shock as his fam-

ily tearfully chatted in the kitchen. "I don't know how to explain what I did next. I didn't really know what to do. I am totally lost in this world."

Explaining that he and his family arrived in Canada 10 years ago from Sri Lanka, Pradeep begins to discuss the type of person his wife was.

"She was very pleasant and helpful," he notes. "She was actually like a second mother to me, she looked after everything, every aspect, she looked after me like a kid. She was very caring and loved to do every small detail to make sure we were all safe and happy."

Pradeep explains the important role religion plays in the family's life, all four of them

faithfully attending the Mahamevna monastery and meditation centre.

Inoka could often be found busily preparing food for the monks at Buddhist temple, on Kennedy, just north of Elgin Mills.

'EVERYONE LOVED HER'

As for his now deceased daughter, tiny Savani, he said she was the opposite of a shy child, revelling in human interaction.

"She was very playful and everyone loved her," he said, still unable to even smile at the memory. "She loved making friends and she loved being outside, going to the park and the temple, she never wanted to be inside the house."

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