

COVID-19 ALERT

# Covid-19: Infant, stranded along with over 30 others in Assam, dies while trying to reach Rajasthan

The police said the child's family believed that the lockdown would be lifted on April 14 and transport services would resume subsequently.

Scroll Staff

Apr 20, 2020 · 02:16 pm





Representative photo: Police force villagers to go back to their homes in Assam during the lockdown on Sunday. | PTI

An infant in a group of over 35 stranded people from Rajasthan died in Assam's Chirang district last week during the extended lockdown to rein in the coronavirus pandemic, the police told *Scroll.in* on Monday.

The nine-month old child, identified as Vishal Singh, died on April 14. The police said the family was trying to reach Rajasthan in a truck after believing that the lockdown would be lifted on April 14 and transport services would resume subsequently. The countrywide lockdown, imposed on March 25 and was supposed to end on April 14, has been extended till May 3.

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The child's family, originally hailing from Rajasthan's Dausa, belonged to the itinerant Banjara community, Chirang Police chief Sudhakar Singh said. "The family told us that they had boarded the truck in Sonitpur district and were trying to go home," he added.

Bijit Dadhora, the officer in charge of Dhaligaon, where the police discovered the family, said the post-mortem report of the child is pending. "According to statement of the doctor who examined the child, he died of suffocation," he added. "It was very hot that day, and there were a total of 37 people cramped inside the truck."

The officer said the family came to Assam with others from the same community several months ago, “They would move around from one place to another, and sell their wares in fairs,” Dadhora added.

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Police said the group had been in Middle Assam’s Tezpur town when the lockdown was imposed. All of them boarded the truck heading to Rajasthan after delivering edibles in Assam because they were under the impression that the travel restrictions will be eased. “They had neither money nor food with them,” Dadhora told *Scroll.in*. “So, when they heard that the lockdown was going to be lifted and trains would be operational too, they decided to get on the truck.”

The truck was intercepted in Assam-West Bengal border in Srirampur, almost 400 km from Tezpur. The driver was forced to return back and he dropped the group at a place called Chapuguri on the Chirang-Bongaigaon district border. Dadhora said the infant, according to the family, died on the journey between Srirampur and Chapuguri. “When we went there, the family told us that their child had died,” he added.

The group was shifted to a quarantine facility in Chirang. “They will be allowed to go home once train services resume,” said Singh.

The family could not be contacted as they do not own a mobile phone.

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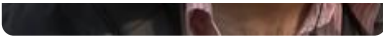
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