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Border issues: Heart patient dies, woman gives birth in ambulance

Kerala has not lost any life to Covid-19 yet, but the lockdown has claimed the first life.



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Doctors pushing a stretcher into the an isolation ward in Kerala. (File Photo | EPS)

By George Poikayil

Express News Service

KASARGOD: Kerala has not lost any life to Covid-19 yet, but the lockdown has claimed the first life.

Abdul Hamid, 60, of Kunjathur in Manjeshwar, died of a heart attack Thursday night. Around 6 pm, his nephew Ibrahim Baba tried to take him to a medical college at Deralkatte in Mangalore, just 12km from him house. But Karnataka police refused to open the gate. "I pleaded with the police for 30 minutes. But they did not budge," said Ibrahim.

He then took Hamid to the primary health centre at Uppala. The doctor at the PHC asked me to take him to Mangaluru. Kasaragod does not have a cardiac hospital. On Friday, a woman from Patna gave birth to a girl in a moving ambulance after their vehicle was sent back at the border at Talapady.

Gauri Devi, 25, and her husband Dinanath were lucky. The child and mother are safe and healthy, and now admitted in Kasaragod General Hospital. The couple works in a plywood factory in Kunjathur. "For those in Kunjathur, Kasaragod is one hour away, and hospitals in Mangaluru just 20 minutes away. But Karnataka police are keeping us out as if we are foreigners," said A K M Ashraf, Manjeshwar block panchayat president.

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Devi gave birth when the ambulance reached Mogrhal, while on the way to Kasaragod. Ashraf said many patients requiring blood transfusion, dialysis, chemotherapy, and heart treatment were being sent back at the border. “They have taken a ruthless decision not to allow even ambulance to enter from Kerala,” he said. At several other smaller roads, the Karnataka police have dumped mud to stop people from entering the state.

Ashraf has formed a small squad to help critically ill patients living on the border. “On Thursday, four kidney patients walked across the toll booth at Talapady, and my men took them on motorcycles to hospitals,” said Ashraf. After dialysis, they were dropped back at the toll gate, and they walked back in. But the state government should find a lasting solution to this humanitarian crisis, he said.

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