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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
5804	01.03.2020	02.03.2020	Kottayam Kerala	www.newindianexpress.com/English https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2020/mar/01/mystery-shrouds-death-of-three-inmates-of-psychiatric-hospital-2110495.html
Title:	Mystery shrouds death of three inmates in district Kottayam, Kerala			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU- Kottayam, SSU-Kerala			

Mystery shrouds the death of three inmates in a span of one week at a private psychiatric hospital and de-addiction centre at Thrikkodithanam near Changanassery. The mysterious deaths of a woman and two men were reported at Puthujeevan Trust Hospital for Psychological Medicine and De-addiction, a sister concern of Puthujeevan Trust Rehabilitation Centre, Nalukody, which is being run by V C Joseph, a retired police officer.

According to reports, the deceased were identified as Sherin, 44, of Mukkoottuthara in Erumely, Gireesh, 55, of Petta, Thiruvananthapuram and Yohannan, 21, of Thottakkad near Changanassery. Sherin collapsed on Sunday night and died while she was being taken to a hospital nearby and Gireesh, who was admitted to the hospital with symptoms of some infectious disease, died on Wednesday. Yohannan, who was referred from a private hospital in Tiruvalla to the Kottayam Government Medical College Hospital on Friday night, died on Saturday morning.

Meanwhile, six inmates of Puthujeevan hospital are currently undergoing treatment at the Government MCH, Kottayam. Another person got discharged after treatment

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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at Government MCH, Thrissur. In the wake of deaths and hospitalisation of other people, a team of doctors under the aegis of the District Medical Officer (DMO) visited the hospital on Wednesday and Thursday, but couldn't find any reason for the sudden development. "The deceased and those under treatment showed almost similar symptoms. Considering the possibility of an infectious disease, we had sent medical samples of both the deceased persons and those undergoing treatment to the National Institute of Virology at Government MCH, Alappuzha. But the institute ruled out diseases like Nipah, COVID -19, H1N1, Leptospirosis and Dengue fever," said Dr Jacob Varghese, DMO.

As per preliminary analysis, Sherin died due to myocarditis, while Yohannan died of pneumonia. However, the exact reason for the death can be confirmed only after the results of chemical examination are out. The medical sample of Yohannan has been sent to Amrita Institute of Medical Science, Kochi, for toxicology tests to confirm presence of toxic substance. Meanwhile, District Collector P K Sudheer Babu has ordered a comprehensive inquiry into the functioning of the hospital. According to the collector, the investigation will be conducted by Additional District Magistrate Anil Oommen. At the same time, tension prevailed in front of the Puthujeevan hospital on Saturday afternoon, after a group of local people gathered in front the hospital demanding strict action against hospital director V C Joseph.

Health minister orders inquiry

T'Puram: Health Minister K K Shailaja has ordered a probe into the death of three inmates at a destitute home in Changanassery, Kottayam. Rajan Khobragade, principal secretary, health, will conduct the probe. Meanwhile, the minister ruled out any possibility that novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was the reason for the deaths. The probe will determine the exact reason, she said. A parallel inquiry will also be conducted at the same time, as a medical board headed by Kottayam Medical College forensic head Dr Ranju Raveendran has been constituted. "A probe was held following the first death. In the wake of the second death, the health authorities had demanded a postmortem, but the relatives refused. In case of the third, strict instructions were given to conduct the postmortem. Samples have been collected. The preliminary finding has ruled out COVID-19 as the cause of the death," said Shailaja.

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