A Bihari worker's last journey

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COIMBATORE: Lakshmi Das (38) did not have to make his last journey as just another unclaimed body.

Killed by a stroke because of hypertension, the worker from Bihar was about to be cremated here because those who worked with him in Karur did not have the money to take the body to his village -- Baghi at Begusarai District in Bihar.

But, knowing of the predicament from relative and fellow worker Jayaram Das, the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital (CMCH), Thozhar Trust (a voluntary organisation) and the Lions Club of Coimbatore Sangamam arranged for not only money, but also co-ordinated with the railway authorities here to have the body taken to Patna by a train from Ernakulam on Monday night.

Assistant Resident Medical Officer at CMCH S.K. Thirunavukkarasu said the hospital was moved by the plight of the workers from Bihar, who had given up hope of the wife and four children of Lakshmi Das paying their last respects to him.

Dr. Thirunavukkarasu contacted Thozhar Trust and the Lions Club for assistance. "The Station Manager at the Coimbatore Railway Junction, L. Chinnarasu, was of great help in arranging for the coach to transport the body. Apart from the voluntary organisations, the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnetra Kazhagam provided an ambulance to transport the body to the place where it was embalmed and also to the railway junction," the hospital official said.

"In logon ne hamari zindagi mein sabse badi madad ki hai (these people have done the biggest help to us in our life)", Mr. Jayaram Das said in Hindi while the body was being embalmed. He and Lakshmi Das were workers engaged in laying floor tiles at various places in Karur.

Given their wages that provided no scope for savings, there was no chance of taking the body home. But, help came overwhelmingly from all sides, he said.

"This is a humanitarian gesture they deserved, considering the pathetic situation they were in," Dr. Thirunavukkarasu said.