Chennai Residents Protest Cremation Of Andhra Doctor Who Died Of COVID-19

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Chennai: Residents of a Chennai locality protested against the cremation of a doctor from Andhra Pradesh who died of coronavirus in the city, forcing authorities to change the location overnight with a top official blaming "coordination gap" for the incident.

As the body of the 56-year old doctor, who died on Monday at a private hospital, was taken to the cremation ground in Ambattur area, the locals protested against it, saying it might lead to the spread of coronavirus in their locality, police said on Tuesday.

Following the resistance, the doctor's body was taken back to the hospital mortuary, they said.

Top government sources said the man was cremated late on Monday in another locality.

A top official from Chennai Corporation told PTI that complete coronavirus protocol was followed while cremating the body.

When asked about locals objecting to the cremation, state Health secretary Beela Rajesh said such an incident was rare and said "coordination gap" may have been the reason behind it, but did not elaborate.

"It is a very sensitive issue. Everybody in the government is aware of the guidelines that needs to be followed to dispose of a body. We have also issued guidelines to private hospitals. These kind of issues have not occurred in the past. A small coordination gap has occurred", she said.

The government has already informed the district collectors about the procedures to be followed, Ms Rajesh said, adding, "we will reinforce them again".

The doctor who contracted coronavirus from a Tablighi Jamaat attendee was first admitted to a government hospital in Nellore, about 175 km from Chennai, and later shifted to the private hospital on April 6.
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He was a diabetic and also suffered from hypertension.

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