

17 infants die in 48 hours at 1 Indian hospital

June 30 2011

(AP) -- At least 17 infants have died in the last 48 hours at a government-run hospital in eastern India and the state is investigating, media reported Thursday.

Television news channels showed images of weeping and wailing parents outside the B.C. Roy Hospital for Children in Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal.

The hospital head D. Pal told Press Trust of India the babies were either premature, suffering from septicemia or had [low birth weight](#) problems. He denied any negligence by the hospital.

PTI quoted the state's top elected official, Mamata Banerjee, as saying her government had ordered an investigation.

In 2006, 22 infants died in three days at the same hospital because of prematurity or acute forms of either meningitis, encephalitis or [septicemia](#), the hospital said at the time.

State-run hospitals in India are often overcrowded and ill-equipped to manage the large number of patients that come to them desperate for medical care.

India's [infant mortality rate](#) is higher than the world average. It ranks 50th of 222 countries and territories, with about 48 deaths per 1,000 [live births](#) estimated this year, according to the CIA World Factbook.

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