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Dogs "rescue" girl abandoned by mother

Tue Apr 22, 2008 11:11am EDT

PATNA, India (Reuters) - Hundreds of villagers have flocked to a remote Indian village to see a baby girl who was saved by stray dogs after she was abandoned in a mound of mud by her mother, officials said on Tuesday.

Villagers in the eastern state of Bihar saved the newborn on the weekend after they saw three dogs barking near a baby covered with mud.

"The dogs removed the soil around and began to bark and the baby started crying which drew attention of the local villagers," Ram Narayan Sahani, a senior government official, said on Tuesday from Bihar's Samastipur district.

"The girl is crying but is safe in the lap of a childless couple who have adopted her."

Police said they were looking for the girl's mother, who they think had left the girl to die.

Female foeticide, though illegal in India, is widespread as boys are traditionally preferred to girls as breadwinners, and families have to pay huge dowries to marry off their daughters.

The United Nations says an estimated 2,000 unborn girls are illegally aborted every day in India.

(Writing by Bappa Majumdar; Editing by Alex Richardson)

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