

UN group to help control bird flu in West Bengal

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has announced the launch of an operation to control the spread of bird flu in West Bengal.

Avian flu virus hit 13 of the 19 districts in the state this January. Two weeks ago, the flu resurfaced at English Bazaar in Malda district and at Raghunathganj and Jiaganj areas in Murshidabad, almost a month after the government claimed it had contained the virus. The outbreak was also confirmed in Jalpaiguri district March 27.

FAO announced Tuesday that its representatives will undertake an operation to ward off the deadly H5N1 virus that has also affected Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. The operation will be carried out in all five countries.

FAO scientist Deoan Saravate said: 'First and foremost we are trying to locate the origin of the virus, that is, from where this disease is spreading at this rapid rate. Only then will it be easier for us to take the necessary precaution.'

Saravate added that the bird flu control operation would last about three months. FAO will also arrange for alternative temporary jobs for poultry breeders. For this the organisation has collaborated with US government organisation USAID.

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