

Culling on in fresh bird flu-hit West Bengal district

The cull in freshly bird flu-affected areas of West Bengal's Nadia district is expected to be completed Wednesday, Nadia District Magistrate Omkar Singh Meena said.

'We have started a cull Sunday and we are expecting to complete this by Wednesday evening. Already 15 state Animal Resource Development (ARD) teams have been pressed into service and it will be increased to 25 from today (Monday),' Meena said.

He said the operation was started at Baidyapur-II Gram Panchayat area of Ranaghat sub-division in the district where a fresh outbreak of bird flu was confirmed Saturday.

The authorities had earlier collected samples of dead poultry birds for tests following the unnatural deaths of nearly 700 chickens in the Mondalpukur area of Baidyapur, about 75 km from the state capital, last week.

The district administration received a report from the High Security Animal Disease Laboratory (HSADL) in Bhopal, saying that the samples had tested positive.

'All birds within a five kilometre radius around the area would be culled by Wednesday evening and a mopping up operation would commence a day after,' Meena said, adding that compensations to the farmers would be given on the spot.

Sources said about 25,000 poultry birds, including 3,000 chickens of a state-run poultry farm, will be culled.

Over 225,000 birds had been slaughtered in Nadia district during the first outbreak of avian influenza in January and February this year. That outbreak in West Bengal was confirmed Jan 15.

The affected districts were South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, Birbhum, South Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Nadia, Burdwan, Bankura, Malda, Cooch Behar, Purulia and West Midnapore.

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