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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Animal Husbandry - Bird Flu

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Bird flu: Health officers told to conduct differential diagnosis of fever patients

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After the border districts of Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu, Mysuru and Udupi were put on high alert in the wake of avian influenza H5N8, health officers of these districts said instructions had been passed to peripheral centres and public health facilities to do a differential diagnosis of fever patients for suspected avian flu.

Dakshina Kannada district health officer Dr Ramachandra Bairy said, "At present, there are no reports from our peripheral health centres of an

outbreak. If there are symptomatic patients, that is, if they have a viral fever, their samples will be sent for testing."

He said fever patients, who do not respond to treatment for 24 hours or 48 hours at peripheral health centres, will be referred to taluk and district hospitals. If it is considered a suspected case, the hospitals will send blood samples for confirmation to National Institute of Virology, Pune or a virology lab in Bengaluru, he added.

Dr Bairy said, "Every fever case should be suspected. One of the differential diagnosis should be avian influenza. We

will do fever surveillance thereafter to check for an outbreak. We don't have virology where-withal to do the tests here. This is also an RT-PCR test, but we need blood samples. We have not gotten any suspected cases from private hospitals either."

Kodagu district health officer Dr K Mohan said they will rely on contact history with birds for suspecting fever patients. "We have not had any bird deaths so far. If the animal husbandry department confirms that it is the H5N8 strain and if any bird handlers have symptoms, we will treat them as suspected cases and send their samples to virology labs.

During H1N1, we used to send it to Hassan district labs," he said.

Mysuru district surveillance officer Dr T Shivaprasad said, "If there are bird deaths, our health inspectors and veterinary inspectors will do a postmortem. If it is infected, we will carry out surveillance activities. We have no suspected fever cases for now."

Dr Sudhir Chandra Sooda, Udupi district health officer, said he has received no surveillance instructions though Health Minister Dr K Sudehakar told reporters here he had directed health officers in the border districts to be vigilant.