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ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Indian Express ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 18/1/2009

No bird flu in state, says animal husbandry dept

Measures in place to detect, prevent outbreak, says state government

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WITH Delhi and Maharashtra confirming cases of avian flu of sub-type H5N8 recently after its presence was confirmed in Kerala, the Karnataka government has put measures in place to detect and prevent an outbreak.

Officials from the animal husbandry department and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) have been holding regular meetings and ensuring regular testing of faecal samples. So far, all samples have tested negative for avian flu.

Experts say that although the H5N8 sub-type of the bird flu virus (Influenza A virus) is considered to be less pathogenic for humans, its pathogenic potential has been found to have increased compared to the highly virulent H1N1 sub-type. (H1N1 and H5N8 are both sub-types of the Influenza A virus). Although low-risk for humans, it is lethal for birds and poultry.

However, officials of the health, animal husbandry departments and the BBMP have maintained that there is no need to worry and that chicken and eggs are safe for consumption.

Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department Secretary Rajendra Kumar Kataria told TNIE that all protocols and safety measures are being adhered to. "Samples of all dead birds are being taken for analysis and so far, all cases are nega-

tive for bird flu. There is no need for citizens to panic. In case of poultry farms, an alert has been issued and protocols are being followed. Officials are paying regular visits to check the status and health of birds. Since Karnataka is a producing state, special checks are being conducted," he said.

The State government has imposed a ban on poultry and other products coming from Kerala to Karnataka, as cases are being reported in the neighbouring state.

"Although we do not procure poultry from Kerala, as a precautionary measure an alert has been sounded and ban imposed to ensure that their unsold items do not enter Karnataka's markets," an animal husbandry official said.

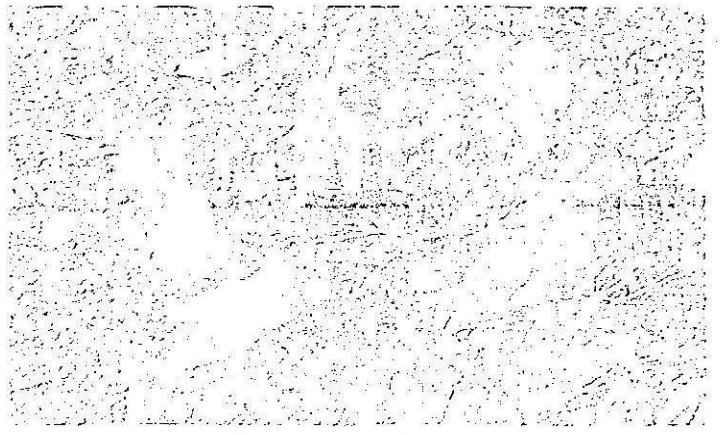
Health officials said the general public need not panic. "As long as people cook eggs and

chicken well, they can eat it," a health department official said.

BBMP officials said that a close watch was also being kept on chicken stalls selling live and processed meat to ensure that hygiene and standards are met, and there is no outbreak.

"Only those who work in poultry farms and touch dead birds or their droppings need to wear masks and gloves. They must wash hands with soap and water after handling them. So far, samples of dead birds sent from Mysuru and Chikkaballapur have tested negative and there are no cases of bird flu in Karnataka," said Dr Bhanumurthy, Joint Director, Communicable Diseases, Health and Family Welfare department.

Meanwhile, ornithologists have assured that reports about dead birds being found around Puttenahalli Lake are fake.



Nearly 50 birds were recently found dead in Gadagi EXPRESS