



मंत्रिमंडल सचिव  
CABINET SECRETARY  
NEW DELHI

K. M. CHANDRASEKHAR

January 17, 2008

Dear Chief Secretary,

You may be aware that Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) has resurfaced again and this time in some parts of West Bengal. For more than a year, the Government of India had been cautioning all the States/UTs about the threat that this country perceives from Bird Flu because of the continuous prevalence of the disease in some of our neighbouring countries. In order to be vigilant against the ingress of the disease, both the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare had been sending advisories to you for intensive surveillance of poultry as well as resident, wild and migratory birds. The importance of early detection of unusual mortality in any of these birds and rapid action in terms of information sharing, prompt dispatch of specimens for diagnosis as well as collection of representative clinical samples at regular interval for analysis were also brought to your notice.

2. However, from the feedback that we have received from various States, it would appear that there is need to step up surveillance. Even samples that have been collected in many places have not been representative.

3. I would, therefore, suggest that you hold regular meetings with Departmental Heads concerned with the control and containment of Avian Influenza and Pandemic Influenza in your State in order to take stock of situation and assess preparedness of your State. An area that needs attention is about creating awareness among the population regarding dangers of Bird Flu and preventive steps that are required to be taken so that the cooperation of the public is available in tackling this problem. The nodal Departments of the Government of India would always be available for necessary advice, guidance and information in this regard, and such assistance as is needed.

4. I would like to reiterate that in terms of threat to public health, Avian Influenza poses a major challenge. I would like all of us to be fully prepared and geared up to face the challenge in this country. I shall be grateful if you would personally review the arrangements periodically to ensure that we contain the outbreak as quickly as possible.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(K.M. CHANDRASEKHAR)