

**SCOTLAND on SUNDAY**

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## Bird flu death dashes hopes of end to crisis

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VIETNAMESE health officials said yesterday that a 12-year-old boy had died of bird flu, bringing Asia's toll from the disease to 24 and dashing the country's hopes of declaring itself free of the virus by the end of the month.

The boy was admitted to a hospital in the southern Tay Ninh province on March 13 and died two days later, a doctor at Tay Ninh hospital confirmed. Tests showed that the boy had died from the H5N1 strain of bird flu, bringing Vietnam's number of cases to 16, according to a doctor at the Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh City.

Eight Asian countries have been battling a severe form of the virus for months now. Since December, about 100 million chickens have either died from the illness or been slaughtered because of it. The virus has jumped to humans only in Vietnam and Thailand.

Several Asian nations have said recently that their outbreaks were coming under control - with China this week declaring victory in its fight against the virus - but international health officials have repeatedly warned that the Asian bird flu crisis isn't over yet.

The Paris-based World Organisation for Animal Health and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation said that they were willing to send experts to evaluate the problem.

"In countries such as Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, further outbreaks could still flare up," the groups said.

### Web links

- [Dept of Health - pandemic flu](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en)  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en>
- [WHO - Bird Flu fact sheet](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)  
[http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004\\_01\\_15/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)

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