

SCOTLAND on SUNDAY

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Exotic animals now feared to have bird flu

CHRISTOPHER CLAIRE

AFTER killing millions of chickens and ducks across Asia, bird flu is feared to have jumped to some exotic species, killing a heron in Cambodia and possibly a leopard in Thailand.

A zoo in northern Thailand has also isolated two healthy giant pandas over fears they may catch the disease.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation warned that the virus - which has killed 14 people in Vietnam and five in Thailand - still has not been controlled in several Asian countries. "Cambodia, China, Indonesia and Laos continue to report new outbreaks in poultry," the FAO said.

A one-year-old Thai girl from north-eastern Kalasin province's Huay Mek district yesterday became the latest person suspected of having the disease.

The girl became sick with a fever and cough a week after her family's 10 chickens became sick and died.

More than 80 million chickens have been slaughtered across Asia to curb bird flu's spread.

Indian authorities said they plan to hold an emergency meeting in New Delhi tomorrow of health and agricultural officials from seven South Asian nations to discuss ways to prevent the spread of bird flu in the highly populous region.

In Cambodia, a grey heron that died last month at a Cambodian zoo has tested positive for the avian flu, the country's third confirmed case of the H5N1 virus.

Pin Lyvun, the director of the Phnom Tamao zoo, said 56 wild birds have died and some 400 parakeets have been killed at the zoo after some mysteriously dropped dead. The bird section of the zoo was closed over fears bird flu could spread.

In Thailand, minister of natural resources and the environment Prapat Panyachatraksa said tests on Friday showed a clouded leopard died of bird flu on January 27 at Khao Khiew Zoo in Chonburi province.

The World Health Organisation said that if confirmed it could be the first known case of the disease found in an exotic animal or a member of the cat family.

Web links

- [Dept of Health - pandemic flu](#)



<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/

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