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China flu outbreak spooks Tibet, Sri Lanka

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Singapore: The Tibetan Ministry of Agriculture revealed on Tuesday, May 14, 2013, that a fresh outbreak of the older strain of H5N1 bird flu was reported from a remote part. This highly contagious strain of bird flu virus infected and killed 35 chickens at a farm in a village in Mainling County of Nyingchi Prefecture.

The National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory in Tibet confirmed the nature of the virus earlier this week after testing the samples collected from the farm. The ministry highlighted in a press statement that a total of 372 chickens were culled and safely disposed of in order to prevent the disease from spreading. Authorities have further sealed off the sterilized the infected area.

Furthermore, Sri Lanka suspended all meat imports from China and have redoubled surveillance of birds migrating from there. This move comes merely days after the World Health Organization (WHO) warned about an epidemic. Dr W K De Silva, director, Health Department, Sri Lanka, said that each year thousands of wild birds migrate to Sri Lanka from China.

"We have doubled the number of samples that we collect from wild birds, particularly those that migrate to a few wetlands in Sri Lanka. Further, we will intensity the checks until the WHO warning is lifted," he said.