



Bird Flu Threat

Why in News

Hundreds of crows have died in Rajasthan prompting authorities to sound a bird flu alert in the state.

Key Points

▪ About:

- Bird flu, also known as Avian influenza (AI), is a **highly contagious viral disease** affecting several **species of food-producing birds** (chickens, turkeys, quails, guinea fowl, etc.) as well as pet birds and wild birds.
- Occasionally mammals, including **humans, may contract avian influenza.**

▪ Types:

- Influenza viruses are grouped into **three types; A, B, and C.** Only **type A is known to infect animals and is zoonotic**, meaning it can infect animals and **also humans.** Type B and C **mostly infect humans** and typically cause mild disease.
- Avian influenza virus subtypes include **A(H5N1), A(H7N9), and A(H9N2).**

▪ Classification:

- Influenza viruses are classified into subtypes based on two surface proteins, **Hemagglutinin (HA)** and **Neuraminidase (NA)**. For example, a virus that has an HA 7 protein and NA 9 protein is designated as subtype H7N9.
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) virus occurs mainly in birds and is highly contagious among them.
- HPAI Asian **H5N1** is especially **deadly for poultry.**

▪ Impact:

- Avian Influenza outbreaks can lead to **devastating consequences for the country, particularly the poultry industry.**
- Farmers might experience a **high level of mortality in their flocks**, with rates often around **50%.**

▪ Prevention:

- Strict **biosecurity measures** and **good hygiene** are essential in protecting against disease outbreaks.

▪ Eradication:

- If the infection is detected in animals, a policy of **culling infected** and **contact animals** is normally used in an effort to rapidly contain, control and eradicate the disease.

▪ India's Status:

- Previously in 2019, India was **declared free from Avian Influenza (H5N1)**, which had also been notified to the [World Organization for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#).
- The status will last only till another outbreak is reported.

World Organization for Animal Health

- The OIE is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health worldwide.
- It is recognised as a **reference organisation by the [World Trade Organization](#)** (WTO).
- In 2018, it had a total of 182 Member Countries. India is a member country.
- It is headquartered in **Paris, France**.

[Source:IE](#)

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