

Bengal affected by Japanese Encephalitis, Centre offers help

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Bengal affected by neonatal deaths due to JE, Centre offers help



The union health minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan has written to Ms Mamata Banerjee, chief minister of West Bengal regarding neo-natal deaths in the state due to AES and JE and offered help of the central government.

In his letter, the health minister has stated that the flow of reports from West Bengal on neonatal deaths and fatalities from AES and JE had prompted him to send specialist teams to the affected areas during the current month. The Minister states that there are infrastructure issues that need to be addressed as we are only a year away from the deadline for meeting the Millennium Development Goals on MCH parameters.

Regarding the deaths due to JE-AES in north Bengal, the health minister states that the ministry has stepped up the immunization drive against JE and cleared the installation of urgently needed hospital infrastructure in affected areas. He notes that he has himself flagged off a mass immunization drive in June in Bihar.

Dr Harsh Vardhan has assured the chief minister of West Bengal of his personal interest in extending all facilities to help her tide over the crisis. He has also recommended, for a start, intensive and extensive consultations between the state and central officials on the steps to be taken on an emergency basis, and also on the permanent measures that would be necessary to avoid such tragedies in the future.