

## **Ebola outbreak may last forever: WHO**

23 September 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

### **Ebola outbreak may last forever: WHO**



With the flesh-eating virus continuing to wreak havoc in the West African countries, many Asian countries have rushed to the rescue. Singapore scientists from the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*Star) are lending a hand in the Ebola fight by studying the mutation and evolution patterns of the virus.

Researchers are examining viral epitopes to determine the best cocktail of antibodies that can kill the virus and contain the spiraling cases in West Africa. Dr Sebastian Maurer-Stroh, senior principal investigator at A\*Star's Bioinformatics Institute, said that the research hopes to find antibodies that 'works the best'.

Dr Maurer-Stroh added that this work will eventually help in evaluating the mutational properties of the virus as the antibodies extracted from survivors may not work for the current outbreak if the epitopes are too different.

The current Ebola epidemic in Africa has caused catastrophic destruction killing more than 2800 people so far. The epidemic is also taking a toll on the economic stability of the African nations that are grappling with the deadly virus.

Meanwhile in its emergency meeting convened by the World health Organization, the health governing body said, "Blocking flights to or from affected areas and other travel restrictions only serve to isolate affected countries, resulting in detrimental economic consequences and hinder relief and response efforts, risking further international spread."

WHO has further issued a warning that if the outbreak in West Africa is not effectively arrested the epidemic could soon become a permanent fixture in that area.