

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1695  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6TH AUGUST, 2024**

**RISK OF HIGH-LEVELS OF CARCINOGENS IN PACKAGED FOODS**

**1695. SMT. RANJEET RANJAN:  
SHRI HARIS BEERAN:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that countries like Singapore and Hong Kong have banned the sale of several Indian spice brands due to the detection of suspected carcinogenic pesticides;
- (b) if so, the measures taken by Government to address these challenges and ensure the safety and quality of Indian packaged foods for export and sale in the domestic market; and
- (c) the details of any investigations or quality checks conducted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on dairy products, spices, and fortified rice?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY  
WELFARE  
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)**

(a) to (c): Ministry of Commerce has informed that Indian Spices have not been banned by countries like Singapore and Hong Kong. Specific batches of few spice mixtures exported from India were recalled by Food Safety Authorities in Hong Kong and Singapore due to the presence of ethylene oxide (EtO) above permissible limits. As part of its import surveillance, the Singapore Food Agency placed the consignments of spices from the associated brands under Hold-and-Test regime for a period of one month.

Spices Board, Ministry of Commerce has taken various steps including mandatory pre-shipment testing of Spices being exported to these destinations, issuance of comprehensive guidelines to be followed by exporters to prevent possible EtO contamination at all stages namely; procurement of raw materials, processing, packing, storage, transportation etc., to meet the varying EtO limits of the importing country.

Further, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is fully committed to ensure the availability of safe food products to the consumers across the country. Towards this, FSSAI through State/UTs and its Regional Offices conducts regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection and random sampling of various food products including dairy products, spices and fortified rice, to check compliance with the quality and safety parameters and other requirements as laid down under Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006, and regulations made thereunder.

In cases of non-compliance to the statutory requirements as above, penal action is initiated against the defaulting FBOs as per the provisions laid down under the FSS Act. Further, FSSAI has conducted pan-India surveillances for milk and milk products in 2011, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2023. The report of Milk surveillance done by FSSAI in 2018, 2020 & 2022 is available in public domain at [www.fssai.gov.in/cms/national-surveys.php](http://www.fssai.gov.in/cms/national-surveys.php). FSSAI has also asked the State/UTs to deploy the Food Safety on Wheels for screening/rapid testing of Milk and Milk products. FSSAI has conducted pan India Surveillance on spices in 2022.

FSSAI has laid down standards for Fortified Rice, Rice Flour for preparation of Fortified Rice Kernel, Fortified Rice Kernel, and Vitamin–Mineral Premix for Fortified Rice Kernel to achieve effective implementation of the National level Rice Fortification Program and to provide quality and safe fortified rice to the consumers. Also, FSSAI has launched a dedicated portal, FoRTRACE (Fortified Rice Traceability) portal for traceability purpose of rice fortification starting from manufacturing of premix to Fortified Rice production.

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