

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.826
TO BE ANSWERED ON 7TH FEBRUARY, 2025**

RISK OF HIGH LEVELS OF CARCINOGENS IN PACKAGED FOOD

826. SHRI IMRAN MASOOD:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that Singapore and Hong Kong have banned the sale of several Indian spices brands due to detection of suspected carcinogenic pesticides and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures taken by the Government to address these challenges and ensure safety and quality of Indian packaged foodstuffs for export and sale in the domestic market;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to ban spices using suspected carcinogenic pesticides in India as well and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of any inspection or quality check carried out by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on dairy products, spices and fortified rice; and
- (e) whether the assessment has been conducted in regard to impact of vacancies on the huge number of such cases and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) & (e): Ministry of Commerce has informed that Indian Spices have not been banned by countries like Singapore and Hong Kong. However, earlier, 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.

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.

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. 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, wherein, 82.4% samples were found safe for human consumption. In Financial year 2024-25, a targeted enforcement drive on spices was conducted in which 4216 samples were analyzed out of which 85% of the samples found conforming with FSS Act.

For quality check of Fortified Rice, FSSAI has published standardized test methods and has developed a dedicated portal (FoRTRACE- Fortified Rice Traceability) for ensuring traceability in rice fortification. In FY 2024-25, the FSSAI had conducted an inspection on Fortified Rice wherein out of 672 cases of inspections, only one case of non-compliance was observed.

The implementation and enforcement of provisions under Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 including filling up of vacancies of field-level officers primarily lies with the State/UT Governments. No impact of vacancies on functioning of State Food Authorities has been reported.
