Check on chemical use in fish stock

Concern over wide use of sodium benzoate to preserve stock

STAFF REPORTER

KOZHIKODE: After Operation Sagar Rani that mainly targeted the local fish vendors who sprinkled harmful chemical preservatives on fish, the enforcement wing of the Food Safety Department is all set to routinely examine the fish stock that arrives in Kerala from other States.

There are reports that sodium benzoate is widely used in fish coming from Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The drive will zero in on non-Kerala suppliers as the samples collected from local fishermen contained only minimal preservatives.

Food Safety Department officials say intensive vehicle checking with the support of the police and other related departments will be planned to check the stock and collect samples on the spot.

“We had collected fish items and ice samples from 47 locations in the district, but only samples collected from the Central fish market in the city contained sodium benzoate. The main issue in Kozhikode is that vendors do not use required quantity of ice for preserving fish,” said O. Sankaranununni, Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety Department.

The department will go ahead with field-level awareness programmes for fishers on the impact of cancerous preservatives on human body.

According to the Food Safety Department, fish samples collected from the Central fish market in Kozhikode contained sodium benzoate. — PHOTO: K. RAGESH