Adulterators turning pale as more fish caught in CIFTest

THE CIFTest — developed by Indian Council for Agriculture & Research-Centre Institute of Fisheries Technology (ICAR-CIFT) — is hogging the limelight as the food safety officers seize more and more chemical-contaminated fish coming into the state.

A total of 18,000kg — including 4,000kg on Sunday — was seized in recent days using CIFTest, which helps officers detect the presence of Formaldehyde and Ammonia in fish.

Officers said the the State Health & Safety Department, under operation Sagar Rani, has been using the CIFTest to intercept adulterated fish being brought into the state through places including the Walayar checkpost, where it seized consignments from Andhra Pradesh.

The shortage of fish caught in the state due to trawling ban has resulted in vast quantities of it being brought from across the borders.

"Special emphasis was given to make the kit non-destructive, simple as well as cost-effective and its method of use consumer-friendly, to suit its use in domestic markets and among food inspectors, regulators and the general public," said ICAR-CIFT, Kochi director C N Ravishankar. The kit consists of paper strips, reagent solution and standard chart for comparing results.

Kerala Food Safety Commissioner M G Rajamanickam said, "We’ve intercepted about 20,000kg of adulterated fish brought into the state since the trawling ban began. The CIFTest ensures our teams are able to analyse the samples in real time."

Joint enforcement drive planned

T’Puram: The state plans joint enforcement drive with TN, Karnataka, AP and Goa to check adulteration.

Prawns seized

Palakkad: The Food Safety Department seized 4,000 kg of prawns, suspected to have been treated with formalin, at Walayar on Sunday morning.

Since the trawling ban is in place, vehicles with fish consignments will be allowed into the state only after stringent inspections

K K Shylaja, Health Min