

## You can check fish adulteration in 3 minutes

**Kochi-based Central Institute of Fisheries Technology has developed a unique kit**

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To check out adulterants such as ammonia and formaldehyde in fish, the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Kochi, has developed a unique kit. Once the device is out in the market, people buying fish can check chemicals in it within three minutes.

Since ammonia helps in preventing ice from melting and formaldehyde increases the shelf life of fish, therefore many people in the fishery sector use these chemicals. However, the continuous ingestion of ammonia and formaldehyde can lead to many health issues, including abdominal pain, vomiting, unconsciousness, and even death in the worst case.

In stored fish, ammonia cannot be detected but formaldehyde presence can be

found out. India's domestic fish market is reported to be selling formaldehyde-adulterated fish, especially in markets located far away from landing centres or production sites.

Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh on Tuesday launched the kit saying that continuous monitoring of these contaminants in a laboratory is time-consuming and requires expertise as some people use toxic chemicals in the form of contaminated substances.

"Formaldehyde is potential cancer-inducing chemical, which is a major health concern, therefore, its use needs to be curbed," said the Minister.

Officials of the Agriculture Ministry said the two kits, one for ammonia and other for formaldehyde include thin paper strips and a small solution. A person wanting to test the fish will just have to remove



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the strip and rub it on the fish to be checked. Then put one drop of solution on the paper strip and watch the colour change. If it turns dark blue, then it means that the fish is contaminated. The colours are indicated on the package so that a consumer can get the result on the spot.

The Indian and international regulations said fresh fish and shellfish should be preserved only by means of ice. The use of substances other than ice to maintain quality is a fraudulent practice.

Meanwhile, the overall fish production has registered an increase of approximately 18.86 per cent in comparison to the last three years. Combining the production of all types of fisheries (capture and culture), the total fish production in the country reached about 11.41 million tonnes in 2016-17.

Fish and fish products have presently emerged as the largest group in agricultural exports from India, with 10.51 lakh tonnes in terms of quantity and ₹33,442 crores in value.