

Marine fish naturally contains certain amount of formalin, says FDA

DAMAGE CONTROL?

■ BY NETWORK

PANAJI It what appears to be a damage-control move, the Directorate of Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) on Friday issued a press release stating that marine fish naturally contains a certain amount of formalin, and reiterated that the results of the fish samples were found to be within the permissible limit.

However, the fish has failed to disclose the amount of formalin found in the samples, which it had drawn from Mangal fish wholesale market, after their detailed examination in the laboratory on Thursday.

The FDA, in the press release, has stated that the department has not taken a U-turn on the detec-

Spot tests carried out on the samples indicated presence of aldehydes, which is a family of organic compounds which include formaldehyde. Formaldehyde in its liquid form is known as formalin. Among all the aldehydes, formalin (formaldehyde) is carcinogenic, if consumed in excess. To rule out the presence of added formaldehyde in the fish samples same were subjected to detailed testing at the FDA laboratory at Bambolim and the results were found to be within permissible limit.

Directorate of Food and Drugs Administration

Form of formalin in fish samples as reported in the meeting.

The FDA has quoted two reports published in Journals of Fisheries and claimed that the concentra-

securing formaldehyde in the range of 5 to 15 mg/kg to 8 mg/kg.

However, the FDA has failed to give an explanation as to which act or rule of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) mentions the quantity of formalin present in the fish to be safe or unsafe for human consumption.

The FDA, in its test press release, never mentioned whether the formalin found in 'permissible limit' was inherently present or derived as added formalin.

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hydes, formalin (formaldehyde) is carcinogenic, if consumed in excess. To rule out the presence of added formaldehyde in the fish samples same were subjected to detailed testing at the FDA laboratory at Bambolim and the results were found to be within permissible limit,' states the press release.

'Spot test carried out for detection of aldehyde is only an indicative test and definite confirmatory tests are carried out in the laboratory to ascertain the presence of formalin quantity. Fish cannot be declared as positive for formalin content,' it made further.

The FDA has informed that the FSSAI has sought the laboratory report from the department of sampling of fish arriving in Goa from Chennai.



Following the raids by FDA to check 'formalin content' in fish, people on Friday were found queuing around the fish source - local or out of state, as they purchased it at the fish market in the city.

Vishwajit says designated FDA official was not authorised to disclose spot analysis report to media

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PANAJI Health Minister Vishwajit Rane, on Friday, said that P.A. Fernandes, the designated officer of the Directorate of Food and Drug Administration (FDA), who had led the team that tested wholesale fish mar-

Everyone knows my integrity as Health Minister. I will not allow anybody to play with the life of the people. At the moment there is no reason to panic on fish issue. We will ensure that fish beyond permissible limit of formalin is not sold

Vishwajit Rane, Health Minister

ket samples, is also mentioning the authorities.

He admitted that there was an ongoing drive among the private as well as public fish vendors to ensure that fish containing ammonia level of formalin will not be sold in market.

'Let me make point as generally there is no reason to panic on fish, but let me check on Google whether it is there or not. Some states have banned the sale of fish as it was reported that formalin was used to preserve the fish,' he said.

The Health Minister said that the government is monitoring the situation on these fish vendors of whether they are providing ammonia level of formalin exceeding permissible limit.

Luizinho gives notice on 'special resolution'

Seeking judicial probe into food adulteration

■ BY NETWORK

Calling upon the leaders among the party from the state to give minimum of 100 signatures for the special resolution seeking judicial probe into food adulteration, Luizinho said.

The National Farmers' Organisation of India (NFIU) has given a notice that it would consider the effectiveness of the resolution towards success, which will be held here July 14 to 15 and a working session at a national conference in Goa on July 16. The state party is also planning to hold a meeting on the sidelines of the national conference.

Testing kits should be used at home to test all foodstuff

■ BY NETWORK

Not less than four lakh people are affected by liver tumor and carcinoma on learning that our beloved fish is laced with formalin and other bad things.

We know, of course, will live in peace, color and health at this state of affairs and then after knowing about a little cancer, get into a panic and start taking medicine.

For any long-term solution, however, there may be a few tips we could use after our familiar hyper-sensitizing if we have the patience and insight to address the problems.

Firstly, whenever the spot, formaldehyde is a potent carcinogen. You need not be a rocket scientist to understand why cancer cases are galloping through Mumbai's neighborhoods. Secondly, formaldehyde is not less than used for preserva-

tion and permanent solutions, I am sure, solution is about drugs, wine, alcohol and betels. Killing our germs will result in new epidemics now known as AIDS.

Finally, there are kits which, if used on fish and vegetables after being thoroughly washed in cold water, will turn yellow to safe left to use them as home ingredients.

Washing of foods in water that is mixed with vinegar can potentially eliminate formaldehyde. And, finally, a truthful and honest assessment of the problem and a scientific solution to the problem.

That's why we give our power to test about the report of spot test to prove and stop sale of fish. It was not mistake which will not be repeated again, said the Health Minister.

The minister also informed that he has asked the provision of FDS for submission of report of the spot test to the designated officer of the department and added that the Chief Minister Stan-

the chief life of fish, but every food stuff, vegetables and fruits included.

Those, the only authorities who should be given authority to detect and prosecute those traders may be the FDA and local bodies.

only the FDA, Vigil Squad may be a matter of detection, but detection, to ministers, bureaucrats. Fish traders must not be misled with our process of science. The FDA must stand up and be counted.

Finally, the Gujarat government of livelihoods will come into focus sooner than later. This horror story is about our lives and lives of our children. Minister's health, business and minister's interests must not be put in scientific facts with the



The writer is a physician (Pran Prasad)