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E-Paper

Gutkha seizure: FSSAI to issue notice to unit

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) are in the process of issuing show-cause notice to the betel nut products manufacturing company at Kannampalayam, near Suler, after a marathon raid by the Coimbatore District (Rural) Police showed large stocks of prohibited gutkha and pan masala, which are suspected to have tobacco as an ingredient.

The action is being taken after the manufacturing unit owned by Amit Jain of Pitampura, in New Delhi, engaged in the making of gutkha whereas the licence issued by the food safety regulator in 2014 was for the manufacture of food grade (non-tobacco-based) pan masala. Designated officer of FSSAI in Coimbatore has already sent a report to the head office in Chennai. It is learnt that FSSAI is planning to suspend the licence granted to the unit.

Meanwhile, FSSAI faced criticism for having failed to check gutkha manufacturing at the unit. While people living close to the unit had been complaining of tobacco odour from the place, the local food safety officer in January this year had given a report that it was manufacturing non-tobacco-based products. A senior police officer, who is part of the investigation, said that an application seeking the custody of B. Raghuraman (45), of Kannampalayam, manager of the unit, will be filed before the court on Wednesday. Raghuraman and three employees namely S. Ajay (30) from Uttar Pradesh, D. Ramdev (24) and K. Sojiram (26) from Rajasthan are currently in judicial custody. The four-member special team of police constituted to trace Mr. Jain is camping in New Delhi.