



International quality check agency to inspect fish entering Goa

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Health minister Vishwajit Rane on Monday said that an international quality certification agency of repute will be roped in by the state government to inspect the quality of fish coming to Goa from other states. Addressing reporters after a high-level meeting with senior officials to review the situation following the formalin-in-fish row, Rane said the move was aimed at allaying public apprehension about the quality of fish available in Goa's markets.



TCP minister Vijai Sardesai and fisheries minister Vinod Palyekar were among those present. The selection of the agency will be finalised within the next two days in consultation with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The selected agency will work in association with the state directorate of food and drugs administration (FDA), it was informed. "People are still apprehensive about the quality of fish available in the markets. By roping in an international certification agency, we hope to remove that fear and restore the trust of the people," Rane said.

Stating that the government will soon crack down on unauthorised sale of fish, Rane said those fish traders not registered with the FDA will be prohibited from plying their trade. "Enough time was given to fish traders to register themselves with the FDA. Only 10 traders have registered so far.

Action will be taken against unauthorised traders after Dussehra (October 18)," Rane said. While the FDA will continue checking fish coming into Goa at the Polem and Patradevi border checkpoints, their officials will also be present at fish markets to ensure that no contaminated fish finds its way into the markets, it was informed. Sardesai said that registrations of fish traders with incomplete records will also be cancelled. "The entire executive power of the government will be used to make sure that no contaminated fish ever reaches the hands of a Goenkar. We are ready to go to any length for this," he said.

Accusing the opposition of politicising the fish-in-formalin issue and thereby creating fear among the public, Rane termed the politicians who protested over the issue as "jokers". Sardesai said that the South Goa district office of the FDA will be opened on October 18 on the occasion of Dussehra. Chief secretary Dharmendra Sharma, South Goa collector Tariq Thomas, director FDA Jyoti Sardesai, chief officer Margao Municipal Corporation Siddhivinayak Naik, member secretary South Goa Planning and Development Authority Ashok Kumar, were among those present for the meeting.