

FSSAI alerts FDA about unlicensed import of chocolates

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THE Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is investigating the sale of unlicensed imported chocolates in Mumbai after the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) complained that chocolates are available in markets and stores without import licence.



To regulate the large market for not just chocolate but also cookie and dry fruit from abroad, the FDA and FSSAI are coordinating to establish a supply chain of unlicensed eatables. Following inspections on October 30 and November 2 at three stores in Khetwadi, Cuffe Parade and Haji Ali, food safety officers seized chocolates from the Haji Ali and Cuffe Parade stores that were imported without licence or required labels on packaging. The seized chocolates include big brands like Cadbury, Hershey’s and Ferrero Rocher. “Under FSSAI Act,

the importer must adhere to licensing conditions. In this case, we found no import licence number or address on the packaging,” said Dilip Sawant of the Intelligence Bureau department of the FDA. The chocolates have been sent for testing to check if they belong to the original brand and meet the required standards. “There was some information that shops are selling chocolates without licence. We also have information regarding biscuits and cookies being imported. And the import market for dry fruit is larger,” said Dr K Methekar, deputy director at FSSAI.

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Sawant said: “It is believed that the entry of unlicensed imported chocolates in Mumbai is from other ports, and goods reach Mumbai via road,” said an FDA official. The largest market in Mumbai that supplies these chocolates is in Crawford Market. “The shops we inspected, we were told they sourced the stock from Crawford Market. We are yet to locate the importer.”

According to Pallavi Darade, Maharashtra FDA commissioner, while the importer has to procure a licence from FSSAI, a retailer has to ensure he buys only licensed food articles from an importer or distributor. The sale of unlicensed imported chocolates can attract a fine ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 5 lakh. According to the FSSAI Act, if a retail shop owner is different from the importer, separate licences are required to sell imported chocolate.

“In Mumbai, most import of chocolates is through Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT). Some come from other entry points...,” said FSSAI Western region director P Muthumaran.