



Major checkpoints in Kerala to come under Food Safety Department scanner

The Food Safety Department will put in place a strict monitoring system at major checkpoints to check the quality of goods being transported to the state.

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Cops, who were on duty at the venue of the toddy shop auction in Kottayam, cleaning their hands using sanitiser. (Photo | EPS)

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Food Safety Department will put in place a strict monitoring system at major checkpoints to check the quality of goods being transported to the state. Special squads will be deployed at Amaravila, Aryankavu, Walayar and Manjeshwar checkpoints. The move follows a directive by Health Minister K K Shailaja to strengthen the surveillance in the wake of the pandemic and ensuing monsoon rains.

ENSURING SAFETY

Special squads to be deployed at Amaravila, Aryankavu, Walayar and Manjeshwar checkposts

They will focus on inspecting fish, fruits and vegetables.



If found to be unsafe to consume, the items will be seized at the checkpost itself

The move to deploy squads follows a directive by the health minister to strengthen the surveillance in the wake of the pandemic and ensuing monsoon showers

The Food Safety Dept is planning to launch an awareness campaign to encourage healthy eating habits among the public

As part of the ongoing Operation Sagar Rani of the department, over two tonnes of stale fish, mostly being transported from other states, had been seized. “The squads will collect samples of all type of food items and send them for scientific examination. This will be a random exercise to avoid traffic block,” said Food Safety Commissioner Ajayakumar A R.

The squads will focus on inspecting fish, fruits and vegetables. If it is found to be unsafe to consume, it will be seized at the checkpost itself. “These squads are part of the statewide preventive measure against food poisoning. The health sector is already burdened with the pandemic. We cannot stress the hospitals further with cases of food poisoning or illnesses like diarrhoea which usually spike during monsoon season,” he said.

Besides the Operation Sagar Rani, the department is now conducting special drives to check the quality of fruits, vegetables, milk and water. Manufacturing and supply units of 20-l water dispensers are also being inspected. The Food Safety Department is planning to launch an awareness campaign to encourage healthy eating habits among the public. Vehicle and social media campaigns will also be conducted to promote safe eating habits and use of home-cooked food.

SOP for eateries

The department will roll out a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for restaurants when they are open after the lockdown. Again, stress will be given to preventing the spread of Covid-19 and monsoon-related illnesses. Specific directives will be issued on the maintenance of kitchen, store, supply of food and mode of interaction with customers. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India will hold a meeting with the state government representatives on May 24 to discuss the post-lockdown measures in the sector.