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THIS STORY IS FROM FEBRUARY 14, 2012

All guktha samples fail FDA test

TNN / Updated: Feb 14, 2012, 06:13 IST

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BHOPAL: In all the gutkha samples tested, the Madhya Pradesh Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)) have found traces of harmful magnesium carbonate or tobacco or both. The tested samples included leading brands of gutkha, say officials. FDA officials said all 122 samples of gutkha collected from across the state during April-December 2011 contained traces of magnesium carbonate and tobacco contrary to the [Prevention of Food Adulteration Act](#) (1954) stipulation that gutkha should not contain harmful contents as it is a product for human consumption. MP food safety commissioner Ashwini Rai said "The companies which have failed the test would only be renewed licences after they stick to norms."

Most manufacturers whose products have failed the test do not have a production base in the state and there is little the FDA could do against the companies. However, Rai said more samples would be collected and the FDA would recall batches of gutkha products "The units based in MP would face tighter scrutiny," he added. "Magnesium carbonate is a prohibited substance and without its use, the thriving gutkha market would automatically close down," say gutkha industry insiders, pointing out gutkha manufacturers use it only to make substance more free-flowing. In absence of magnesium carbonate, gutkha will turn sticky in sachets. Medical practitioners say that magnesium carbonate along with tobacco.

"The gutkhas from different brands have tested positive." The samples were tested in the state food testing laboratory, which is slated for an upgrade later this year. Doctors say that excessive betel nut chewing over a prolonged period causes oral sub-mucous fibrosis, an irreversible condition that results in restricted mouth opening. The carcinogenic properties of betel nut get deadly when taken with tobacco in gutka. India has 75,000 to 80,000 new cases of [oral cancer](#) per year, the world's highest incidence, [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO) said.

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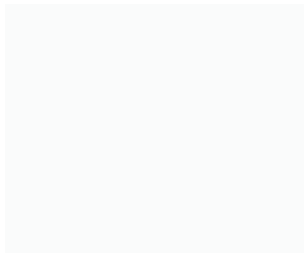
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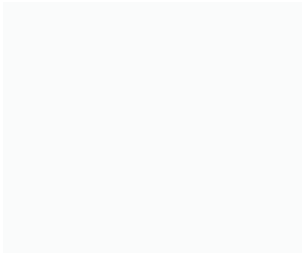
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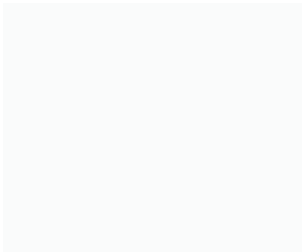
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