

Goa is insisting only on fish quality certificate, says Deshpande

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



Revenue Minister R.V. Deshpande addressing a press conference at the Circuit House in Mangaluru on Sunday.

The neighbouring State has not banned consignments from other States: Minister

Revenue Minister R.V. Deshpande said here on Sunday that as per his understanding the Goa government has not banned fish from other States, including Karnataka, but was only insisting on fishermen producing certificate from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for selling fish in that State.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Deshpande, who is also in-charge Minister of Uttara Kannada, said that he spoke to Goa's Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on November 21 over the issue. Mr. Rane told Mr. Deshpande that Goa gets fish from many States. Fish arriving in Goa from other States is not fresh. In addition, there is an issue over formalin coated fish arriving in Goa from other States. It is posing a threat to the health of the people. Hence, Goa has asked those who send fish to it to produce quality certificate from the Food Department and not banned fish from other States.

Mr. Deshpande said that as the matter is related to a risk to the health of the people as they may be forced to consume chemically coated fish, all should support the decision taken by the Goa government. It has taken the decision in the interest of all.

The Revenue Minister said that he called a meeting of fishermen in Karwar on November 22 in this regard. All fishermen have agreed to maintain standards.

He believed that fishermen from the State do not send formalin-coated fish to Goa and do not mix any chemical with ice while sending consignments to other States.

He said that Kerala and Andhra Pradesh too send fish to other States. There is nothing wrong in obtaining certificate from FSSAI. If one got certificate, it might fetch more rate as the quality is certified. There will also be no threat to the health of the people.

Meanwhile, a delegation of MLAs from fishing areas in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kanada to be led by Nalin Kumar Kateel, Member of Parliament, is scheduled to visit Goa on November 27 to discuss the issue.

Mr. Kateel told *The Hindu* that the delegation will meet Goa's Speaker, Health and Fisheries Ministers and discuss the issue.