

Police seize 2,000kg 'fake' paneer from 2 factories, seven arrested

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Mumbai: Mumbai police crime branch control has busted two allegedly spurious paneer manufacturing units at Badlapur and Bhiwandi, seized 2,131kg of the product and arrested seven persons. Police said the spurious "health hazard" paneer was being supplied to several restaurants and eating houses in the suburbs and south Mumbai for a year.

On May 6, the police first detained a tempo in Chembur and seized 631kg of spurious paneer; they collected paneer samples from the tempo that was to deliver it to a dairy in Chembur.

"The samples were sent to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for testing. Their report stated that it was spurious, contained oil and was not edible," said a police official.

IT'S SPURIOUS, SAYS FDA REPORT



How authentic paneer is made

► Milk is boiled and lime juice or curd added to curdle it. It splits. Water (whey) is squeezed out. What is left behind is a creamy slab—paneer (cottage cheese)

Following the report, an FDA official lodged an FIR at the Chembur police station on Wednesday under Indian Penal Code sections 420 (cheating) 272 (adulteration of food or drink intended for sale) and 273 (sale of noxious food or drink). Sections of the Food

How accused prepared spurious paneer, according to the police

- Mixed milk powder with water, boiled it in large quantities
- Replaced lime juice with acetic acid to curdle the mixture
- Added palm oil to make the mixture appear creamy and glossy
- Strained the 'whey' through a muslin cloth to get 'paneer' slabs
- Once ready, packed 3-5kg cubes of 'paneer' and supplied it in large containers to customers

and Safety Standards Act were invoked as well. The crime branch control unit thereafter took over the probe.

Pravin Padwal, joint commissioner of police (economic offences wing), said: "We have arrested seven accused in this case and they have been re-

manded in police custody for five days. Further investigation is on. The crime branch control unit of the EOW, Mumbai, will carry out effective cases against food adulteration with FDA's help."

Police inspector Nitin Patil said, "We raided two factories — Yeshoda Organic Food in Badlapur and Disha Dairy in Bhiwandi—and arrested their owners."

Police personnel Rohit Sawant, Ganesh Doiphode and Bharat Kharvi seized 95 containers containing palm oil, milk powder and paneer from the two factories.

"The average price of original malai paneer is around Rs 400 per kg. Spurious paneer was sold for Rs 200-250. They would use milk powder instead of milk, and add palm oil or any low quality oil to prepare it," said a cop. One factory would sell around 2,000kg of paneer per day, said investigators.