



NewMUN: Chapter VI BACKGROUND GUIDE Lok Sabha Jr.

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

Greetings Delegates,

The chairs of Lok Sabha, Aditya Sujith and Mridini Sabarinathan, welcome you to the New Indian School Model United Nations Conference! As your chairs, we are thrilled to embark on this journey with you, exploring the intricacies of Indian politics, governance, and policy-making.

Please note that this guide is just the basic information of your agendas. As the issue posed in Agenda 2 is a still ongoing matter, new information may come to light which may be released after this guide has been formulated, therefore it is imperative to you as delegates, to do proper research on these topics. We want you to research well and think how they relate to your allocated political party and also your opponent's political parties to make your debates more informative and interesting. Your writings and speeches should be erudite and carefully prepared, taking into consideration your constituencies and, of course, the nation's welfare.

Being the house of the people, the Lok Sabha is central to the anatomy of the Indian parliamentary system of governance. This is where ideas that define people and cultures are developed, decisions are passed and the destiny of a nation is built. In this committee, you will such as an Indian legislator, belonging to the different political parties and holding different positions. This will provide a rare chance to get acquainted with the difficulties together with the duties that are implied by the constitution of India legislative process. It is for this reason that the Lok Sabha remains one of the most fascinating houses as far as debates are concerned. The topics that you are likely to debate, present the stance of your party. This, in turn, entails possession of general knowledge and comprehension of events as well as the ability to analyze and explain events and ideas. Re-emphasize the fact that everyone's voice counts and get into more civil debates so that you are able to help shape the discussions.

When interacting during the sessions it may be pertinent to bear in mind that the objective of the activity is not to claim victory over the other party but to find direction that is beneficial to the country. Listen to understand, and be ready to accept what is said and try to see things from the other person's view. This is the essence of diplomacy and statesmanship. We hope that this MUN conference will be informative and enjoyable. It is a chance to grow, to develop, and grow to go up against new challenges a venturing into new territory. As you enter this experience, be ready to embrace the fact of learning, and the desire of positively affecting the society.

We look forward to meeting you all and witnessing the thoughtful discussions and innovative solutions you will bring to the Lok Sabha. If you have any further questions or require any help, kindly feel free to contact us.

“We the chairs of Lok Sabha do solemnly swear to provide an experience that is educational in manner, fun in the making, and useful in your future.”

Let's make this session of the Lok Sabha a remarkable one!

Warm regards,

Adithya and Mridini.



AGENDA 1:

Analyzing the preparedness and response of the government to Cyclone Amphan, focusing on its impact on agriculture in West Bengal and Odisha, and proposition of improved disaster management policies.

INTRODUCTION

In May 2020, Cyclone Amphan wreaked havoc in India as well as Bangladesh. The cyclone had started from a low-pressure system that developed in the Bay of Bengal on the 13th. Within the next few days, it became a very severe cyclonic storm and subsequently as comparable with Category 5 hurricane strength super cyclone in open waters of Bay of Bengal handling peak winds at speeds up to 240 km/h (150 mph). Heavy damage and numerous casualties were reported by the time Cyclone Amphan reached land in West Bengal, India's Sundarbans.

Cyclone Amphan lashed a wide area, with powerful winds and heavy rainfall that contributed to widespread infrastructure damage as well as damaged of homes and crops. Strong damages were reported in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal and neighboring Odisha, especially Kolkata which is also capital of West Bengal.

In Bangladesh, Cyclone Amphan most affected the southwestern coastal area and caused widespread devastation. It wiped out homes, schools, and hospitals across a swathe of the country 'leaving many communities without any means to receive even basic services.'

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Origin and History of Cyclone Amphan?

Cyclone Amphan was a big and nasty cyclone that hit South Asia in May 2020. It's not just because of the intensity but also because of the damage it did in areas already prone to disasters. Amphan formed over the southeastern Bay of Bengal on May 16, 2020. It intensified quickly due to favorable conditions, became a super cyclonic storm which is the highest category in the North Indian Ocean. Amphan intensified fast because of warm sea surface temperatures and good atmospheric conditions.

Amphan steadily intensified and by May 19, had attained its maximum strength: the maximum wind speed of 240 km/h (150 mph) and the gusts of 270 km/h (165 mph). This made it the strongest storm to form in the Bay of Bengal since the 1999 Odisha cyclone. Thus, it became clear that cyclone was of extratropical nature: the central pressure reached a level of about 920 hPa.

Amphan made landfall on May 20, 2020 near the India-Bangladesh border, in the Sundarbans. At landfall, Amphan had weakened slightly but still had winds of up to 155 km/h (95 mph) and heavy rainfall. The cyclone caused widespread destruction, mostly in the Indian state of West Bengal and the southwestern parts of Bangladesh.

Amphan showed us how intense tropical cyclones are getting in the region, climate change is the reason, scientists say. Warmer sea surface temperatures mean more powerful storms and Amphan was a perfect example. The cyclone also showed us the importance of mangroves in coastal protection. The Sundarbans mangrove forest, though damaged, acted as a buffer and absorbed some of the cyclone's impact and protected the inland areas.

The cyclone was brutal. In West Bengal, the capital city of Kolkata was badly hit with uprooted trees, damaged buildings and communication and power lines broken. Rural areas had flooding, crop destruction and homes made of weaker materials damaged. Amphan killed over 100 in India, West Bengal was the worst affected. In Bangladesh, the coastal areas had storm surges, flooding and high winds, homes, and infrastructure damaged. The country reported 26

deaths due to the cyclone. Millions were displaced and the economic damage was in billions of dollars.

In India, over 500,000 people were evacuated, in Bangladesh, 2.4 million. This proactive approach saved many lives. But the COVID-19 pandemic complicated evacuations and relief efforts as social distancing in shelters was difficult to maintain. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies provided food, water, medical supplies and temporary shelter to the affected people. Reconstruction efforts focused on rebuilding homes, restoring infrastructure and supporting affected farmers and businesses.

The Current Situation

Impact and Damage:

Cyclone Amphan devastated the eastern part of India mostly West Bengal and Odisha. It led to the death of people, destruction of houses, buildings and crops, displacement of people among other calamities. Populated cities such as Kolkata were badly affected that included fallen trees, damaged constructions and complete disruption of electricity supply for hours.

Recovery Efforts:

Recovery too has been gradual and continues even to this date. The rebuilding of families' homes as well as other communal facilities such as roads and electricity supply and lines also on progresses. As for support in the framework of fight against drought, members of the Government as well as NGOs have been assisting the population.

Agricultural Sector:

The impact was, seen especially in the agricultural sector, the farmers reported high losses due to the decease. Agricultural restoration continues to this date though it is still a challenge given the seriousness of the problem.

Environmental Impact:

The loss of structures and properties was felt dramatically; however, the environmental costs seemed incredibly high, specifically to the Sundarbans area. There has been some efforts made to restore this important mangrove ecosystem, however, it will take several years before everything could get back to normal.

Community and Government Response:

The government of India and related organizations have been very much involved in recovery process. People have been provided with financial assistance, food, and medical supplies, and there are present processes aimed at restoration and recovery of the struck populations.

Challenges:

They are recovery of sustainable infrastructure that was adversely affected, community livelihoods, and development in the context of future climatic occurrences. Another area that should not be ignored is the psychological consequences on the targeted population.

MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED

Governments of India and Bangladesh:

- Disaster response and management was greatly influenced by the governments of both countries. They ensured that people moved to safer place, supplied essentials and even searches and rescues.
- Impact was most strongly felt in the two neighboring states of West Bengal and Odisha where the state governments remained the most active in managing the consequences.
- Although Bangladesh failed badly in every respect, the government of Bangladesh tried to mobilize resource to protect the vulnerable people in coastal region.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) - India:

- The NDRF directed different teams of officers toward evacuation and search & rescue operations, and for the function of offering relief to the stricken zones in India.

Bangladesh Armed Forces:

- Military in Bangladesh was engaged in rescue operation, search and relief operation and distribution of relief materials among the stricken people.

Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD):

- These agencies include Meteorological and Hazards agencies which assisted early in issuing warning and forecast that enable early evacuation and preparatory measures.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Aid Agencies:

- A diverse range of INGOs contributing in providing the affected places with basic needs included Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxfam and UNICEF etc.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

- Two key organizations that contributed to the disaster response included the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and the Indian Red Cross Society who dished out food, shelter, medical help and other needs.

Oxfam:

- The organization had its operations existent in Bangladesh and also in India that directly came into the aid of the affected populations and providing clean water, sanitation facility for hygiene kits and other relief materials. They also assisted in the long-term development process where part of the population was emancipated.

UNICEF:

- From the UNICEF, emergency supplies consisted of; medical supplies, hygiene kits, and water tablets. They also supported the programs because they envisaged the need for education and child protection in the after-cyclone situation.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

Formation and Intensification

May 13, 2020: A low creation area starts to develop over the southeast Bay of Bengal.

May 15, 2020: Low pressure area becomes a depression.

May 16, 2020: The depression further intensified into deep depression and into cyclonic storm and named as Amphan by the India meteorological department (IMD).

May 17, 2020: A new development is reached as Amphan intensified into severe cyclonic storm.

Peak Intensity and Preparation

May 18, 2020: Amphan evolves into the strongest storm of the super cyclone category with the wind speed of 240 km/h (150 mph), thus becoming the strongest storm on the Bay of Bengal since the 1999 Odisha cyclone.

May 19, 2020: Cyclone Amphan became slightly less and came to category 5, while it continues to be an extremely severe cyclone storm as it nears the coast.

Landfall and Immediate Impact

May 20, 2020: Cyclone Amphan hit the coast near Bakkhali, West Bengal at approximately at 2:30 PM IST with a maximum wind speed of cyclone 155-165 km/h and gusts up to 185 km/h.

Aftermath and Relief Efforts

May 21-23, 2020: Governments, NGOs, as well as International organizations engage in triaging to respond to such issues as food, water, medical persons, and shelters.

Recovery and Rehabilitation

Late May to Early June 2020: The rescue operations go on with emphasis made on rehabilitation of physically critical infrastructures, removal of wreckage, and aid to the affected persons and groups.

Long-term Impact and Response

June 2020 - Onwards: Reconstruction of houses, rehabilitation/ revegetation of agricultural lands, and measures were taken for protection against further cyclone were done.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

- **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):** OCHA oversaw the humanitarian operation that involved other UN agencies, international NGO and national authorities.
- **World Food Program (WFP):** Continue to feed the target groups, the vulnerable society groups that were affected by the cyclone. WFP was also involved in the management of resources on the supply chain in the network as a means of delivering basic relief items.

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** Focusing on public health interventions, such as the provision of care, the promotion of health for communities, as well as the control of disease transmission, and sustainment of health structures.
- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):** Some of these are involved in providing shelter and non-food items to families, with especial care for refugees and stateless people.
- **United Nations Development Program (UNDP):** Supported the reconstruction and rehabilitation process involved mainly in the reconstruction of the livelihoods and infrastructure and the improvement of people's capacities in disaster risks management.
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):** Assisted in the program of restoring the cultivation of the land, enabling the farmers to replace their crops and animals that were ravaged by disasters.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- 1. Smart Infrastructure Planning:** Implement built-in tough continuing, of structures and infrastructure so that the former could bear the impacts of high wind and floods.
- 2. Green Infrastructure:** Encourage installment of green roofs, permeable pavements and urban green spaces to hold rainwater and decrease the occurrence of floods.
- 3. Localized Early Warning Systems:** Adapt weather warning systems and mechanisms placed in every region of the municipality specifically for the different neighborhoods.
- 4. Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction:** Provide the local communities with a first-aid training with emphasis on basic disasters response, search and rescue, and evacuation.
- 5. Mobile Apps for Emergency Communication:** Continue using and expanding application, Web 2.0 tools for mobile devices with the features of real-time information sharing that can include emergency notifications, maps with directions to exits, and safety procedures.
- 6. Resilient Public Infrastructure:** Establish and modify public infrastructures like school, hospitals, and other community center structures to provide shelters during cyclone occurrences.

7. Climate-Resilient Agriculture: Accompany farmers in using climate smart agriculture for increasing production and reducing cases of crop failure after cyclones.

8. Post-Disaster Recovery Financing: Set up specific funds or insurance for fast and efficient delivery of compensation and recovery of impacted populations.

9. Coastal Erosion Management: Emphasize on the protection of the coasts from erosion and storm surge impacts through practicable working including the beach nourishment, dune restoration and the preservation of mangrove forest.

10. Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement: Engage the academic institutions, business, CSOs and the neighboring municipalities for exchange of information and experiences on disaster preparedness and mitigation measures.

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AGENDA 2:

Addressing the Ban on MDH and Everest Spices: Assessing Safety Concerns and Trade Implications for Southeast Asian Markets

INTRODUCTION

India stands today as the largest exporter of spices in the world, valuing almost \$4 Billion. This also accounts for about 12 % of global spice exports. It is to this economic landscape that the recent bans of spice products produced by Indian companies MDH and Everest pvt.ltd by Southeast Asian countries including Hong Kong, Singapore and most recently Nepal have been instituted

The ban is attributed to a recent report by Hong Kong's Centre for Food Safety (CFS) about the presence of ethylene oxide, a chemical classified as a Class 1 Carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

The presence and tolerance of pesticides and other chemical impurities in foods have been a hotly debated topic at home and abroad. As these issues stand to threaten India's access to the lucrative Chinese, US and EU spice markets, Half of India's spice industry hangs in the balance.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1. **Ethylene Oxide:** Ethylene oxide is a chemical used in the sterilization of spices. The IARC classifies it as a Class 1 Carcinogen.
2. **Class 1 Carcinogen:** Class 1 carcinogens are chemical substances which can sufficiently be proven to significantly increase the risk of cancer in human beings upon exposure, this list is maintained by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.
3. **FSSAI:** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is a statutory body under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that is responsible for the regulation of food products and enforcement of food safety standards in India

GENERAL OVERVIEW

1) Where it started:

The wave of international scrutiny on Indian spices began when during routine food safety inspections, the Centre for Food Safety of the Hong Kong Department of Food and Environmental Hygiene discovered the presence of a carcinogenic pesticide known as ethylene oxide in many spice products manufactured by the MDH and Everest corporations and issued a general recall for the same in a press release dated 5th of April 2024.

Following this action by CFS Hong Kong, The Singapore Food Agency issued a notification on the 18th of April 2024, calling for a recall on a product of the Everest Corporation due to the identifiable presence of ethylene oxide. This claim was substantiated by the Nepal Department of Food Technology and Quality Control who issued a ban on Everest and MDH products on the 17th of May 2024

The latest action is that of the Malaysian Ministry of Health on the 30th of May 2024, banning Everest and MDH products within the federation.

2) Specifics of the issue:

The nexus of the issue lies in a chemical known as ethylene oxide, ethylene oxide is a colorless gas that is used as a pesticide and sterilizing agent in the spice industry.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) considers ethylene oxide as a Class 1 carcinogen, which if exposed to in sufficient quantities can lead to development of Lymphoma, Leukemia, Breast and Stomach cancers. During routine food testing, it was Hong Kong CFS that identified the presence of these chemicals in products manufactured by Everest and MDH and called for its recall, with other nations following suit.

3) India's place in the spice trade and what it stands to lose:

In the fiscal year 2024, India exported 4.25 Billion US Dollars worth of spice products which accounts for 12% of world spice exports, India's spice markets include:

- **UAE (US\$ 256 million)**
- **Thailand (US\$ 193 million)**
- **Malaysia (US\$ 147 million)**
- **Indonesia (US\$ 137 million)**
- **UK (US\$ 122 million)**
- **Australia (US\$ 63 million)**
- **Singapore (US\$ 50 million)**
- **Hongkong (US\$ 5.5 million)**

Everest and MDH are also two of India's top spice producers with Everest being the largest spice producer in the country.

These actions threaten almost half of India's spice exports. But the real issue lie in the threat of further market closures, If China acts on the precedent set by ASEAN and Hong Kong and bans Indian spice exports, The potential repercussions could affect exports valued at \$2.17 billion, representing 51.1% of India's global spice exports.

The repercussions could be even worse if the European Union, which has a history of rejecting Indian food follows suit, An EU-wide rejection could impact an additional \$2.5 billion, bringing the total potential loss to 58.8% of India's worldwide spice exports.

This could pave the way for future actions against other Indian food exports citing safety concerns, It could have a detrimental impact on the Indian economy which may lead to many companies even shutting down causing large scale unemployment and costs to import lost production.

4) Previous actions against Indian food items:

This is not the first-time foreign nations have clamped down on Indian food products, previous instances include:

- A) In October of 2023, Shipments of MDH spices into the US were rejected after the US Food and Drug Administration discovered the presence of Salmonella, a harmful bacterium, The FDA stated that 13 of MDH's 65 shipments into the country were found to have Salmonella present in them. In Fiscal Year 2022-23 15 percent of MDH's 119 shipments into the United States were detained, mostly due to the presence of Salmonella. Everest fared better with only 1 of its 450-shipment were seized.
- B) Indian exports to the European Union faced a much higher level of scrutiny, between 2019 and 2024, over 400 Indian products were detained by EU authorities due to the presence of various impurities including various pesticides, fungicides, lead, mercury etc.

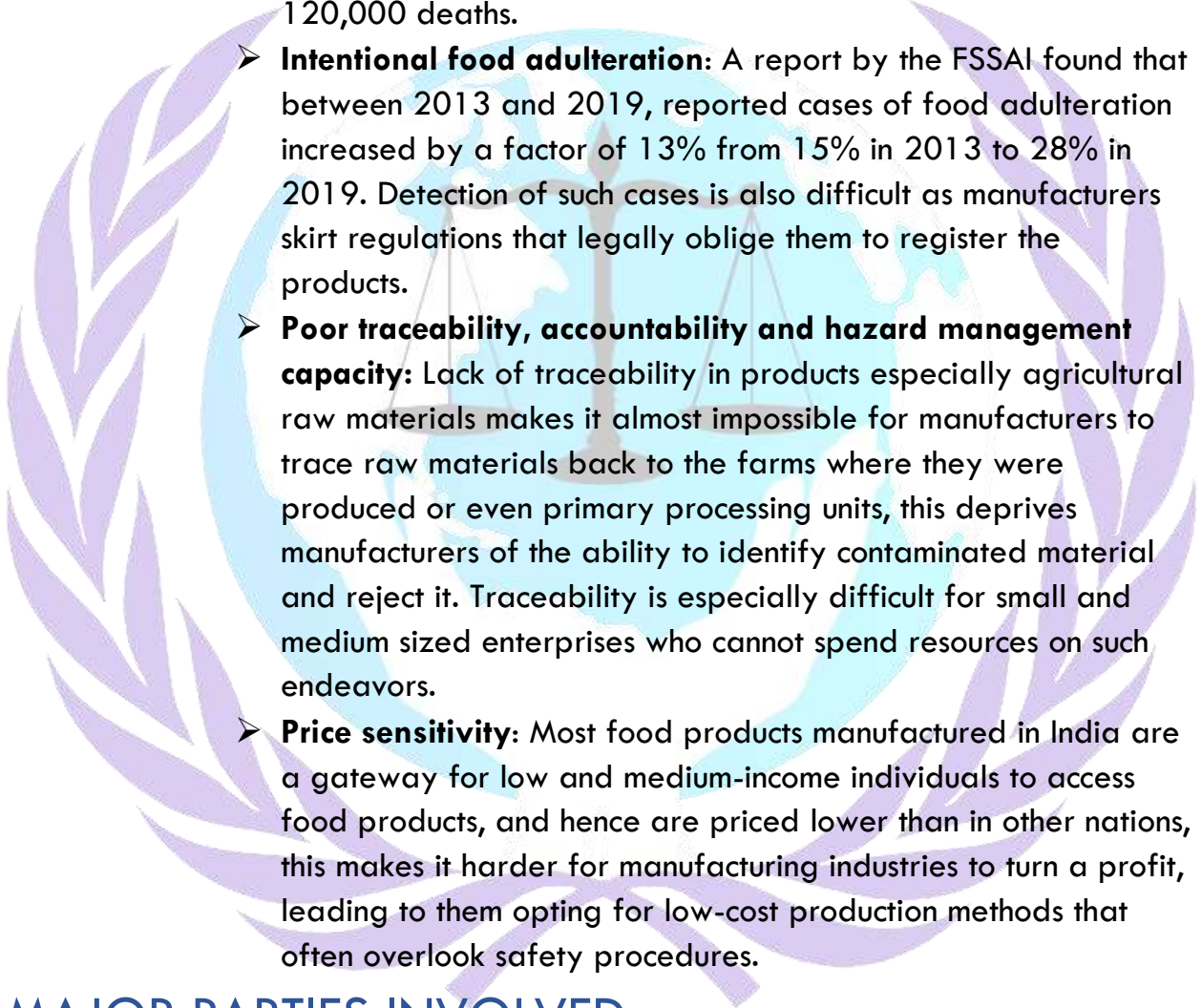
5) Food safety regulation and enforcement in India:

Indian food safety is regulated under the Food Safety and Standards Act, the first and only food standards regulation in India, enacted only in 2006.

The same year, the enforcement agency, The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India was established and tasked with enforcing food safety regulations in India.

Factors that contribute to a low level of food safety in India include:

- **Lack of awareness:** As food safety regulation by the state is a new practice in India, starting only in 2006, there is also low awareness among the populus with regards to food safety practices and their role in preventing illness. Even those aware of the prevalence of food contamination do not follow the guidelines.

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- **Infrastructure Limitations:** Most food manufacturing and production in India happens in small scale industrial units in the unorganized sector who simply do not find it profitable to maintain food safety standards and hence do not. This leads to presence of foodborne ailments in food products, India has an estimated 100 million foodborne illnesses a year, causing about 120,000 deaths.
 - **Intentional food adulteration:** A report by the FSSAI found that between 2013 and 2019, reported cases of food adulteration increased by a factor of 13% from 15% in 2013 to 28% in 2019. Detection of such cases is also difficult as manufacturers skirt regulations that legally oblige them to register the products.
 - **Poor traceability, accountability and hazard management capacity:** Lack of traceability in products especially agricultural raw materials makes it almost impossible for manufacturers to trace raw materials back to the farms where they were produced or even primary processing units, this deprives manufacturers of the ability to identify contaminated material and reject it. Traceability is especially difficult for small and medium sized enterprises who cannot spend resources on such endeavors.
 - **Price sensitivity:** Most food products manufactured in India are a gateway for low and medium-income individuals to access food products, and hence are priced lower than in other nations, this makes it harder for manufacturing industries to turn a profit, leading to them opting for low-cost production methods that often overlook safety procedures.

MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:** It is under this ministry that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is constituted, even before the current fiasco the MoHFW has had a vested interest in curbing unsafe food production and enforcement of health standards, it is this ministry that will take the on-the-ground steps to improve food safety in India, it is headed by Cabinet Minister JP Nadda

- **Ministry of Commerce and Industry:** This ministry handles trade in India and between India and other foreign nations, MoCI has an interest to ensure food quality in order to secure India's foreign export markets
- **Everest Spices:** Everest Spices otherwise known as Everest Food Products Pvt Ltd is one of India's premiere spice manufacturers, they are also accused of non-adherence to food safety protocols in the manufacture of their products, their interest is two-fold,
 1. To ensure the basic minimum standards are met to ensure profits.
 2. Prevent any future enforcement action on their products.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

April 5, 2024: Government of Hong Kong SAR issues a press release detailing presence of carcinogens in Everest and MDH products, issues general recall

April 18, 2024: Singapore Food Agency acts on safety recommendations issued by Hong Kong and issues a recall and ban on Everest and MDH products

May 17, 2024: Nepal govt. bans aforementioned products due to presence of ethylene oxide

May 30, 2024: MoH Malaysia issues a recall for the products

June 15, 2024: Upon discovery of carcinogens in food products in Rajasthan, FSSAI launches investigation on Everest and MDH products

Note: Timeline created on 28-07-2024, events after may be omitted

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

- **Food Safety and Standards Act:** The establishment of food safety regulations in India and the enforcement agency that is the FSSAI in 2006 is one of the first actions by the government of India to control food production and safety in India. The Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 is the first of its kind in India and has been used to regulate food manufacture, storage and distribution in India
- **Food Safety and Standards Amendment 2020:** This amendment to the 2006 act further strengthened legislative rules to ensure food safety in India, It increases penalties, expands the FSSAI's mandate and gives increased powers to the FSSAI to prosecute defaulters.

- **Eat Right India Program:** This program, brought into effect by the FSSAI, was awarded by the Rockefeller Foundation as one of its top 10 initiatives for its visionary ideas in tackling food safety, including the deployment of 300,000 new food supervisors to enforce food regulations at the local level, it also aims to certify at least 50% of known street food vendors and make the ratings public
- **Increased Enforcement:** The FSSAI in more recent years has taken a more heavy-handed approach to establishments that threaten public safety through unsafe food, using the 2020 amendment, they now have powers to strictly punish rule breakers

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. **Increased public awareness:** Not many people in India are aware of the impact food safety has on their physical well-being. Therefore, increased awareness programs such as those already in effect under the UN Food and Agricultural Organization will greatly benefit food safety in India
2. **Transparency in manufacture:** Entering production methods and standards into the public record will allow the consumers to view how the food is being produced, this increases trust between the public and the manufacturers and allows the people to identify those that do not follow standards.
3. **Export Minded Production:** Along with ensuring food safety in India, it is also necessary to secure India's exports through rigorous testing of food products that are to be exported to meet international standards, and to share these findings with the concerned nations.
4. **Government support:** Along with shuttering those that violate rules, government should also aim to support small and medium scale manufacturers in establishing food safety systems in their factories, which the manufacture themselves cannot do due to their thin profits
5. **Modernization:** As India becomes a more technologically advanced society, food safety has taken a central position in the nation's social psyche, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when social media campaigns helped raise awareness about viral contamination in food products.

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