

Source : The Hindu Date : 26.06.2009

Think twice before drinking packaged water

G.V.R. Subba Rao

Loose groundnut oil samples taken by VMC also found to be adulterated

VIJAYAWADA: Think twice the next time you pick up a branded packaged drinking water bottle at the railway station or bus station. There is every chance of you picking up an adulterated or unsafe drinking water bottle, which is likely to contain bacteria. Some of the cooking oils too are found to be unsafe for consumption.

This was established by the examination of the samples collected by the officials of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) a month ago. The Corporation officials picked up samples from retail outlets and sent them for microbiological tests. The tests revealed that “yeast and molds’ colonies” were present in the packaged water, though no treated and packaged water should contain any of these bacteria, officials say.

The food inspectors took samples of four popular brands of water bottles and found that the water packaged by two of them was “unsafe” for drinking.

Similarly, the food inspectors collected samples of palm oil and loose groundnut oil. The tests divulged that the acid content in palm oil was 0.94 count, against the permissible limit of 0.5 count. The loose groundnut oil was found to have been adulterated with cottonseed oil, which is said to be a toxic oil as it contains gossypol. It is often used as a pesticide. So, there is every chance of users of this loose oil consuming the toxic substance. VMC officials say they will send a report to the State food health authorities, who would have to permit the Corporation to prosecute the erring companies or shops. If the charges are established in a court of law, the

companies would have to pay fine and undergo six months of imprisonment. The Corporation officials say these results prove beyond doubt that adulteration is not just confined to some local brands or products.