

Suryapet: Chinthalapalem police bust spurious seed marketing gang

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Suryapet: Cracking on errant and unlicensed seed dealers ahead of the monsoon sowing operations, the district police on Thursday busted another spurious seed racket and arrested six persons including Dwaraka Seeds Managing Director Malapati Venkata Shiva Reddy and seized 986.74 kg seed of red chilli and vegetables worth Rs 13.52 crore.

Besides Venkata Shiva Reddy (40), a resident of Vanasthalipuram in Hyderabad, Vemireddy Laxma Reddy (36), regional manager of Dwaraka Seeds and native of Narayanapuram in Khammam district, Vasireddy Prathap Kumar (56), native of Kambampadu village of Krishna district, Sukuri Yadagiri(33), native of Gudikandula of Siddipet district, Mada Jaganmohan Rao (63), native of Dondapadu village of Chinthalapalem mandal in Suryapet district and Ramana, a native of Hyderabad were also arrested.

The police seized 349.18 kg of red chilli seed, 45.9 kg of tomato seed, 111.7 kg of ridge gourd seed and 479.3 kg of water melon seed from their possession.

Displaying the seized spurious seeds at a media conference here, Superintendent of Police R Bhaskaran and District collector T Vinay Krishna Reddy said that Venkata Shiva Reddy got permission from Agriculture department in 2017 to market seed under the brand of Dwaraka. Taking advantage of the license from the Agriculture department, he appointed dealers at Parakala, Sujathanagar, Wyra and Vasthalai in the State and started marketing red chilli and vegetable seed to the farmers through the dealers terming them as anti-virus hybrid seeds. He was bringing in spurious seed from Maharashtra and Karnataka and packaging them in a godown at Vanasthalipuram for sale to farmers through the dealers.

The officials said Venkata Shiva Reddy was involved in sale of seed without license at unauthorized premises, possession and sale seeds that were past the expiry date. There were no labels on the seed packets as per norms. The modus operandi of the gang was fly by night operation. The dealers sell the spurious seed to farmers visiting their villages at night time and don't give receipts.

Bhaskaran said Venkata Shiva Reddy has earlier worked in seed companies and used the knowledge he had gained to make a fast buck through illegal trade. Cases were filed against the six arrested persons under different sections of Seeds Control Act-1983 at Parakala police station of Warangal Police Commissionerate, Enkur police station in Khamman district and Chinthalapalem police station on Suryapet district.

The entire racket was exposed when Chinthalapalem police took up investigation of sale of seed to local farmers by some persons. Chinthalapalem Sub-Inspector A Ranjith Reddy grew suspicious when he heard about anti-virus hybrid seeds being sold, and he brought this to the notice of higher officials. Police inquired with the farmer about the person who sold the seed and this helped them in busting the racket.

It is learnt that special teams of Suryapet police also arrested seven members belongs to two spurious seed marketing gangs and Rs 70 lakh worth cotton seeds seized from their possession.

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